

(De)constructing the heterosexual/homosexual binary: The identity construction of gay male academics and students in South African tertiary education

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*As with all my work,
I dedicate this to my mother, Annatjie.*

*Without your unconditional love, support and strength,
particularly during this past year,
I would not have been able to make as much progress as I have.
Because of you, I will never be 'reflexively defeated'.*

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTUP	AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power
ANC	African National Congress
BCE	Before the Common Era
Edu-HRight	Education in Human Rights and Diversity
FHAR	<i>Front Homosexuel d'Action Révolutionnaire</i>
GASA	Gay Association of South Africa
GLEE	Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgendered Educational Equity Project
GLF	Gay Liberation Front
GLOW	Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand
GLSEN	Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network
GRID	Gay Related Immune Deficiency
GSB	Government of the Student Body
GSS	Gay Student Services
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGLHRC	International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission
ILGA	International Lesbian, Gay, Intersex and Transsexual Association
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex
LGBTIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Asexual
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer ¹
NCA	National Communication Association
NCGLE	National Coalitaton for Gay and Lesbian Equality
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OLGA	Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists
OUT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Well-Being
PFLAG	Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
POUT	Potchefstroom OUT
QAA	Queer Academic Alliance
SASA	South African Sociological Association
TAMU	Texas A&M University
UDF	United Democratic Front

¹ I have opted to use the acronym LGBTQ throughout the thesis. In those instances where the other acronyms are used (LGBT, LGBTI, LGBTIA), it is done to retain the original use in the cited source and/or quote.

UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

SUMMARY

Considered as *the* “...central organizing method” (Fuss, 1991:1) in terms of gender and sexual orientation particularly in the Western world, the heterosexual/homosexual binary, emphasises the centrality of “compulsory heterosexuality” (Rich, 1993:227) in the everyday lives of social and sexual actors. In doing this, homosexuality is not only differentiated from heterosexuality, but may rather be ‘banished’ to a lower and subordinate stratum of so-called sexual “respectability” (Rubin, 1993:13). Using it as a point of departure, this particular sociological inquiry sought to critically explore the influence of a binary logic on the identity construction of gay male academics and students in South African tertiary education. This study provides an in-depth qualitative discussion of the lived experiences of these men on university campuses in order to redress the limited focus on the subject matter in South African sociology. Informed by the metatheoretical principles of phenomenology and central features of a symbolic interactionist methodology, three specific subthemes guided the research. These included the **rationalisation of sexual orientation**, **self-reflexivity** and, as my inductive contribution, a consideration of the **deprofessionalisation** and/or **professionalisation of the gay male academic identity** in South African higher education. In adopting Jackson and Scott’s (2010) conceptualisation of the **rationalisation of sexuality**, the study sought to explore its role in the identity construction of gay men through, amongst others, “sexual scripting” (Gagnon & Simon, 1973), “doing gender” (West & Zimmerman, 2002), “using gender” (Johnson, 2009) as well as “doing gay” (Dowsett et al., 2008), to (de)construct a “gay sensibility” (cf. Seidman, 2002a) within and between their private and professional contexts. Secondly, such negotiation of their homosexual “performativity” (Butler, 1990) presupposed an undeniable degree of “**reflexiveness**” (cf. Mead, 1962) on the part of the gay male, to adhere to the expectations of other individuals in a specific social context. Given the findings from a thematic analysis of fifteen (15) in-depth interviews with academics and seven (7) with students, as well as two (2) self-administered questionnaires completed by academics and seventeen (17) by students, the influence of heteronormativity, heterosexism and homophobia, was again reiterated. The participants mostly opted to **professionalise their gay male identities** (thus differentiate between their private and academic gay male identity), regardless of the fact that their narratives reflected an internal diversity, plurality and potentially non-subordinate otherness, akin to Plummer’s (1998b) reference to “homosexualities” rather than only one homogenised version of ‘homosexuality’. Their choice to do so was attributed to a conscious effort to either ‘pass’ as heterosexual, assimilate into the dominant sexual and gendered culture of the

campus, or conform to a stereotypical gay performance in homosexually-segregated academic departments because of anxiety, fear or shame. As such, the potential of mastering an uncategorised 'queer' inclination in tertiary education, becomes all the more difficult, if not improbable.

Key words: Deprofessionalisation, ethnic model, gay academics, gay male identity, lesbian and gay studies, professionalisation, queer theory, symbolic interactionism, social constructivism, sociology.

OPSOMMING

Die heteroseksuele/homoseksuele tweeledigheid wat beskou word as dié “...sentrale organiseringsmetode” (Fuss, 1991:1) spesifiek in die Westerse wêreld in terme van geslag en seksuele oriëntasie, beklemtoon die sentraliteit van “verpligte heteroseksualiteit” (Rich, 1993:227) in die daaglikse lewens van sosiale en seksuele ‘akteurs’. Hierdeur word homoseksualiteit nie net gedifferensieer van heteroseksualiteit nie, maar word dit eerder ‘verban’ as ‘n laer en minder belangrike stratum van sogenaamde seksuele “aansien” (Rubin, 1993:13). Deur dié as vertrekpunt te neem, het hierdie sosiologiese studie gepoog om die invloed van binêre logika op die identiteitskonstruksie van homoseksuele manlike akademici en studente in tersiêre Suid-Afrikaanse opleidingsinstansies krities te ondersoek. Hierdie studie bied ‘n in-diepte, kwalitatiewe bespreking van die lewenservarings van hierdie mans op universiteitskampusse met die doel om die beperkte fokus ten opsigte van hierdie studie onderwerp reg te stel. Geïnspireer deur die metateoretiese beginsels van fenomenologie en die sentrale eienskappe van ‘n simboliese interaksionistiese metodologie, het drie spesifieke subtemas die navorsing begelei. Dit het die **rasionalisering van seksuele oriëntasie, self-refleksiwiteit**, en as my induktiewe bydrae, ‘n oorweging van die **deprofessionalisering en/of professionalisering van die homoseksuele, manlike, akademiese identiteit** in die Suid-Afrikaanse hoër onderwys, ingesluit. Deur Jackson en Scott (2010) se konsepsualisering van die **rasionalisering van seksualiteit** aan te neem, het die studie gepoog om die rol hiervan in die identiteitskonstruksie van homoseksuele mans te eksploreer deur middel van, onder andere, “seksuele teks” (“sexual scripting”) (Gagnon & Simon, 1973), “doen van gender” (West & Zimmerman, 2002), “gebruik van gender” (Johnson, 2009), sowel as “doen van gay” (Dowsett et al., 2008), om sodoende “gay oordeelkundigheid” (Seidman, 2002a) te (de)konstrueer binne en tussen die private en professionele kontekste van die mans. Tweedens, sodanige onderhandeling van hulle homoseksuele “opvoering” (Butler, 1990) voorveronderstel ‘n onbetwisbare graad van “**refleksiwiteit**” (Mead, 1962) aan die kant van die gay man om aan die verwagtinge van ander individue in ‘n spesifieke sosiale konteks te voldoen. Na aanleiding van die bevindinge gegrond op ‘n tematiese analise van vyftien (15) in-diepte onderhoude met akademici en sewe (7) met studente, asook twee (2) selfvoltooide vraelyste voltooi deur die akademici en sewentien (17) deur studente, is die invloed van heteronormatiwiteit, heteroseksisme en homofobie weer herbevestig. Die deelnemers het meestal verkies om hulle **gay manlike identiteite te professionaliseer** (hulle onderskei dus tussen hulle private en akademiese gay manlike identiteit). Dit was nieteenstaande die feit dat hulle narratiewe ‘n

interne diversiteit, pluraliteit en potensieel nie-inskiklike andersheid weerspieël het. Dit stem ooreen met Plummer (1998b) se verwysing na “homoseksualiteite”, eerder as net een gehomogeniseerde weergawe van homoseksualiteit.

Hulle keuse kan toegeskryf word aan ’n bewuste poging om, of as heteroseksueel deur te gaan, te assimileer in die dominante seksuele- en geslagskultuur van die kampus, of om te konformeer met ’n stereotipiese gay optrede in homoseksueel-verdeelde akademiese departemente vanweë angs, vrees of skaamte. Derhalwe is die moontlikheid om ’n ongekategoriseerde ‘queer’ geneigdheid in tersiêre instellings te bemeester, uiters moeilik, indien nie onmoontlik nie.

Sleutelwoorde: Deprofessionalisering, etniese model, gay akademici, lesbiese en gay studie, professionalisering, ‘queer’ teorie, simboliese interaksionisme, sosiale konstruktivisme, sosiologie.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In her consideration of the contested meaning and relevance of gay and lesbian categorisation, Butler (1991:13) asserts the following:

...The prospect of being anything...has always produced in me a certain anxiety, for 'to be' gay, 'to be' lesbian seems to be more than a simple injunction to become who or what I already am. And in no way does it settle the anxiety for me to say that this is 'part' of what I am...identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes, whether as normalizing categories or oppressive structures or as the rallying points for a liberatory contestation of that very oppression.

Implied in her contemplation, is the presence of the so-called heterosexual/homosexual binary arrangement of sexual orientation. This polarisation, according to Fuss (1991:1), serves as *the* "...central organizing method in Western society" in which heterosexuality is deemed as the dominant and only acceptable sexual variant, whereas homosexuality is posited as its sexually orientated subordinate (Ingraham, 2002; Jagose, 1996; Roseneil, 2002:29; Sedgwick, 2008; Warner, 1991). This group may be kept intact, through the repetitive performance (cf. Butler, 1990) of gendered and sexually orientated rituals (cf. Ingraham, 2002) as part of an ongoing process of 'becoming homosexual' through an onset of several identity construction models and themes (Benkov, 1994; Bozett, 1988; Cass, 1984; 1990; Coleman, 1982; Connell, 1992; Dank, 1979; DeVine, 1984; Downs, 2006; Konik & Stewart, 2004; Miller, 1998a; Plummer, 1975; 1996; Troiden, 1998; Weston, 1991; Worthington et al., 2002), for which members of the homosexual category, are held accountable (cf. Dowsett et al., 2008; Johnson, 2009; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2002). Fuss does, however, contend that the perceived "...stability and ineradicability of the hetero/homosexual hierarchy", which favours heterosexist and heteronormative hegemony in contemporary society "...are no longer thinkable in terms of a simple inside/outside dialectic" (Fuss, 1991:1). Here the 'inside' is occupied by heterosexuals while sexual minorities are part of the 'outside', much akin to Rubin's (1993:13) "...erotic

pyramid” which places heterosexuality within a “blessed” (cf. Sedgwick, 2008:1) and homosexuality in a ‘peripheral’ realm, respectively.

As such, the perceived stability of the categories of ‘the heterosexual’ and “the homosexual” (cf. Foucault, 1978), are both posited as comprising “...an unstable identity process” (Phelan, 1997:60). In this regard, De Lauretis (1991:iii) blatantly asserts:

...[h]omosexuality is no longer to be seen simply as marginal with regard to a dominant, stable form of sexuality (heterosexuality) against which it would be defined...it is no longer to be seen as transgressive or deviant vis-a-vis a proper, natural sexuality (i.e. institutionalized reproductive sexuality) according to the older, pathological model, or as just another, optional ‘lifestyle’.

Nonetheless, the ostensibly implied possibilities of destabilising the observed dominance of heterosexuality in favour of a diverse, plural and inclusive society (cf. Tong, 2008) for gay and lesbian self-identified individuals, are problematised by several factors. These include the stigmatisation of same-sex attraction within contemporary society in general, and African as well as South African society in particular (Cock, 2003; Conway-Smith, 2012; Croucher, 2002; De Vos, 2008; Dlamini, 2006; Epprecht, 2010; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Gevisser, 1995; Gevisser & Cameron, 1995; Hames, 2007; ILGA, 2012c; Kowen & Davis, 2006; Ndashe, 2010; Reddy, 2001; 2002; 2006; 2009; 2010; Rossouw, 2012; Sanger & Clowes, 2006; Scholtz, 2010:5; Wells & Polders, 2006). As such, the so-called “...disease model” (cf. Herdt, 1992:6), which typifies homosexuality as the dependent form of sexual orientation in relation to heterosexuality, is kept intact. This makes it all the more difficult for sexually dissident groups to fully develop their sexual orientation freely without fear, coercion or emotional, psychological and physical abuse, since it reinforces stigmas associated with pathological views of gay individuals as ill, deviant or amoral (Aldrich, 2010:11; Meem et al., 2010:47; Rubin, 1993:13; Tamagne, 2010:271; Weeks, 1996:48). As a consequence then, the mere adoption of a queer inclination towards sexual orientation which, as implied by De Lauretis (1991), favours a view of a sexually orientated identity as open, contestable, fluid and plural, since assuming the idea of having a “...core homosexual identity...is incomplete and misrepresents” (Seidman, 2008:243). I therefore consider it necessary, as did Kirsch (2007) in his work, to quote Weeks (1985:210) at length, to emphasise the inherent contradiction which may arise:

...To argue that 'anything goes' is to fall back on an easy libertarianism which ignores questions of power and quality of relationships...There exists a plurality of sexual desires, or potential ways of life, and of relationships. A radical sexual politics affirms a freedom to be able to choose between them...Identity, may, in the end, be no more than a game, a ploy to enjoy particular types of relationships and pleasures. But without it, it seems, the possibilities of political choice are not increased but diminished. The recognition of 'sexual identities', in all their ambivalence, seems to be the precondition for the realization of sexual diversity.

Some of the earliest academic efforts at theorising gay and lesbian identity, and emphasising a more objective and/or "...inter-subjective" (cf. Schütz, 1932) approach towards sexuality studies, initially contradicted Weeks' (1985) assertion of 'sexual diversity' within identity categories. It favoured assimilation into an identity category, both in its underlying research focus, and also in terms of its proponents, i.e., self-identification and categorisation. As first attempt at including the subject matter in mainstream academic discourse, **lesbian and gay studies** (cf. Adam, 2002; Jagose, 1996; Nardi, 2002; Plummer, 1998a; Roseneil, 2002; Seidman, 1996; 2008) offered several gay and lesbian academics the opportunity to collaborate with others who expressed the need for a safer environment in which they are afforded the opportunity to "...voice their interests and concerns" (Kirsch, 2007:24). Yet, such inclusion also went hand-in-hand with apprehension and disapproval from their fellow academics. In one of the few academic studies on the state of lesbian and gay studies in academia, Henslin (1972, quoted in Warren, 2008:136) argued that academics interested in this field of study (regardless of their sexual orientation), were labelled deviant and even homosexual themselves, in so far as they displayed "...peculiar interests...[in doing] 'that kind of research'". As such, it is believed that their data was usually "...questionable [and] self-serving and unethical..." (Sagarin, 1973:11) since it only served to further the researcher's own motivations. This, would be the "...road to their own undoing", since their work would be seen as indicative of a selfish need to further their own interests (Sagarin, 1973:11-12). Several academics have since commented on the manner in which they have been influenced either directly or subtly for attempting to publically proclaim their homosexuality as personal or as a self-reflective academic inquiry (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; Dews & Leste Law, 1998; Dolan, 1998; Grace, 2006; Honeychurch, 1996;

Munt, 1997; Renn, 2000; Sagarin, 1973; Sears, 2002; Slagle, 2007; Wallace, 2002; Williams, 1993).

Because of such adversity, Honeychurch (1996:530) believes that homosexual academics and students are "...[f]orced to ponder our bodies by a culture startled by gender non-conformity and sexual diversity, social researchers who claim a queer position may best be suited to interrogating the sexual in social inquiry". In so doing, homosexually identified academics and students are afforded the opportunity to reflect on their own identities as well as the nature of sexual inquiry in social sciences (cf. Williams, 1993), and I could plausibly add, whether the two identities (the private and academic selves) necessitate mutually exclusive and divorced 'performances' (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Goffman, 1971; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008) in separate spheres (personal versus academic sphere). Grace (2006:827), a Canadian teacher educator, underscores these assertions in expressing the need to "...write the queer self".

This entails that the sexually minoritised teacher, lecturer, academic and/or theorist should explore ways in which to improve their teaching and research, to investigate their conflated and diverging 'selves' in order to critique overt and covert heteronormativity and homophobia, which may reinforce the noted binary. Several **queer theorists** have undertaken such work (Ault, 1996; Brontsema, 2004; Butler, 1993; Epstein, 1996; Fuss, 1991; Halperin, 1995; Ingraham, 2002; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Namaste, 1996; Rich, 1993; Roseneil, 2002; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 2008; Stein & Plummer, 1996; Warner, 1991). This individual should also advocate for respect, inclusion and acceptance regardless of ignorance and devise unique possibilities and initiatives to endeavour towards identity synthesis (cf. Cass, 1990) and pride (Grace, 2006:827). This thus requires the homosexual educator to transgress a mere spectator position of "...watching, waiting, avoiding and hiding" towards being "...a role model and mentor...kindred spirit with other queer outsiders...someone who doesn't turn away from them" (Grace, 2006:829).

In exploring the potential of affording the gay academic an opportunity at such transgression, the following discussion provides a background to this study. This comprises an overview of challenges faced by sexual minorities in both the African and South African context, based on the noted binary logic and contestability associated with the categorisation related to 'being gay'. The overview of these general issues is provided in order to inform the necessity of a more specific focus on the nature of sociological inquiry into homosexuality in Western and South

African academia, which in turn, provides the basis for the problem statement. The latter emphasises the role of binary categorisation as one of the pre-eminent factors which may influence the identity construction of homosexual individuals in general, and gay male academics and students, in particular. This is followed by the research questions and research objectives. The final subsection introduces the central theoretical arguments of Erving Goffman (1971) and George Herbert Mead (1962). Since their contributions provide the theoretical bases of the study, it is necessary to clearly conceptualise the central inherent concepts in their work. This is followed by a short overview of the chapters to follow.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

In their consideration of the current state of affairs regarding the protection of the rights of sexual minorities on the African continent, Baumann and Macaulay (2013:33) argue that during “...the last ten years the focus on equal rights, law reforms, community cohesion, diversity, families and migrations for Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) Africans has gone from bad to worse”. As part of the annual publication of The International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA hereafter) entitled *State Sponsored Homophobia* (Itaborahy & Zhu, 2013), which provides an in-depth account of the governments which criminalise same-sex behaviour, these writers underpin debates which centre on homophobic stances towards homosexuals in Africa. In contrasting the “...enviable” (Baumann & Macaulay, 2013:33) South African Constitution with those of other African countries, they provide a troubling picture of such state-sponsored homophobic inclinations. Examples include the fact that thirty seven (37) African countries currently criminalise homosexuality, which account for more than 50 per cent of the governments on the continent. If someone were to be found guilty of homosexual acts, their punishment could vary from imprisonment to the enactment of the death penalty, depending on the African state (Baumann & Macaulay, 2013:33; Gitari, 2013:39; Itaborahy & Zhu, 2013).

Much of these discriminatory tendencies may be associated with beliefs that homosexuality contradicts and defies traditional African culture, since it was only introduced to the continent's inhabitants since colonialism. Its influence, as secular Western import, has since been exacerbated through the “...radical intervention of technology” (Baumann & Macaulay, 2013:34; Cock, 2003). These claims have, however, been refuted by several studies which document the existence of same-sex practices as part of the African culture for centuries (Dlamini, 2006:131;

Muholi, 2004:123; Mutua, 2011:459; Nkabinde & Morgan, 2006; Patanè, 2010:271; Reddy, 2001:83; Wallace, 2010:257-262). Regardless, specific examples of homophobic gestures on the continent have prevailed during the last decade. In Uganda, mainstream media publications such as the newspaper *The Rolling Stone*, laundered the reputations of self-identified gay men through implicitly encouraging physical attacks on these men (ILGA, 2012d; Olukya & Straziuso, 2010). Nkwene Member of Swaziland's Parliament, Aaron Sotsha Dladla, recommended that gays and lesbians be banned from their country (ILGA, 2012b). Gambian president Yahya Jammeh renounced homosexuality during his address as part of the 22nd Annual July Revolution-celebrations, when he stated: "...In fact, promoting homosexuality and imposing it on weaker or poorer nations is a declaration of war on both religions and human existence. For Muslims, this is a declaration of war on Islam, a declaration of war against Allah, a declaration of war on human existence" (ILGA, 2013b). The brutal murder of Cameroonian LGBTQ activist Eric Lembembe in July 2013, also spurred sudden arrests and further harassment of LGBTQ activists in a country considered as one of the most "...violently homophobic" nations on the continent (ILGA, 2013a). In South Africa, several cases of 'corrective' rape, assaults and the murder of lesbian women also persist (ILGA, 2012c; Kowen & Davis, 2006; Sanger & Clowes, 2006; Scholtz, 2010:5; Wells & Polders, 2006). Considered as one of the most progressive countries in terms of legal rights afforded to sexual minorities, several troublesome issues have arisen which may potentially threaten the South African Constitution's defence of sexual dissidents. These include, amongst others, The National House of Traditional Leaders (NHTL) and the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa) (Conway-Smith, 2012; Gevisser, 1995; Mkhize, 2008:102; Reddy, 2010; Rossouw, 2012), African National Congress (ANC) members as well as South African representatives at the United Nations, who have displayed behaviour which clearly juxtaposes the legal protection afforded to gay and lesbian individuals.

Members of Contralesa and the NHTL expressed their disdain with the potential ambiguity which would potentially characterise social institutions such as family and marriage, if homosexuals would be given the right to marry and adopt children (Mkhize, 2008:103). Patekile Holomisa, African National Congress (ANC) Member of Parliament and chairperson of its constitutional review committee, expressed her disdain for homosexuality when she noted that "[t]he last time this issue [homosexuality] was discussed was about same-sex marriages. Most of the people in the caucus were opposed to it, but then Luthuli House and the leadership instructed us to vote for it", and continues that the "...great majority [of the ANC constituency]

does not want to give promotion and protection to these things”, but based on pressure from the ruling party’s changing clauses on the protection of human rights, such tension exacerbated between so-called traditional and secular views (Conway-Smith, 2012; Rossouw, 2012).

South African based LGBTQ organisations also voiced their concern about their government’s United Nations (UN) representatives’ decision to vote in favour of removing “...a reference to sexual orientation from a resolution on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions” in November 2010. As part of the United Nations General Assembly’s role in LGBTQ-rights, these representatives originally upheld an amendment presented by the UN representatives of Benin who, on behalf of the African Group, recommended a removal of the explicit reference to sexual orientation from the UN’s anti-execution resolution. This, according to the Executive Director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (quoted in OUT, 2010), “...[was and] is a dangerous and disturbing development...It essentially removes the important recognition of the particular vulnerability faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people – a recognition that is crucial”. Based on the criticism from politicians, NGOs and members of the public, the South African government later reversed their support for this amendment (cf. Rothmann, 2012).

Against this troubling background, much of South African social inquiry into homosexuality has centred on the challenges faced by those sexual minorities. Studies on civil rights and legality (Butler et al., 2003; Cock, 2003; Croucher, 2002; De Vos, 2008; Dlamini, 2006; Epprecht, 2010; Gevisser, 1995; Gevisser & Cameron, 1995; Hames, 2007; Hoad et al., 2005; Ndashe, 2010; Reddy, 2001; 2002; 2006; 2009; 2010), have mainly and, considering the given background, unsurprisingly, dominated most of these social inquiries, whereas others have sought to explore the experiences of sexual minorities in terms of identity construction in South African society (cf. Crous, 2006; Du Plessis, 1999; Elder, 2005; Gear, 2007; Gevisser & Cameron, 1995; Ochse, 2011; Reid, 2006; 2013; Smuts, 2011; Steyn & Van Zyl, 2009; Van Zyl & Steyn, 2005), the role of religiosity (Germond & De Gruchy, 1997; Potgieter, 2007; Russell, 2004) and same-sex marriage and family (Judge et al., 2008; Reddy, 2009; Steyn & Van Zyl, 2009). Universities, as social institutions, have however not been researched as extensively in South African academia, as its Western counterparts have done. Regardless of the troubling statistics in the most recent United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation report (UNESCO, 2012) on school-based homophobia, only four studies, three of which were cited above (Beyers, 2011; Butler et al., 2003; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Hames, 2007), have primarily centred on the

importance of educational courses and programmes on issues related to sex, gender and sexual orientation in secondary and tertiary education.

Multicultural beliefs and values, according to Beyers (2011:192), may act as inhibiting factors in teachers' commitment to teach on issues related to gender, sexuality and sexual health. One should always retain a reciprocally beneficial relationship indicative of respect between the differing cultures, but according to her, a shared cultural commitment to courses on the noted issues, should be facilitated in order to enlighten the broader public (Beyers, 2011:206). Butler et al. (2003:24) recommended an institutionalisation of human rights educational efforts to emphasise the importance of training teachers in South African secondary schools to attain, amongst others, more "...social justice". Francis and Msibi's (2011:170) study echoed this notion, in so far as they commented on the manner in which educational programmes on challenges faced by sexual minorities should be regarded as imperative in South African higher education. Through such initiatives, an emphasis should be placed on an intersection between, for example, race and gender to observe the country's diversity. Hames (2007) emphasised the incongruence between the perceived progressive Constitutional protection of sexual minorities in South Africa on the one hand, and the lack of sufficient restructuring of higher educational policies to curtail the marginalisation of sexual minorities on university campuses, including her focus on the University of the Western Cape, on the other.

Studies on the matter in Western academia have proven to be even more substantial with regard to its thematic foci. Research included an exploration of the conflation of gender and sexual orientation (Savage & Miller, 2011), the role of homophobia directed towards academics and students (Blackburn & McCready, 2009:222; Chang, 2005; Fox, 2007; Fox & Ore, 2010; Grace, 2006; Jagose, 1996; Petrovic, 2000; Sears, 2002; 2009; Slagle, 2007), as well as the potential for increased substance abuse amongst sexual minorities suffering from institutional or internalised homophobia (Athanasios & Larrabee, 2003; Cox et al., 2011; Goldfried, 2001; Kosciw et al., 2008; Pachankis & Goldfried, 2006; Petrovic, 2002; Silverschanz et al., 2008; Tierney, 1992; UNESCO, 2012; Waldo, 1998). Other studies have sought to explore the potential interventions on behalf of the gay and/or lesbian students courtesy of safe spaces (or zones) which provide supportive contexts for sexual minorities (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008; Evans, 2000; 2002; Fox, 2007; Fox & Ore, 2010; Goldfried, 2001; Rankin, 2005; San Diego State University, 2009; Savage & Miller, 2011; Waldo, 1997). In addition, considerations on the self-reflexive academic enterprises, on the part of the homosexually identified academic, were

also highlighted in several of the studies (Chang, 2005; Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Honeychurch, 1996; Maxey, 1999; Petrovic, 2002; Slagle, 2007; Williams, 1993).

Based on this background, the **problem statement** reads as follows:

From the foregoing background, it should be evident that academic inquiry into the experiences of sexual minorities in South African academia has mainly focused on judicial issues, basic human rights and identity construction in general, whereas the heterosexual/homosexual binary's influence on identity construction, maintenance, critique or its deconstruction within academia, has mainly gone ignored. Those South African studies which sought to posit the subject matter of homosexual identity as central theme in academia, included that of Beyers (2011), Butler et al. (2003) and Francis and Msibi (2011). Their work centred on the importance of institutionalised efforts in higher education in order to encourage training programmes on sex, sexual health and LGBTQ-issues. Hames' (2007) work mainly focused on the noted incongruence between the Constitution and the enactment (or lack thereof) of such provisions in civil society, particularly in universities. Western accounts, however, have provided a plethora of studies on varied themes ranging from the effects of homophobia on sexual minorities in secondary and tertiary education, the subsequent substance abuse, suicide or internalised homophobia which may ensue based on such homophobic acts, the potential role of safe spaces (or zones), and also the reflexive possibility social inquiry could provide for the gay or lesbian lecturer who wishes to challenge heteronormativity through "writing the queer self" in their lectures or research (cf. Grace, 2006). In focusing on several of these interrelated themes from South African and Western-based studies, the study explored how the heterosexual/homosexual binary necessitates a distinction (or non-distinction) between the personal gay identity of the male academic and student from his professionally orientated academic gay identity.

Through an inductive thematic analysis, the noted distinction (or non-distinction), manifested the **(de)professionalisation model of gay male academic identity**. If the identity were to be **(de)professionalised**, it affords the opportunity to merge the personal and professional gay identity, without reflexively deciding to refrain from 'hiding' one's homosexuality through conscious verbal or behavioural conduct. **Professionalisation**, however, entails the construction of a definite boundary between the publically visible gay male identity and the more covert and secretive form within the parameters of South African academia, in an attempt to avoid potential discrimination, prejudice or stereotypical labelling. This thematically inductive

sociological study provides an exploration of the perceived influence of the heterosexual/homosexual binary as contributing factor in distinguishing between the personal and professional sexual selves of academics.

Corresponding with the preceding problem statement, are the research questions and research objectives which guided the study.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In accordance with the foregoing problem statement, the **research question** is: ‘**How does the heterosexual/homosexual binary influence the identity construction of South African gay male academics and university students in terms of their sexual orientation?**’

Subquestions derived from the research question included: How does **rationalisation** influence the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the South African gay male academic and student?

- How does rationalisation influence the **phases** associated with gay male identity construction and/or deconstruction?
- What is the influence, if any, of “**doing**” or **using gay** in the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the gay male academic and student?
- What are the **differences and/or similarities**, if any, between gay male academics and students in terms of rationalisation?
- What is the influence, if any, of **self-reflexivity** in terms of the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the South African gay male academic and student?
 - How does self-reflexivity influence the gay male academic and student in their choice to either **remain** or ‘**come out of the closet**’ in their academic and private contexts?
 - How does self-reflexivity influence the gay male academic and student in their choice to construct different forms of **social** and/or **sexual selves** in their academic and private contexts?
 - What are the **differences and/or similarities**, if any, between gay male academics and students pertaining to their self-reflexivity?

- How does rationalisation and self-reflexivity influence the **professionalisation** or **deprofessionalisation** of the gay male academic identity on South African university campuses?

Associated with these research questions will be the corresponding **research objectives** of the study.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the formulated problem statement and research questions, the **general** and **specific research objectives** of the study included the following.

1.4.1 General research objective

In accordance with the research question, the **general research objective** was to explore the manner in which the heterosexual/homosexual binary influences the identity construction of South African gay male academics and university students in terms of their sexual orientation.

1.4.2 Specific research objectives

Specific research objectives included the following:

- To explore the influence of **rationalisation** on the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the South African gay male academic and student.
 - To explore how rationalisation may influence the **phases** associated with gay male identity construction and/or deconstruction.
 - To explore the influence of “**doing**” or **using gay** in the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the gay male academic and student.
 - To explore the **differences and/or similarities**, if any, between the gay male academic and student pertaining to rationalisation.
- To explore the influence, if any, of **self-reflexivity** on the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the South African gay male academic and student.

- To explore how self-reflexivity may influence the gay male academic and student in their choice to **remain** or '**come out of the closet**' in their academic and private contexts.
- To explore how self-reflexivity may influence the gay male academic and student in their choice to construct different forms of **social** and/or **sexual selves** in their academic and private contexts.
- To explore the **differences and/or similarities**, if any, between the gay male academic and student pertaining to their self-reflexivity.
- To explore how rationalisation and self-reflexivity influence the **professionalisation** or **deprofessionalisation** of the gay male academic identity on South African university campuses.
- To provide **recommendations** for further sociological research as well as practical initiatives in South African tertiary education, as it relates to sexual minority academics and students.

In addition to the noted background and problem statement, research questions and objectives, an overview of the research design and methodology is discussed next.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY²

The study sought to provide an answer for the general and specific research questions through an in-depth explorative sociological inquiry. This was embedded within a **qualitative research design** and facilitated through the use of the inherent principles associated with the research bases of **interpretivism** and **social constructivism**. These informed the choice of the metatheoretical paradigm of **phenomenology** and methodological features prescribed by **symbolic interactionism**. The choice of this approach centred on the fact that I wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of the participants. In addition, the choice of this design is attributed to its emphasis on a contextual and naturalistic inquiry with the researcher as intersubjective insider and the potential for thick descriptions in order to work towards qualitative transferability, credibility and confirmability (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:270-274; Creswell, 2009:175; Sarantakos, 2013:45).

² An in-depth discussion of the chosen metatheoretical, research design and research methodological procedures is provided in Chapter Four.

The study was executed through an adherence to the non-probability sampling procedures of **purposive**, **snowball** and **theoretical sampling**. The data collection methods comprised **in-depth interviews** with gay male students and gay male academics, as well as the completion of **self-administered questionnaires**. I conducted twenty two (22) semi-structured interviews over a period of six months in 2012 between July and December. These comprised fifteen (15) with self-identified gay male academics and seven (7) with gay male students. These were transcribed throughout the period. Two (2) self-administered questionnaires were completed by gay male academics, whereas seventeen (17) students opted for this method.

The findings were critically explicated through the use of an **inductive thematic analysis**. The themes, reworked into the questions included as part of the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, were informed by the general theoretical foci provided in Chapter Two, as well as the specific focus on the experiences of homosexually identified academics and students in tertiary education, in Chapter Three. Specific subthemes ranged from a definition for gay identity, a choice between individualisation or collectiveness, the private persona of the gay male and gay male stereotypes, to the symbolism of ‘the closet’ and the subthemes associated with homosexual individuals in university contexts, including discrimination, safety, the nature of collegiality (or peer-relationships) and the inclusion of homosexual themes into the mainstream curricula of tertiary education. The analysis of the transcripts and completed self-administered questionnaires was informed by **open** and **selective coding**. The first was used in order to identify the “...first-order concepts” which comprised the narratives of the academics and students (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:373). The latter provided an additional delineation of the core category (the (de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity) by relating it to other subcategories or themes associated with the research objectives of the study, including the rationalisation thesis, self-reflexivity and the potential of reinforcing or deconstruction of the heterosexual/homosexual binary in South African academia (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:501; Sarantakos, 2013:373-374).

Given the sensitivity of the subject matter, due care had to be taken in terms of the ethical standards of the study. Participants could decide as to whether they wished to undergo the in-depth interview or complete a questionnaire (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:521), through the adherence to the principle of **voluntary participation**. Both the interview schedule and questionnaire were accompanied by a written **Informed Consent Statement**, which gave an overview of the nature of the study, the objectives of the study, the procedures to be used as

well as the rights of the participant (cf. O'Leary, 2010:41). In addition to this, I also observed the importance of **anonymity**, **privacy** and **confidentiality** (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:523; Neuman, 2003:124; O'Leary, 2010:41).

1.6 CONCLUSION

The introductory chapter provided the central themes, problem statement, research questions and corresponding objectives as well as an overview of the metatheory, research design and methodology which guided the study. Based on the contentious nature of homosexuality in African and South African contexts, as researcher I explored the manner in which gay male academics and students construct, possibly 'synthesise' and link their personal social and sexual identities with those portrayed in their professional contexts, hence the **(de)professionalisation of the gay male identity**. In order to do this, the chapters which follow establish an amalgam between the theoretical contemplation of debates on gay male identity and its corresponding empirical counterpart as exhibited in the plethora of diverse experiences of supposed sexual minorities in academia.

The study's **central theoretical argument**, informed by the work of George Herbert Mead (1962) and Erving Goffman (1971), frames an in-depth discussion on a cyclical theoretical movement of sorts in **Chapter Two**. This is complemented by a focus on a non-categorised depiction of same-sex behaviour and emotion as an uninhibited and socially sanctioned social phenomenon on international level. This is complemented by the introduction of "the homosexual" (Foucault, 1978) by medical practitioners, the "ethnic model" (Epstein, 1998) by proponents of lesbian and gay studies, and a deconstruction of homogenised and essentialist models by queer theorists. The (potential) contributions of sociology underlie much of the discussion. **Chapter Three** continues along this line of thought by introducing the reader to empirical studies on lived experiences of gay male academics and students on international and South African level. Focus is placed on the current state of affairs pertaining to discrimination and prejudice, on the one hand, and additionally, on the other hand, the role of so-called safe(r) zones to safeguard sexual minorities is also contemplated. This was done in order to contemplate whether these academics and students opt to either assimilate or transgress the potentially heteronormative context.

Chapter Four outlines the particular qualitative research design and corresponding methods of in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires as instruments in providing "thick

descriptions” (Geertz, 1973). Embedded in the metatheoretical paradigm of phenomenology and the methodological principles of symbolic interactionism, I consider my personal self-reflexivity as self-identified gay male academic as feasible in this particular study. As with any scientific study, a demarcation of the ontological and epistemological considerations, units of analysis and the importance of ethical considerations, complement the content of chapter. **Chapters Five and Six** present the findings of the study and merge them with the theoretical contributions cited in **Chapter One, Two and Three**. Finally, **Chapter Seven** provides concluding remarks on the central findings and identify specific recommendations regarded as imperative for future investigation and practical implementation.

CHAPTER TWO

GAY MALE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION ACROSS THE CONTESTED TERRAIN OF LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES AND QUEER THEORY: A THEORETICAL CONTEMPLATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“Gayness...” according to Castells (1983:157), “...is more than a sexual preference: it is an alternative way of life, characterized by the domination of expressiveness over instrumentalism and by human contact over impersonal competition”. The gay community, he continues, is representative of “...a sexual orientation, a cultural revolt, and a political ‘party’” (Castells, 1983:157). This chapter explores much of the central ideas expressed by Castells through an exemplification of the communal nature shared by this perceived sexually dissident group in mainstream late modern society. In keeping with the general and specific objectives of the study which mainly centre on **exploring the manner in which the heterosexual/homosexual binary influences the identity construction of South African gay male academics and university students in terms of their sexual orientation**. Chapter Two focuses on both essentialist and social constructionist accounts of gay lifestyles. This will be courtesy of **lesbian and gay studies** on the one hand, and a 180-degree-turn towards its postmodern adversarial counterpart **queer theory**, on the other hand. In so doing, a more individualised consideration of gay male experience will be possible.

Firstly, emphasis is on non-categorised debates on same-sex behaviour. Originally termed same-sex attraction, emotion and behaviour, historians and social scientists alike, should be cognisant of avoiding a “...perverse presentism” (cf. Halberstam, 2005a) when contemplating the origin of what we today refer to as homosexual or gay. This will become clear during the second section, in which the reader is provided with an overview of classical accounts concerning same-sex attraction in, amongst others, the Grecian city of Athens and tribal communities of sub-Saharan Africa (cf. Alvarez, 2009; Dlamini, 2006; Wallace, 2010). The eradication of the ‘same-sex’ denotation through the introduction of the medical model’s homosexual “personage” (Foucault, 1978:43), will serve as explication of the sources of contemporary binary logics. In constructing such an ‘other’, provision is made for further elaboration on features, attitudes and conceptualisations and needs for such a “...species” (cf. Foucault, 1978:43).

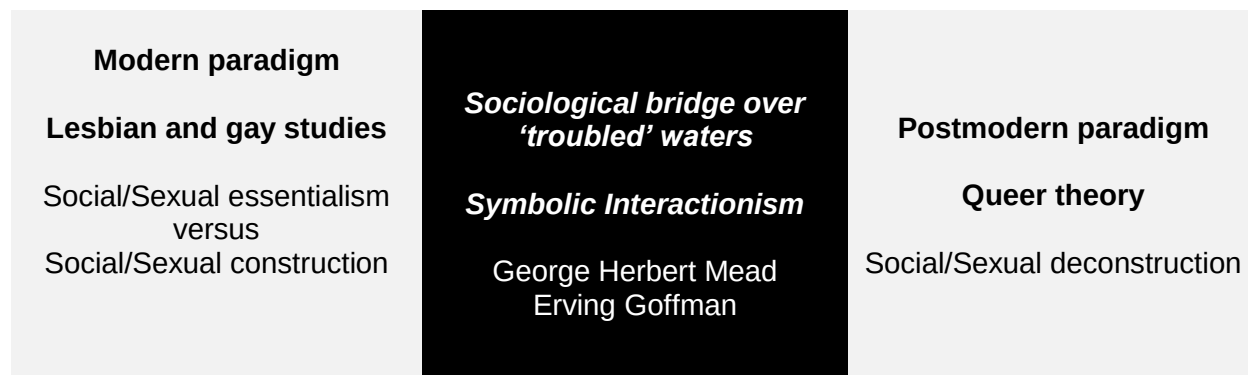
This manifests the seemingly incongruent relationship embedded in the differing strands of the modern-based theoretical paradigm of lesbian and gay studies. Constituted originally by an assimilationist and essentialist characterisation, homophile and later lesbian and gay liberationist movements attempted to create a communal sense of self through education and political provocation, respectively (Jagose, 1996:21). In so doing, homogenised depictions of gay life emerged, which culminated in public and private spaces (Abraham, 2009; Altman, 1982; Castells, 1983; 2004; D'Emilio, 1983; Valentine, 2002). Because of critique directed towards the proponents of such debates, the age of social constructionism emerged in the early 1970s, particularly in the United States, of which its proponents wanted to provide an academic discussion which emphasises the role of external social stimuli and influences on the creation of gay men. At the forefront of this academic movement was Mary McIntosh (1968), whose “homosexual role” has come to be an indefatigable source for initial and current studies on particularly homosexual men. Foucault (1978), Gagnon and Simon (1967a; 1967b; 1973) and Weeks (1977; 1996; 1998), amongst others, followed suit. Much of this according to Epstein (1998), resulted in the exacerbation of the exotification (Seidman, 1996:7), “...racialisation” (Forth, 2008:151), polarisation (cf. Fuss, 1991) and eventual ethnic configuration (Epstein, 1998) of the gay male as sexual dissident. Practical examples from Anglo-American, European and South African contexts, will serve as contextualisation for the theoretical arguments and debates.

The “...contested terrain” (Lovaas et al., 2007) of this homogenised ethnic dissident “personage” (Foucault, 1978:43) and diverse, plural and uniquely celebrated ‘queer’ sexual being, emerged in the early 1990s, primarily because of Teresa de Lauretis (1991). She, alongside others, including Judith Butler (1990; 1993) and Eve Sedgwick (1993; 2008), stressed the necessity for the creation of theoretical transcendence of assimilationist debates and an emphasis on rebellion against the taken-for-granted stability of a hegemonic and patriarchal-based heterosexuality. A queer theoretical interrogative deconstructive emphasis, which views gay identities as plural, individualistic and autonomous, is considered to underscore the tension between modern and postmodern paradigms on homosexuality. In this last section of the chapter, an attempt at defining the ‘indefinable’ queer theory is complemented by an emphasis of its central themes – these being reclaiming the concept ‘queer’, a denaturalisation of heterosexuality, the symbolically laden secretive space of ‘the closet’ and queer theories’ anti-assimilationist agenda.

In order to provide a sociological theoretical contextualisation for divergent modern and postmodern paradigms of lesbian and gay studies and queer theory respectively, the imperative contributions of micro sociological sociologists, George Herbert Mead (1962) and Erving Goffman (1971) are discussed in the subsection to follow and, in addition, have been integrated throughout the chapter. Both these theorists provided an in-depth discussion and demarcation of the components, processes and phases associated with an individual's social self. Here, emphasis is placed on their respective foci on the 'performative' qualities of the sexual self, whereby individuals are afforded the opportunity to dramatise their divergent yet analogous selves of the 'I' and 'me' (Mead, 1962) and dramaturgical '*front*' staged performance to their audience (Goffman, 1971) in a gendered and sexualised context. This provides the basis on which the chapter charts the initial emergence of same-sex attraction and behaviour up to their current configuration.

The following serves as metatheoretical model with sociology as contextualised "bridge" (cf. Rothmann, 2012; Slagle, 2007) between lesbian and gay studies and queer theory:

Figure 1: A metatheoretical model for sociology as bridge between modern and postmodern paradigms



This subsection to follow underscores the role of the micro sociological theoretical approach of symbolic interactionism as the potential "bridge over troubled waters" (cf. Rothmann, 2012) between the noted limitations of the essentialist and ethnic depictions of homosexuality and its postmodern 'queer' counterpart. It provides a general discussion of the invaluable contributions of George Herbert Mead (1962) and Erving Goffman (1971) on the social construction of the self. Although it is primarily associated, and per implication predominantly embedded in a modern micro-theoretical tradition, courtesy of, amongst others, the Chicago School (cf. Ritzer, 2012), the concurrent discussion and parallel linkage of this with the modern and postmodern

paradigms of lesbian and gay studies and queer theory, will serve to highlight the undeniable reciprocal influence symbolic interactionism affords to the supposed “contested terrain” (cf. Lovaas et al., 2007) of the mutually exclusive theoretical traditions of sexual construction (modern) and sexual deconstruction (postmodern) based on binary logic (cf. Plummer, 2003).

2.2 THE WORK OF MEAD AND GOFFMAN: THE CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT³

In order to link the two seemingly juxtaposed worlds of lesbian and gay studies, as modern theoretical paradigm, with that of its postmodern counterpart, queer theory, the central theoretical argument will be embedded in the microsociological paradigm of symbolic interactionism, and the work of Mead (1962) and Goffman (1971), in particular.

2.2.1 A link between the individual and the social

As precursor to a coherent exploration and demarcation of social constructivist accounts of gay identity construction, through an allocation of roles and rationalised resources of sexual selfhood (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010), the contributions of two social scientists on the ‘social self’, will be placed at the centre of this discussion, these being Mead and Goffman. In contemplating the potential amalgam between sociology and lesbian and gay studies, Plummer (1975; 1992; 1996; 1998a; 1998b; 2003) has judiciously demarcated the role of symbolic interactionism as pre-eminent theory to steer sociological discourse towards inclusion of homosexuality in its empirical and theoretical studies. In keeping with the title and corresponding objectives of the study, this particular section will focus primarily on the manner in which the newly adopted category of “the homosexual” (cf. Foucault, 1978) found representation in earlier social science accounts.

Plummer (1996:66) argues that homosexuality is constructed through a series of interactive social phenomena in an intersubjective world. In his seminal work, *Sexual Stigma*, Plummer (1975:11) builds on the premise of the principles which inform symbolic interactionism by identifying three foci of interactionism in social science – the world as subjective reality, as a process, and as an interactive experience (cf. Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962). Relating to the first, he explains the manner in which the physiological capacities and needs of individuals are

³ It should be noted at the outset that regardless of the use of the male pronoun in this particular subsection in referring to the individual social actor, the terminology is not meant to be interpreted as being gender biased in any way.

complemented by an additional symbolic level comprised of "...language, symbols and gestures [which] enables him to attach meanings to objects and actions in everyday life, to interpret the world around him, and to daily create social life" (Plummer, 1975:11). He differentiates between so-called 'objects' and 'actions' which emerge through such a symbolic endeavour. In terms of 'objects', he notes that through a process of interpretation and definition, objects are created based on the meanings individuals ascribe to them (cf. Mead, 1962). This meaning may influence 'action', thus a form of behaviour laden with subjective meaning. Much of the contributions of the symbolic interactionist is thus associated with the contributions of the phenomenological sociologist who basically protests against the notion of a world characterised by "...absolute, inviolable meanings" (Plummer, 1975:12; cf. Schütz, 1932). The individual rather experiences an "...ongoing struggle to make his life meaningful" (Plummer, 1975:12). The second focus of the interactionist is the world as a process, whereby individuals constantly create and modify meanings associated with the social world, which according to Plummer (1975:13) is always in a "...state of flux". Much of this will be demarcated based on the contributions of Mead (1962) on the 'breakage' of the coherent social self-courtesy of its constituent phases of the 'I' and 'me', and Goffman's (1971) view of individuals as dramatic performers on a stage, whose performances should mostly be 'moulded' in such a way, as to have it reflect the attitudes and expectations of the broader social context (cf. Blumer, 1969). The third of the three foci centres on the world as interaction which primarily posits that no individual identity can be considered in isolation, i.e. removed from other social actors or influences within the broader social system (Plummer, 1975:17).

Ritzer (2012:387) quotes the contributions of Sheldon Stryker (1980:52) who, in adhering to the basic premises of Mead's work, sought to establish a definite link between the individual and society, as reciprocal influential components. He noted that, through interaction, the "...social structure operates to constrain the conceptions of self, the definitions of the situation, and the behavioral opportunities and repertoires that bind and guide the interaction that takes place". The so-called "...intellectual sources" (Stryker, 1980:53) of symbolic interactionism necessitate this linkage between the social person and the social structure within which he/she is embedded, for without such cognisance, social interpretation would be deemed imperfect. He developed several principles to reflect his objective, which serves as introduction to the discussion on Mead (1962) and Goffman (1971) to follow. His work mainly centred on the importance individual social actors ascribe to the 'naming' of material and non-material components of the social world, which facilitates the creation of certain roles each will occupy.

In so doing, individuals are given the opportunity to better understand the interpersonal, group or broader social context of which they form part (Ritzer, 2012:387; Stryker, 1980:53-55). Although he discusses the role of larger structures, conceptualised as “organized patterns of behavior” (Stryker, 1980:54), these mainly only provide a framework in which individuals name, organise and allocate individuals pertaining to their respective roles and statuses which translates to degrees of freedom or restriction. This restriction is not only imposed by external stimuli or influences, but also by the individual performer himself, who may seek to gain a “...self-designated” and “...internalized expectation” label to which he may conform. As overarching theme to his principles, Stryker (1980:54) emphasises the effect of these social conceptualisations and categorisations on future possibilities for social change, which may exemplify “...possibilities of interaction” (Stryker, 1980:55).

Such changes are likely to be facilitated through reconfigured attitudes, thoughts and behaviours on sexual orientation, not necessarily evident in even the current late modern society.

2.2.2 The self as self-consciously constructed dramatic performance: The contributions of Mead and Goffman

In applying Mead’s work on the ‘self’ to sexuality, Plummer (1975:17) notes, “[a]ny human activity involves an individual not only intentionally initiating action, but also imaginatively reconstructing the anticipated responses of others to that action”. This applies to Lemert’s (1967) reference to primary and secondary deviance. Elaborating on the use of the ‘I’ and ‘me’ in an individual’s daily interaction with others, the former denoting the uninhibited and ‘free’ self and the latter the confirmative component, he argues that it “...is the existence of the ‘self’ which provides a constant link between the individual and the society, and which serves as the basic unit of interaction analysis. To sum up and express the idea crudely: ‘You’re never alone with a self’” (Plummer, 1975:17).

According to Mead (1962:136), an individual’s ‘self’ is “...object to itself”, thus a capability afforded to an individual to be reflexive and, per implication, be both the subject and object of this reflexive endeavour. By distinguishing between a conscious and self-conscious self, Mead argues that a social actor is constructed through an awareness of “...intense action, memories and anticipations” (Mead, 1962:137). This in turn provides individuals with the opportunity to merge their experiences based on outside activity with internal reflection through “...memory

and imagination” (Mead, 1962:137) and establish an amalgam between internal and external worlds. In so doing, the social actor moves outside of himself to reflect on his/her perception of social reality through “...the process of social conduct or activity in which the given person or individual is implicated” (Mead, 1962:138). Through consciousness, the individual takes a somewhat impersonal, objective and rationally position about himself. He

...[e]xperiences himself as such, not directly, but only indirectly, from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs....he first becomes an object to himself just as other individuals are objects to him or in his experience; and he becomes an object to himself only by taking the attitudes of other individuals toward himself within a social environment or context of experience and behavior in which both he and they are involved (Mead, 1962:138).

This process is facilitated through a communicative encounter with these other individuals in so far as you are given the opportunity through the use of symbols, to consciously take note of what you say and the manner in which others react to you. Symbols afford individuals the opportunity to respond to each other based on the meaning ascribed to the gestures (Ritzer, 2012:544; Wallace & Wolf, 1980:236), and because of this, both the gestures and their corresponding meanings are communicated amongst members of a social group (Ritzer, 2012:544). It is through these so-called ‘vocal gestures’, exhibited during human interaction, that “...we hear ourselves just as others do. One result is that the vocal gesture can affect the speaker in much the same way that it affects the listeners...we are far better able to stop ourselves in vocal gestures than we are able to do in physical ones” (Ritzer, 2012:545).

These ‘others’ manifest what Mead refers to as a “...generalised other”, thus, not only a social group or community necessarily, but rather an inclination towards certain social issues or institutions based on their perceptions or attitudes, which may be generalised to the culture at large. Ritzer (2012:364) underscores this point, since individuals deem it necessary to be part of a specific community in order for them to develop a coherent sense of self. In so doing, the individual progresses from what Mead (1962) terms as the “...play stage”, during which children are socialised into specific roles through play, towards the “...game stage”, where the social actor takes on a role prescribed by and associated with everyone else within a given group or

community (cf. Ritzer, 2012:364). The “...game stage” provides the child the opportunity to take on attitudes and portray so-called “...discrete others”, thus prototypes of certain individuals or groups, which they do not necessarily relate to. In contrast, the “game stage” posits the individual in a definite, meaningful and reciprocal relationship to others with whom he/she has to identify and interact, or impress (Ritzer, 2012:364). Devoid of an “...organized whole” during the “play stage”, children differ from the adult social actor in so far as the latter manifests “...definite personalities” (Ritzer, 2012:364) during the “game stage”, through the provision of an intricate organisation of attitudes, expectations and values to fully comprehend what actions will be necessitated in certain groups which further aid an individual in better understanding their own actions in relation to those of others (Mendelsohn, 1994:152). By taking on the attitudes of the generalised other, the social actor’s actions are influenced all the more by their chosen social group, a thought prioritised by Mead in the importance he ascribes to the influence of the social (Ritzer, 2012:365). Social actors not only take into account the views and perceptions of others with whom they interact, but should rather also be cognisant of the spoken or unspoken rules that govern thoughts and behaviour within particular social groups or communities, which through such an interpretation, becomes the generalised other (Mead, 1962:154). Only by taking these inherent characteristics, principles and processes into account, will the “...fullest development of that individual’s self” (Mead, 1962:155) become a reality, for

...[o]nly in so far he takes the attitudes of the organized social group to which he belongs toward the organized, co-operative social activity or set of such activities in which that group as such is engaged, does he develop a complete self or possesses the sort of complete self he has developed (Mead, 1962:155).

The structure of the social ‘self’ is, as such, dependent on our reflections on social structures and processes within which we are engaged. Individuals are thus very aware and constantly interpret the usage of symbols within social groups or communities, since these social settings “...tacitly agree...[on what symbols] should signify” (Mendelsohn, 1994:149). Influenced to a great extent by the work of Mead, one of the most influential contributors in studies on ‘the self’ is Erving Goffman. Building on Mead’s in-depth demarcation of the mutually reinforcing relationship between an individual’s ‘I’ and ‘me’, Goffman (1971:30) makes the assertion that individuals present a “...‘socialized’, moulded, and modified” performance to others, in order to conform to societal expectations. He argues that this discrepancy arises based on the fact that

there are specific acts individuals wish to perform spontaneously but cannot, based on societal prescriptions and restrictions (Goffman, 1971:30; Ritzer, 2012:375). Regardless of Judith Butler's (1990; 1993) later reference to performativity, it was Goffman's (1971) work in particular which provided the basis for discussions on the dramatic performances of social actors in their everyday life, akin to that of scripted performances on a stage (Jackson & Scott, 2010; Manning & Smith, 2010:53). The self, according to Goffman (1971:223) is

...a performed character...not an organic thing that has a specific location...it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented...In analysing the self then we are drawn from its possessor, from the person who will profit or lose most by it, for he and his body merely provide the peg on which something of collaborative manufacture will be hung for a time. And the means of producing and maintain selves do not reside inside the peg; in fact these means are often bolted down in social establishments.

According to Goffman (1971), the self is not an autonomous construction on the part of the social actor, but rather something that is produced through a constant interaction between the actor and his/her social environment. His main argument underscores the fact that power is afforded to the actor to attempt a secure and stable self through presenting certain images and performances as expected by his/her audience. His work is thus in accordance with Mead's (1962:135) reference to the way in which an individual's conception of himself results as part of a process in which he enters into social relations with others who provide him with a multitude of experiences and activities, which shapes his understanding of himself. As such, the actor seeks to *express* himself in order to *impress* the audience through what he explicitly expresses and more implicitly *gives off*. Both forms of messages may, however, communicate misinformation through either deceit and/or feigning. By doing this, he will be able to manage possible 'disruptions' in his performances. This is done through what he terms, 'impression management' (Goffman, 1971:183).

He, like Mead, suggests that a social actor, as performer, "...must act with expressive responsibility, since many minor, inadvertent acts happen to be well designed to convey impressions inappropriate at the time" (Goffman, 1971:183). In mirroring the work of Mead in a way, Goffman (1971:15) conceptualised the social self as dramatic performance between a social actor and his audience. According to him, "...the individual offers his performance and

puts on his show 'for the benefit of other people'". In many ways, what was of importance to him, was an investigation into the degree to which the social performer himself, also 'buys' into his own projected image of reality, something which in most of the cases, was evident in his social interactions (Goffman, 1971:15; Ritzer, 2012:376). Therefore, the social actor in fact, through an attitude of suspicion of his audience, deceives, misdirects or manipulates others in order to present a self which will most likely be accepted by others (Manning & Smith, 2010:52).

This supposed freedom for a performative 'negotiation', is demarcated in the subsections to follow, courtesy of the contributions of, amongst others, Gagnon and Simon's (1973) "doing sex", Johnson's (2009) "use of gender", West and Zimmerman's (2002) "doing gender" and Dowsett et al.'s (2008) "doing gay". All of these point to the fact that much of reality is neatly ordered and organised within the social and sexual relations of heteronormativity (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993). Mead's (1962) reference to the constant struggle between the self's dynamic and true 'I' and conforming 'me' and Goffman's (1971:64) reference to a social actor's need to establish a congruence between what he performs and what his audience expects is, as such, of interest when considering the manner in which one 'performs' (cf. Butler, 1990; Elliot, 2009:218) one's gender. In attempting to retain the stability of heterosexual manliness, a heterosexual and/or gay male's inherent nature is "...no longer understood as the brutish observe of culture but a rule-governed realm in its own right" (Jackson & Scott, 2010:60). Much of this is accounted for by Ingraham (2002). The aptly titled paper, *Heterosexuality: It's Just Not Natural!* (Ingraham, 2002), reiterates the social construction of heterosexuality and underscores Stein and Plummer's (1996) argument which posits heterosexuality as determinant sexual formation and not the taken-for-granted ideal form of sexual orientation in society. She cites the repetition of several rituals and rules (cf. Elliot, 2009:218) which afford heterosexuality the status of "...highly structured arrangement" (Ingraham, 2002:74). These rituals include decisions on who will ask someone out on a date, pay for it, initiate the first kiss and sexual encounter, or even propose marriage. We are in fact, as discussed in Oakley's (1974) work, socialised in knowing how to manage these issues in our daily lives, for "...women were not born with a wedding gown gene or neo-natal craving for a diamond engagement ring!" (Ingraham, 2002:74).

Based on the possible projected acceptance or rejection of an individual's views or behaviour within such a rigidly structured social and sexual world, as communicated to members of particular social contexts, one may need to divide the perceived unified self into divergent components (Mead, 1962). Such a unified self is projected to a broader community with whom

most of society associates or is acquainted with, which in certain circumstances may manifest a master status for individuals. This implies that one will project a 'different self' in 'different contexts', with 'different individuals', to attempt a universal understanding and experience of the views and actions expressed towards significant others (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010:128-129). As Mead (1962:142) asserts, "...[i]t is the social process itself that is responsible for the appearance of the self; it is not there as a self apart from this type of experience". In other words, based on a heightened sense of self-reflexivity (or as Mead (1962) terms it, "...reflexiveness"), the individual determines whether his/her words will be afforded an ideal response within a given social setting. Such individuals are afforded the distinctive characteristic to the individual as being "...sincere", in contrast with those who purposefully seek to mystify and manipulate their audiences through a "...cynical" and less than truthful performance (Goffman, 1971:15). Since such individuals may be regarded as being "...professionally dis-involved", they may experience "...unprofessional pleasures from [their] masquerade[s], experiencing a kind of gleeful spiritual aggression from the fact that [they] can toy at will with something [their] audience may take seriously" (Goffman, 1971:15-16).

Several researchers have argued that Mead's introduction and distinction between the 'I' and 'me', as objects and processes of the self, have not only been cited frequently by others, but also misrepresented in several of these practical applications (Davidson, 2012:28; Jackson & Scott, 2010:125; Ritzer, 2012:366). In many of these, the 'I' takes on a primitive, presocial configuration, whereas the 'me', as the "...'object'" part, is regarded as the omnipresent 'social' component which defines much of the self, or where both are presented as 'things,' and not processes, as intended by Mead. He distinguished between 'things' and 'objects,' the former denoting a prior existence to a person's actions, and the latter seen as existent only as result of the actions of individuals (Mendelsohn, 1994:153). In contrast, Crossley (2001, quoted in Jackson & Scott, 2010:125) attributes the intended interdependent and reciprocal relationship between the two when he refutes a spatial component to this interdependent and reciprocal relationship, but rather deems it "...a temporal and reflexive self-relationship of an agent who chases its own shadow". He conceptualises these two as both 'objects' and 'processes'. Pertaining to his view of it as objects, the 'I', is regarded as the "...immediate...incalculable, unpredictable, and creative aspect of the self", of which the form is not known in advance, thus the "...'subject' phase of the process" (Mendelsohn, 1994:153). It implies a transcendence of the social self by expressing their unique individuality, originality or thirst for social change (Mead, 1962; Mendelsohn, 1994:154).

The 'me,' as object, is regarded as conveying the "...organized set of attitudes of others which one himself assumes" in full awareness as "...conventional, habitual individual" (Mead, 1962:175,197) which conforms to a "generalised other". It is thus that part of the social self which is 'learned' from the generalised other based on an implicit (and explicit) need to belong to a social group or the community at large (Mead, 1962; Mendelsohn, 1994:154). Much of the 'me' is exhibited to observers on the '*front*' stage on which the dramatic actor, whether sincere or cynical, performs in a "...fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe" (Goffman, 1971:19) him. Such a stage is comprised of a *setting* and *personal front*. The setting, in geographical terms, is considered mostly fixed, necessitating the performer to engage in his dramatisation upon entering the setting and ceasing as soon as he leaves. Only in certain exceptional circumstances, is the setting afforded movement from one to another location (Goffman, 1971:19). He cites funeral and 'dream-like' processions of monarchs as evident examples. In such cases, however, these "...worthies are to be distinguished, of course, from quite profane performers of the peddler class who move their place of work between performances, often being forced to do so...[resulting in] a ruler [being] too sacred, a peddler to profane" (Goffman, 1971:20).

The "personal front" refers to those expressive attributes of the social actor, which forms an inherent part of his personage. Examples include material aspects such as clothing, facial expressions, posture, speech patterns, race, age and sex, amongst others. In terms of sex and race for example, elements of the "personal front" may be fixed, whereas others such as clothing can be changed at will (Goffman, 1971:21). It is divided into *appearance* and *manner*. *Appearance*, as such, informs the observers of the social actor's current social statuses in both formal and recreational settings, as well as the particular place in which he finds himself during a certain stage, phase or cycle of his life. The objective of *manner*, according to Goffman (1971:21), is to "warn" observers of the role a dramatic performer may be expected to portray in an upcoming situation, through an emphasis on an 'emotional-like' manner, whether he is "...haughty,...[or] meek, apologetic". One would expect congruence between the appearance and manner of a specific performer, since a heightened status would surely manifest an assertiveness of sorts, but in some circumstances one may find that an individual of "...higher estate...is unexpectedly egalitarian, [or when] dressed in the garments of a high position presents himself to an individual of even higher status" (Goffman, 1971:22). As such, a

contradictory relationship between what one perceives a performance will be, and its eventual result, may be at the order of the day.

Such performances imply and involve, that a 'mask' is worn by the individual in order to attain the so-called "...role we are striving to live up to – this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be" (Goffman, 1971:17), thus achieving a dramatic realisation. But in a sense, this mask serves to reflect the self we want others to perceive as the 'real you', but at the same time it may obscure the 'real' and 'true' self, since you are, as noted by Goffman (1971:17), portraying a role to avoid public identification which may result in discrimination, intolerance or rejection, if the mask had to be removed. In these circumstances, a cynical dramatic performer's purposeful disillusionment of his audience may serve to preserve the greater good for both himself, which may subsequently have a 'spill-over' effect of sorts, and the social audience, whether a social group or larger community (Goffman, 1971:16). This, according to Jackson and Scott (2010:125), in their application of Mead's work to the study of sexuality in late modern society, is of particular value to marginalised groups in a seemingly patriarchal and heterosexist society. Several generalised others characterise the divergent attitudes, interests and eventual actions of individuals, and per implication emphasise the corresponding existence of multiple selves as well (Ritzer, 2012:366). Reflexiveness cannot necessarily be interpreted as only a redemptive experience (Jackson & Scott, 2010:128). This part of the self, as such, "...exist[s] only for the self in relationship to itself", as it is during these situations that an individual may opt for such a 'breakage' of the social self into the 'I' and 'me'-components. They do this based on their knowledge that the "...set of social reactions" with which they are confronted, may display varying degrees of hostility (Mead, 1962:144). It is not certain individuals who will necessarily influence their decision to 'break-up' their coherent selves, but rather their understanding of the perceived homogeneous perceptions of a "generalised other" in society.

Positing the self as a *social process*, it further implies an 'operation' in a way, since both parts of the process are dependent on the other to fully conceptualise and construct a coherent social self. In "chasing its shadow", the 'I' of the social self, within a specific social context, will attempt to spontaneously move to exhibit an immediate response based on a meaningful gesture exhibited by others with whom an individual interacts. The 'me', however, as second phase of this project, will consider the manner in which the 'I' may be interpreted and received by the generalised other. As such, it may seek to inhibit or curtail the possible inherent spontaneity of the 'I' through reflexive conduct (Mendelsohn, 1994:153; Ritzer, 2012:366-367). In other

instances the 'me' may even recognise the necessity to in fact exhibit the 'I' and self-consciously "...organize and direct its activities" (Mendelsohn, 1994:153). He does this to conform to what the generalised other presumes to be moral, normative and expected (Goffman, 1971:31; Mead, 1962). In doing this, an 'idealization' (Goffman, 1971:30) is constituted, through which an individual performance is "...socialized, molded, and modified" according to the expectations of the society at large. As such, the social and sexual self, are only formed and mobilised based on a predetermined social, sexual and gendered configuration set out by those who seek to retain power in such an interactive encounter (Butler, 2013:19). This tends to emphasise the existent discrepancy between an individual's more personal self, in relation to his "...socialized" self, in so far as he is not given the freedom to express his moods, energies and varied impulses in given situations, since a performance requires a stable demeanour of sorts (Goffman, 1971:49). It is imperative that such a performer and whoever serves as example to emulate (a director in a sense), be fully aware of the scripted necessity of his performance, in order for the "...expression given off" to be congruent with the desired expectations of his audience of observers (Goffman, 1971:64).

The 'I' arises as response to such an adherence to predetermined standards, and provides a much needed dynamic undertone to Mead and, per implication, Goffman's work, in so far as it represents "...freedom...initiative...a self-conscious fashion" (Mead, 1962:177) for individuals to initiate critique and change within a given generalised other when necessitated. An individual therefore does not always merely passively conform to society or its institutional order. In many respects the social actor has to transcend interpersonal communicative encounters with his peers on societal level, and "...speak with the voice of reason to himself" (Mead, 1962:165) on a higher level of communicative acts. This transpires based on, what Mead (1962:165) coined the 'subjective,' the so-called internal, private and secretive part of an individual's inner consciousness, to which only he has access and what he deems as the second phase in constructing the self – the first being formation during communicative encounters with others. Much of the 'subjective' is embedded within these secretive inner reflections on past experiences and future possibilities (Jackson & Scott, 2010:125; Mead, 1962:168). Through this internal communication, individuals are not "bound" to the community of which they form part or the members whom they interact with on a daily basis. Internally subjective reflections in fact challenge us to initiate change or protestation if the situation requires it, merely because we might be able "...to do that intelligibly because we can think" (Mead, 1962:168). Blumer

(1969:68) underscores Mead's argument through his discussion of "...self-indications", which each individual allows himself during interactions with a social world. Consider his explication:

...Self-indication is a moving communicative process in which the individual notes things, assesses them, gives them a meaning, and decides to act on the basis of the meaning. The human being stands over against the world, or against 'alters,' with such a process...the process...cannot be subsumed under the forces, whether from the outside or inside, which are presumed to play upon the individual to produce his behavior. Environmental pressures, external stimuli, organic drives, wishes, attitudes, feelings, ideas, and their like do not cover or explain the process of self-indication. The process...stands over against them in that the individual points out to himself and interprets the appearance or expression of such things, noting, a given social demand that is made on him...able to act back against them, accepting them, rejecting them, or transforming them in accordance with how he defines or interprets them (Blumer, 1969:68).

In affording the individual such social agency, it may lead to what Goffman (1963:185) termed as "creating a scene". He attributes its apt formulation to the fact that the individual performer may want to create this new scene, separate from Mead's "...generalised other", "...to destroy or seriously threaten the polite appearance of consensus, and while he may not act simply in order to create such dissonance, he acts with the knowledge that this kind of dissonance is likely to result" (Goffman, 1963:185). The self is thus conceptualised as an ongoing endeavour, based on reflexivity which did not necessarily only result based on modernisation and a heightened degree of individualisation in modern society (cf. Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Davidson, 2012:28; D'Emilio, 1983; Giddens, 1992; Jackson & Scott, 2010:124), but also through Mead's (1962) understanding of it as *being* social *within* the social (Blumer, 1969:67-68; Ritzer, 2012). They do however, form a unified whole as part of the self. Although the 'me' necessitates some degree of predictability or stability in terms of the form the 'I' might take when called upon, such a certainty is not necessarily a given. Mead (1962:178) explicates this incongruent relationship at length:

...They are separated and yet they belong together. The separation of the 'I' and the 'me' is not fictitious. They are not identical, for, as I have said, the 'I'

is something that is never entirely calculable. The 'me' does call for a certain sort of an 'I' in so far as we meet the obligations that are given in conduct itself, but the 'I' is always something different from what the situation itself calls for....The 'I' both calls out the 'me' and responds to it. Taken together they constitute a personality as it appears in social experience. The self is essentially a social process going on with these two distinguishable phases.

As such, through references to our memory, we are able to fully comprehend the indefatigable influence of the reciprocation between these two agents, which constantly 'chase each other' to constitute a coherent self. Although the 'me' represents the organised, expected and most widely acceptable response held by an individual performer's audience or observers, it is the 'I' which unquestionably constitute the 'me,' since the "...I' of this moment is present in the 'me' of the next moment" (Mead, 1962). Conceptualised as a so-called "historical figure" (Mead, 1962), individuals are given the opportunity to reflect on this fleeting and irrational component of their social selves through memory. In taking the expectations of the generalised others into account, the 'I' reacts to it, by conversely constructing an organised set of responses akin to what might be expected, and as result, the 'me' emerges (Jackson & Scott, 2010:125).

In keeping with the preceding subsection on Goffman and Mead, what follows is an in-depth demarcation of the three broader strands of understanding homosexual identity conceptualisation, construction and subsequently synthesis (cf. Cass, 1979), dependent on an ever dynamic social setting which may challenge essentialist and assimilationist, constructionist and linear as well as deconstructionist and queer accounts of gay male identities. These include, **firstly**, a focus on **sexual orientation as non-categorised emotion and behaviour**, **secondly**, the **essentialist and ethnic categorisation of gay male identity**, and **thirdly**, the role of **queer theory as deconstructionist** conceptualisation of homosexuality. The discussion commences with an overview of a precategorical understanding of same-sex, rather than homosexual, behaviour in society.

2.3 LESBIAN AND GAY STUDIES ON EMOTION, BEHAVIOUR AND CATEGORISATION

Adam (2002:16) notes that the need for historians and academics to record the documented history of homoerotic desire has been quite extensive. Homosexuality, or what one could term, "...same-sex practices, desires, and intimacies" (Meem et al., 2010:11), have existed across several centuries and within many diverse and cultural divergent societies. An inclusion of this

particular subsection serves a dual purpose. Firstly, to provide the reader with an overview of the earliest records and examples associated with, what we would today term 'homosexuality'. Secondly, such an overview not only provides an in-depth historical account of homosexuality, since several others have done so in great detail (Aldrich, 2010; Bray, 1995; Cocks, 2010; Meem et al., 2010), but also establishes a basis for later sections in which the differential meanings associated with same-sex attraction are conceptualised as pathological medical construct, social category and/or diverse, plural and decategorised social entity. Much of this discussion endeavours to reflect on the possible linkages between earlier understandings and such later depictions of male homosexuality through the efforts of proponents of lesbian and gay studies and queer theory. Whilst the latter two sought to either 'invent' or even 'un-invent' the categorisation of "the homosexual", earlier records on emotion, behaviour and desire, steered clear of such (de)categorisations or labels.

2.3.1 Same-sex emotion and behaviour as binary-free

One should be wary of what Halberstam (2005a:52) refers to as so-called "...perverse presentism". This involves an oversimplified, generalised, monolithic and even timeless understanding of social and sexual relationship across varied cultural, time and contextual boundaries within our current, contemporary and late modern society (Meem et al., 2010:2). In the introductory chapter to *Gay Life and Culture*, Aldrich (2010:7) emphasises this notion, when he differentiates between the celebration, reverence and mutually beneficial relationships of ancient Greece and China in the third century, in contrast with the "...panoply of same-sex behaviours, attitudes and identities" in contemporary society. Chauncey (1994:65) articulates this best when he argues that

...[t]he most striking difference between the dominant sexual culture of the early twentieth century and that of our own era is the degree to which the earlier culture permitted men to engage in sexual relations with other men, often on a regular basis, without requiring them to regard themselves – or be regarded by others – as gay.

Citing one of the first recorded histories of what one may today term as 'homosexual behaviour' in Greece, Hupperts (2010:29) believes it to be a somewhat "precarious" situation to even attempt an understanding of sexuality courtesy of records from 3 000 years ago. Greece, and in particular, the city of Athens, has been regarded as one of the most infamous accounts of

ancient histories relating to same-sex relationships. Greeks viewed their gods anthropomorphically, thus, just as vulnerable as they themselves were in terms of their sexual desires as humans. Early references in this regard include the god Zeus who was known for extramarital affairs and his pursuit of homosexual relationships, most evidently in his love for the then prince of Troy, Ganymede who was regarded as the "...fairest of all young men" (Hupperts, 2010:30). In addition to these mythological depictions, several other examples of ancient records, such as Homer's *Iliad* and Plato's *Symposium*, also serve as proof of narratives that centred on male sexual friendships (cf. Meem et al., 2010:13). The former, written in the eighth or ninth century BCE, which is probably one of the most frequently cited examples of male same-sex sexual desire, recounts the legend of the Greek warrior Achilles who withdraws from engaging in battle outside the city of Troy because of his feud with the king. His lover, Patroclus fears that Achilles may lose his honour, and as such, puts on Achilles armour and is killed in battle. Achilles retaliates and kills the Trojan warrior Hector (Meem et al., 2010:13). Although no explicit reference is made to a homosexual relationship between the men, several of the scenes depicted the "...intensity of their relationship" (Hupperts, 2010:30). In Plato's *Symposium*, regarded as one of the first sources in defense of same-sex love cited by Western thinkers, Plato's protagonist Phaedrus utters the phrase, "I know not any greater blessing to a young man who is beginning life than a virtuous lover or to the lover than a beloved youth" (quoted in Meem et al., 2010:13). Both Grecian accounts emphasise the love between an older man and his younger lover, the *erastes* and *eromenos*, respectively, engaged in *paiderastia* (the love between a man and a boy).

Favoured by the Greeks, such a relationship served a dual purpose. For the post-adolescent "beardless" boy, older men provided protection, training and social status, whereas the older lover was afforded friendship and sexual pleasure (Meem et al., 2010:13). Much of these relationships were based on the so-called "*do ut des*"-principle, thus "you do something for me, I'll do something for you", a thought echoed in Sparta, where emotional and sexual bonds between soldiers were guided by the phrase, "...to do it the Spartan way"⁴. In such relationships, the younger men were always courted by their older suitors through the presentation of gifts which included oils, flowers, meat and fruit (Hupperts, 2010:39). Such relationships were, as such, not egalitarian or negotiable in nature, since there was a differentiation between the 'penetrator' and 'penetrated', 'superordinate' and 'subordinate' and 'socially superior' and

⁴It is worth noting that this intricate relationship between younger and older soldiers was also evident during the World Wars, where male segregated communes facilitated emotional and sexual bonds (Tamagne, 2010:177).

'socially inferior' (Halperin, 1993:418). This 'pedagogic' relationship of men and boy practices were also evident in other cultures (Meem et al., 2010:14). In China, sources emerged from the Zhou dynasty during the seventh and eighth centuries BCE, which resembled the celebration of same-sex relationships along generational, class and hierarchical lines, including relationships between young and old as well as rulers and their "favourites" (Carton, 2010:303), which reinforced the *wakashu-do* ('the way of the boy') tradition. These were, according to Carton (2010:304), embedded within so-called metaphors for male bonding, including stories of the "half-bitten peach", "Long Yang and the fish" and "the cut sleeve". In Japan, the diaries of aristocrats from the Heian period (794-1185 CE) serve as examples of explicit sexual encounters between emperors and these aristocrats, as well as entertainers (dancers and actors), servants and "handsome youths" (Carton, 2010:313). Meem et al. (2010:15) refer directly to the so-called "power male-male culture" which proliferated during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), during which wealthier opera patrons would fall in love with the attractive male youths portraying female characters in the opera.

The Greeks, amongst others, thus displayed a great degree of reverence for same-sex love as well as the noted beauty of the male body. Citing Grecians' obsession with fitness, sporting activities and bathing, Hupperts (2010:33) comments on the so-called omnipresent nature of the male body in Athens, as evident in the statues of the god Hermes with a large phallus placed at the crossroads of the city. Such statues depicted muscular, firm and humble men (Alvarez, 2009:23). Much of the beauty of the naked male body was also on display in public places such as gymnasiums and sporting venues, mostly used by men, where their lives intertwined socially, sexually as well as romantically. The patrons of these gymnasiums were extremely beautiful men who exercised naked, a tradition Alvarez (2009:26) associated with the original meanings of the words *gymnos* meaning 'naked' and *gymnasium* which translates as "a place where men exercise naked". To outsiders, such as the Romans, constant nudity was deemed 'degrading' whereas Grecians equated shame about one's nudity as "...brutal" (Alvarez, 2009:26). Much of the importance ascribed to physical beauty may in fact be enmeshed in the adherence to the principle of *Aretē*, which subsumes an amalgam between one's mind and body. It stresses the importance of an individual's personal excellence, reflected in "...an idealized *perfected* state of being that included academic and athletic achievement as well as character and physical beauty" (Alvarez, 2009:22). Other sources of this celebration were evidenced in depictions of erotic scenes as well as competition and performance of such young men on cups, vases and oil lamps (Alvarez, 2009:23; Hupperts, 2010:33; Meem et al., 2010), images Alvarez (2009:23)

associated with contemporary depictions of aggressive and competitive sporting figures in mainstream media. Public sexual parties were abound in Athenian culture, since sexuality “...was omnipresent in the world of Athenian men, in their thoughts, activities and conversations” (Hupperts, 2010:33). Their influence was also evident in other materialised symbols of same-sex erotic love across the centuries, which included so-called Dutch “friendship glasses” from which same-sex companions would drink (Sibalis, 2010:108) in the eighteenth century, panels from temples in India, such as *Surya-temple*, which depict explicit “exuberant and erotic sculptures” of all forms of sexuality (Carton, 2010:325), and so-called “phallic shrines...which fuelled a...physically charged homoeroticism” in Japan in the 1500s (Carton, 2010:314). Texts, such as the infamous *Kamasutra* also provided in-depth descriptions of sexual intercourse between opposite and same-sex individuals (Carton, 2010:326), whereas the works of writers including Radclyffe Hall’s *Well of Loneliness* on lesbian identity, Walt Whitman’s ‘Phallus’-poems on ‘comrade love’ between men, and Edmund White’s depictions of gay urban life, served as examples of literary work on same-sex attraction (Beemyn, 2010:155-156; Cocks, 2010:159; Meem et al., 2010:232-237).

Although these accounts, as noted, never clearly distinguished between heterosexual and homosexual binary logics (cf. Halperin, 1993:420), polarisation was however evident in what one would today term a ‘gendered’ account of the relationships between the men. This was particularly evident in discussions on the roles men assumed in their sexual relationships, namely the assumed masculine and penetrative partner, in relation to the presumed effeminate and weak submissive partner (Hupperts, 2010:39). The more dominant partner, expected to always act like a man in all forms of penetration, whether anal, oral or intercrural, was depicted as masculine, courageous, viral and reliable (Hupperts, 2010:33-34). This echoed contemporary accounts of Connell’s (1987:183) reference to hegemonic males or “...emphasised” females – the hegemonic male being more aggressive and competitive (Bradley, 2007:47; Connell, 1987:186; Segal, 2007:56), whereas the emphasised female is more submissive and flirtatious, amongst others (Bradley, 2007:48). The latter grouping who allow themselves to be penetrated, were posited as “...weak, servile, cowardly, submissive, fickle...insatiable and untrustworthy” (Hupperts, 2010:34). Much of this was created by men themselves, who sought to retain the ideology of male dominance in society, whether it corresponded with reality or not, since “...men used these expressions of sexual ideology to convince themselves of their own superiority and thereby hoped to approximate the gods” (Hupperts, 2010:34). Such thoughts emphasised expectations of Roman laws which ascribed a great deal of importance to masculinity and the

image of “real men” as dominant. Halperin’s (1993:419) demarcation of the different roles is worth noting in this regard:

...What an Athenian did in bed was determined by the differential in status that distinguished him or her from his or her sexual partner; the (male) citizen’s superior prestige and authority expressed themselves in his sexual precedence – in his power to initiate a sexual act, his right to obtain pleasure from it, and his assumption of an insertive rather than a receptive sexual role.

Such same-sex behaviour, in predominantly the Christian West, came to be equated with the condemned practice of ‘sodomy’. The use of this concept is associated with its reference to the Biblical tale of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, which were destroyed by God based on the evident vice in both (Aldrich, 2010:10). Ascribing to this story, Spanish and Portuguese accounts of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, reported on its “widespread” practice amongst indigenous cultures, something they sought to “stamp out” (Aldrich, 2010:10). Aldrich (2010:10) and Beemyn (2010:145) however, caution an uncritical study of such views, since much of its basis was influenced by the dominant Christian doctrine of the time. Evident examples of same-sex practices included intolerant accounts of the then conquistador Hernán Cortes in Mexico in 1519, where he requested the inhabitants to “...give up your sodomy and all your evil practices” (Beemyn, 2010:145). These practices, according to its opponents, were made justifiable by those who engaged in it, as means to prove their virility and to position themselves as superior to their colonial conquerors. Described as “...a devilish thing”, Spanish explorer Cabeza de Vaca (quoted in Beemyn, 2010:147) identified the so-called cross-gendered role adoption by Native Americans. These men would dress in women’s attire as well as marry and engage in sexual intercourse with other men. Contradictory European chronicles of such behaviour, posited these men as both ‘masculine’ since they “...are huskier than the other men and taller”, yet also possibly more “...passive, effeminate sexual partners of other men” (Beemyn, 2010:147). Prominent examples were the so-called ‘berdaches’⁵ in the Native North American culture. These ‘women-men’ and ‘men-women’ were not regarded as occupying a specific ‘gendered’ category, but rather resembling an additional gender which combined male and female elements. Concepts used to describe them included *ayekkwew* (‘neither man nor woman’) by the Cree and *katsotse* (‘boy-girl’) by the Zuni’s (Beemyn, 2010:147). In many respects, these individuals were considered as so-called ‘two-spirited’ people, revered for their gender dualism

⁵‘Berdache’ refers to a male prostitute or ‘kept boy’ (Beemyn, 2010:147).

and were afforded the roles of shamans or healers (Meem et al., 2010:15). The source of these practices was traced to Indian and Pakistani cultures' "eunuchs", thus men who served as guards to the noblemen during the Mughal Empire (1526-1858). Such individuals were either intersexed, transsexual or castrated and portrayed an important cultural role in entreating deities or bestowing fertility on men (Meem et al., 2010:16).

Regardless of an inherent tribal respect, colonial prescriptions, guided by Christian legal codes, sought to introduce European codes which punished the practice of sodomy through the enactment of the death penalty. Examples included the Apostolic Inquisitor's conviction of men found guilty of sodomy to death "by burning" in mid-17th century Mexico. In this particular case, the court records noted that these men "had nice homes in which they received one another and in which they called one another by the kind of names used in this city by prostitutes" (Beemyn, 2010:149). Other gruesome methods included public hangings, choking and being "...tied to a stake, and faggots piled around [them], set afire" (Beemyn, 2010:149). Most of these persecutions were based on the English buggery statute of 1533. This act, introduced by Henry VIII, mirrored the views of the church on same-sex acts, or as they termed it, "...buggery", which condemned it as something unnatural, for which the penalty was death (Weeks, 1996:44). Enforced up to 1861, the law was mainly focused on a condemnation of a series of sexual acts, rather than a person, and predominantly sought to protect the traditional institutions of marriage and family, as was directed mainly towards men (Weeks, 1996:45). As a presiding British judge, Lord Sumner described it in 1918, as sodomites who had become "...the hallmark of a specialised and extraordinary class as much as if they had carried on their bodies some physical peculiarities" (quoted in Weeks, 1996:45). As precondition to be labelled as sodomite and subsequently be prosecuted, proof of penetration and two witnesses were required. Convictions rose considerably at the end of the seventeenth century, something Weeks (1996:45) attributed to the emergence of a gay male subculture in cities which spurred so-called "...morality crusades". These standards made it very difficult to fully realise prosecutions, since much of these relations were consensual and clandestine. In a case brought before the court in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1637, two men were found guilty of "...lewd behaviour and unclean carriage...by often spending their seed one upon another". Both, however, avoided the death penalty since no proof of penetration could be found. As punishment the one John Allexander, was "...severely whipped, burnt in the shoulder with a hot iron and forever banished from the colony" (Beemyn, 2010:150) while the other servant, Thomas Roberts, was whipped and had to return to his master. Much of these persecutions started to decline in the late eighteenth century

since more emphasis was placed on financial and commercial development, rather than concerns about supposed immoral sexual acts (Beemyn, 2010:152). Thus, although sodomy retained its criminally offense-label and resulted in several prosecutions and hangings in the early 1800s (Weeks, 1996:46), a socially sanctioned and idealised interpretation of same-sex desire came to the forefront during this period in the United States. Such same-sex relationships manifested the 'romantic friendships' between individuals, mostly women, which transcended the barriers of marriage and "...superseded matrimony in importance" (Beemyn, 2010:152). For men, such relationships mostly did not endure after reaching adulthood since they now had to "...pursue marriage and a career" (Beemyn, 2010:155). Akin to the Grecian examples, Beemyn (2010:155) explains the purpose of male 'romantic friendships' in the following manner:

...Romantic friendships offered male youth a sense of security and comradeship during the uncertainties associated with coming of age; when their lives became more settled, many had little time for what they came to perceive as unmanly attachments.

Other men did however retain these romantic friendships during their adult lives. Much of this reverence was evident in sexual relationships in all-male communities in the United States in the late nineteenth-century. During this period, mostly young, middle-class white men were introduced to same-sex relationships in male segregated communities and organisations, like the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Based on its staunch adherence to religiosity, one would not necessarily associate it with uncategorised understandings of supposed homosexuality, but as early as 1896, one of its leaders underscored the importance of the organisation in providing for the inherent "...craving of young men for companionship with each other" (Beemyn, 2010:157). This served as attraction to such young men to join the organisation, and although the extent to which sexual intercourse (and possibly homosexual interpretations) was evidenced is unknown, the shared living, eating and sleeping arrangements were seen as causes for alarm, based on its perceived excessiveness by the early twentieth century (Beemyn, 2010:158). Other examples of such intense emotional and possibly physical relationships were also evident in male segregated societies based on labour arrangements, including mining, logging and railroad work. San Francisco in 1849, for example, became a prominent urban setting "where everything goes" (Beemyn, 2010:159), since many men who came to the area in search of fortune, would entertain one another in bars and saloons, in the absence of women.

Contradictory views have however dominated discourse on same-sex activity in sub-Saharan Africa. Originally, most examples of male 'homosexual' behaviour manifested based on a "...situational necessity", when women were not readily available for sexual intercourse. In a study on sexual perversions in this area, Jacobus X, a French colonial surgeon argued that the native pederast "...uses a man when he cannot get a woman, and, when he *can* get a woman, no longer practices the vice. With him it is not a morbid passion...it is simply a mutual exchange of kindnesses which are quite simple and natural" (quoted in Wallace, 2010:257). Many of the arguments on such "situational homosexuality" (Esterberg, 2002:219), which justifies the same-sex sexual intercourse based on the noted contextual constraints, have dominated much of the academic debates on same-sex behaviour in the Southern African context over the past century (Dlamini, 2006:128).

In his discussion on homosexuality in the African context, Dlamini (2006:129) cites the contributions of Swidler (1993) in particular on the longstanding historical linkage of indigenous African culture with homosexuality (cf. Mutua, 2011:459; Nkabinde & Morgan, 2006). Both refute arguments which underscore the novelty of homosexuality because of colonial rule. Colonial rule and migrant labour in male segregated societies only exacerbated and facilitated an opportunity for the realisation of same-sex intercourse and relationships (Dlamini, 2006:129). As with the Grecian accounts, the more experienced miners took on newer miners as their wives, with the latter performing sexual and domestic functions in return for protection. In terms of sexual relations, the penetrative partner would place his penis between the thighs of the receptive partner and reach orgasms through friction, rather than engaging in anal intercourse (Dlamini, 2006:130). Although most of these men formed part of a patriarchal heterosexual union, Henri Junod's research in 1927, highlighted similar practices in Mozambique. He recounts the ceremonies among Tsonga miners in Mozambique's southern regions. Here the husband (*nima*) would pay a bride price to the brother of his chosen boy-wife (*nkonsthana*) during a lavish wedding feast. The latter would perform specific gender-specific domestic and sexual tasks for his husband, upon which he would be presented with gifts for his efforts. Regardless of the fact that the sexual intercourse was intercrural in nature, the relationship was typified by an intense sense of reciprocal responsibility, feeling and even jealousy (Simon & Brooks, 2011:33; Wallace, 2010:261). Although many of these men cited the situational and per implication, short-lived nature of such marriages, later research in the 1980s in South Africa underlined the fact that such male-segregated communities, whether based within mining or

other wage labour industries in urban areas, were more longitudinal (Dlamini, 2006:130). In such instances, several of the boy-wives would return home with their husbands and be accepted and assimilated into the rural community comprised of the husband's wives and elders (Dlamini, 2006:130; Wallace, 2010:261).

Although such accounts posited homosexuality as a "...foreign" practice, introduced by early Portuguese colonisers in Western Africa, amongst others, later research of the twentieth century provided ample evidence of same-sex behaviour in traditional African tribal societies (Wallace, 2010:257). One of the first studies in the 1930s was that of E.E. Evans-Pritchard, who was regarded as one of the most influential academics in African tribal history. Evans-Pritchard directed attention to an age-stratified sexual relationship between warriors and boys in the *Zande* tribe of the Northern Congo. As with the Grecian pederasts, *Zande* men would present younger boys with a 'bride-price' to have the latter, aged between ten and twenty years, act as their pages (Wallace, 2010:258). Accounts of early twentieth century anthropologists underscored the importance ascribed to so-called "institutionalised homosexuality" which characterised much of these African societies prior to the twentieth century and which was based in large on systems of stratification, in accordance with age and gender variants, which would influence role differentiation in sexual intercourse (Wallace, 2010:258). Some of these arrangements mirrored the Grecian model of masculine and effeminate partners, whereas others took a more gender neutral approach (Wallace, 2010:259). Others, however, emphasised the institutionalised nature of heterosexuality, rather than homosexuality. Although the latter was socially and culturally sanctioned, the importance of familial ties and sexual reproduction within a patriarchal and per implication, what one would term today as a 'heterosexual' African society, would still be dominant (Wallace, 2010:259). As such, men could still engage in same-sex sexual intercourse, but such relations had to "...remain secondary and socially invisible" (cf. Gevisser, 1995:76; McClean & Ngcobo, 1995:159; Potgieter, 2005:180; Rankhotha, 2005:166).

Other interesting accounts of same-sex behaviour on the African continent surfaced in the Congo River region in the 1930s, where a sexually atypical age-stratified relationship was noted. Gustave Hulstaert (cited in Wallace, 2010:259) commented on the sexually active and penetrative role younger boys would portray in relation to their older partners, quite different from previous Western, Eastern and African accounts. Contrasting age-based sexual relationships were also evident amongst the Bantu-speaking tribes of Central Africa during and

after the First World War. Here boys of the Bafia peoples of Cameroon, for example, who were too young to engage in sexual intercourse with girls, would satisfy their sexual desires through reciprocal anal intercourse with other boys. This practice was initiated through the so-called enquiry of 'flowers', a tribal ritual which involved an offering of a fresh plate of fruit and earthnuts to a chosen boy, who on accepting the gift, consented to sexual intercourse (Wallace, 2010:260).

In keeping with other continents, research has indicated that Colonialism did not necessarily introduce the perceived 'secular' and "un-African" (Cock, 2003) vice of homosexuality to Africa, but rather its Christian condemnation of it (Dlamini, 2006:131). Missionaries showed little regard for issues deemed important to indigenous African people, since their main objective was to replace existing traditional values with their own (Dlamini, 2006:131). Kendall (1996, quoted in Dlamini, 2006:131) emphasises this thought in the following way:

...homophobia is far more likely to qualify as 'unAfrican' than homosexuality; and that homophobia is certainly the product of a certain class of white folk, arising from a particular culture which only seems normative to us because we are blinded by it.

Such an argument directs us to an abandonment of the importance ascribed to non-categorised and unbounded emotion, behaviour and sexual desire, and introduces the creation of a specialised, unique and differentiated category concerning sexual orientation – "the homosexual".

2.3.2 Identity as medical category: The emergence of "the homosexual" as 'other'

In 1869, Karl Maria Kertbeny invented what Aldrich (2010:11) terms a 'Greco-Latin neologism', the category of "the homosexual". Michel Foucault's (1978) contributions to the study of homosexuality are worth noting here. He identifies the increased power of the medical profession in particular, which facilitated the shift from a central focus on homosexuality as merely behaviour, to that of a distinguishable sexual personhood (cf. Aldrich, 2010:11; Weeks, 1996:48). By defining phenomena they deemed as social problems, doctors, according to Foucault, enforced particular social norms which would control such deviance (Foucault, 1978:43). He continues

...[a]s defined by ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology...Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite has been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species (Foucault, 1978:43).

He argues that it is not necessarily an already existent form of sexuality or sexual orientation which are the victims of persecution through categorisation, but rather that the creation of the category of, for example, "the homosexual", results for the purpose to repress (Foucault, 1978:43). In citing the very recent creation of the categories of both heterosexuality and homosexuality, introduced to American readers in 1913 (Eaklor, 2008:33), Katz (1997:178) supports Foucault's work in stating that both "...[h]eterosexual' and 'homosexual' refer to groups, identities and even behaviours and experiences that are time-limited, specifically modern phenomena, contingent on a peculiar institutional structuring of masculinity, femininity, and lust" (Katz, 1997:178). Some welcomed such a categorisation, since links to pederasty and the medicalisation of homosexuals posited this 'subspecies' as martyrs in search of compassion in, for example Radclyffe Hall's novel *The Well of Loneliness*, whereas news media sought to provide sensationalist accounts of men dressing as women, leading to arrests and a subtle warning to mainstream public of such behaviour, which would not be tolerated (Tamagne, 2010:170-172).

The concept was initially not adopted by all. So-called slang terms originated in many different cultures, ranging from *pédé* in French, *Schwul* in German and *frocio* in Italian. Aldrich (2010:11) cites Edward Carpenter's references to his "homogenic" love, Walt Whitman's "love of comrades" as well as multiple competing conceptualisations which likened homosexuality to inversion, bisexuality, contrary sexual feeling as well as psychic hermaphrodism (Tamagne, 2010:167). With this 'social' and 'linguistic' change, came a contrasting legality. In England in

1861, the Offences Against the Person Act removed the punishment of death for buggery, and subsequently replacing it with lesser prison sentences of ten years to life. Following on this, several attempts were made during the twenty years to follow, to clearly differentiate between the varied formations of buggery, whether it was deemed bestiality or homosexuality (Weeks, 1996:48). Sentences for so-called “...gross indecency” between men, introduced by the Labouchère Amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, treated such acts as misdemeanours subject to two years hard labour. This was followed by the 1898 Vagrancy Act and the 1912 Criminal Law Amendment Act which specifically targeted men and imposed a sentence of six months imprisonment with flogging (Weeks, 1996:48). This resulted in what one could expect, according to Weeks (1996:49), in a “...moral panic” (cf. Forth, 2008:152), particularly in the more sensational court cases.

One such evident example was that of playwright Oscar Wilde in 1895. Known for both his controversial and flamboyant nature, it was the three trials of 1895, brought to the fore by his lover Lord Alfred Douglas’ father, the Marquess of Queensbury, which provided a public depiction of homosexuals. After Queensbury labelled Wilde a “...Somdomite” (which was misspelled), Wilde brought a libel suit against him. This was however dismissed, spurring Queensbury to bring charges of ‘gross indecency’ against Wilde, based on his lawyers’ proof of Wilde’s escapades with young working class men. His trials, in which much of his work such as the implicit homosexual references in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were cited as evidence, resulted in the maximum sentence of two years hard labour (Meem et al., 2010:310; Tamagne, 2010:172; Weeks, 2000:24). These trials, according to Tamagne (2010:172), manifested certain consequences. It introduced specific ‘modes of identification’ such as the green carnation worn by Wilde, it heralded either secretive or rebelliousness from those who identified as homosexual, highlighted the ‘modern’ image of the persecuted homosexual (Cocks, 2010:159), and reinforced what Sinfield (quoted in Tamagne, 2010:172) terms as stereotypically held labels associated, to this day, with homosexuality, including “...effeminacy, idleness, immorality, luxury, insouciance, decadence and aestheticism” (cf. Forth, 2008:151). This “racializing” of homosexual men, in turn, lead to the adoption of an absolutist understanding of sexuality, regardless of whether it was amongst heterosexual or homosexual men (Forth, 2008:151).

Correspondingly, regardless of the concept used to describe homosexuality, its introduction went hand-in-hand with a parallel need to study its aetiology and even possible cures (Aldrich, 2010:11; Cocks, 2010:154). In replacing the ‘criminal before God’-sodomite, the category of “the

homosexual” (Foucault, 1978) came to represent a “...’sick’, ‘perverse’, ‘degenerate’” (Plummer, 1996:64; Tamagne, 2010:167) individual, for whom certain medical laws were fashioned to address its nature. Some of the first contributions came from the Frenchman Ambroise Tardieu, a medical advisor, who compiled a list which outlined ‘signs of pederasty’ which emphasised an individual’s physical appearance, including what West and Zimmerman (2002) would call sex characteristics such as makeup, clothing and cleanliness (Tamagne, 2010:167) which took on a more ‘effeminate’ form in homosexuals. In addition, he also differentiated between ‘active’ and ‘passive’ behaviour amongst homosexuals. Based on views that it could be viewed as both an innate, inborn trait as well as something to be ‘learnt’, initial medical research sought to provide “appropriate treatment” thereof (Tamagne, 2010:168). In 1886, German psychiatrist Dr. Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis* posited homosexuality alongside other ‘sexual perversions’ being studied such as masochism and sadism. He likened homosexuality, as an unfortunate inborn trait, to an “...abnormal congenital manifestation” as well as “...nauseous disease” (Weeks, 2000:23) based on several case studies of individuals who claimed to have had same-sex interests (Meem et al., 2010:47). In addition to its congenital nature, he also believed that it could be based on a number of aetiologies, including a fear of pregnancy or infection during sexual intercourse or “...mental or moral weakness” (quoted in Meem et al., 2010:47). Two interesting points, however, are noted in the fact that he used the concept heterosexuality to refer to those individuals who engaged in same-sex behaviour for non-reproductive purposes and that in his later life, he provided a more moderate explanation of homosexuality as only one of several forms of sexual desire (Meem et al., 2010:47).

Others, including German physician Karl Westphal, identified so-called ‘contrary sexual feelings’ and effeminate characteristics amongst men who were attracted to other men (cf. Carton, 2010:323; Sibalis, 2010:108). This thought underscored Karl Heinrich Ulrich’s reference to homosexuals as “...belonging to a ‘third sex’ and having ‘a woman’s soul trapped in a man’s body’” (Tamagne, 2010:168). They were of the first to refer to these individuals as inverts, since these inverts’ biological sex contradicted their gendered and sexual orientation predispositions, an influential thought which still characterises several debates on homosexuality to this day (Meem et al., 2010:46). Such men were perceived to be more feminine than their ‘normal’ male counterparts, a thought reinforced and popularised by homosexual activist and sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld. He identified four broader criteria which placed a person on a scale between the ‘perfect male sexual type’ and ‘perfect female sexual type’, which included one’s sexual organs, physical characteristics, sexual instincts and morality (Tamagne, 2010:168). It can be

argued that such a view in fact provided a basis for zoologist Alfred Kinsey's work as evidenced in his infamous Kinsey scale. Hirschfeld basically argued that several and 'infinite' sexual variances existed between these two 'types' of which can be chosen by an individual (Tamagne, 2010:168). An openly homosexual physician, Hirschfeld refuted claims of degeneracy and mental illness to be associated with homosexuality. In the tradition of Ulrich, he considered homosexuals to be so-called 'Uranians', thus someone of an 'intermediate' position or "third sex" (Eaklor, 2008:34).

Such a thought was also evident in British sexologist Havelock Ellis' *Sexual Inversion* (1897, cited in Weeks, 2000), co-authored by writer John Addington Symonds, in which they wrote about sex, sexuality and particularly homosexuality. This early account provided what Meem et al. (2010:49) considered a "...relatively sympathetic...fair – and scientific – representation" of gay men. In a letter to his homosexual friend Edward Carpenter, Ellis stated that his objectives for such an approach centred on the harsh laws which were enacted to punish those who were guilty of sexual inversion. In undertaking his research, he sought to provide this more "...sympathetic recognition for sexual inversion" (quoted in Weeks, 2000:26), in order to establish potential changes in legislation of the time.

Weeks (2000:24) argues that homosexuality as only one of several "...sexual deviations", in fact came closest to heterosexual desire, since it also manifested strong emotional, personal and sexual relations. Based on this, he emphasised the importance of understanding homosexuality in particular, in order to fully contemplate the nature of heterosexuality in general (Weeks, 2000:24). Much of the collaboration with Symonds, was attributed to Ellis' essay on American writer Walt Whitman in his book *The New Spirit* (1889), influenced by his homosexual friend, writer Edward Carpenter and Ellis' wife Edith's own lesbian inclination (Weeks, 2000:25). Homosexual himself, Symonds sought collaboration with Ellis since he had also studied theories on 'inversion' since the 1860s and even corresponded with Whitman, subtly 'broaching' the topic of homosexuality, which Whitman famously refuted to his dying day (Meem et al., 2010:234; Weeks, 2000:25). The publication of *Sexual Inversion*, however, was initially marred by Oscar Wilde's trial and persecution, an occurrence Weeks (2000:26) likened to the "...return of the philistines, [and] the crushing of the more radical hopes of the 1880s". This climate led to Symonds' (who died in 1893) literary executor to request Ellis to remove all references to Symonds in the book, an initial lack of interest in its publication and after its publication, arrests of members of the Legitimation League who displayed a favourable response to it (Weeks,

2000:26-27). The secretary of the League, George Bedborough was arrested and brought to trial and in 1898 "...for selling 'a certain lewd, wicked, bawdy, scandalous libel'..." (Weeks, 2000:27). Ellis was never charged or brought to trial, but the book was "...labelled scandalous and obscene", resulting in its subsequent publication outside Britain up to this day (Weeks, 2000:27). In his later work, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (1937), Ellis distinguished between "inversion" and other forms of homosexual behaviour. Inverts, according to him, displayed a true disposition of sexual attraction to people of the same sex, yet other forms emphasised a predisposition based on "...accidental absences" (Meem et al., 2010:49).

Throughout his writing he provided the basis for several seemingly controversial debates which still underline much of the debates in lesbian and gay studies as well as queer theory. One such example was that of his reference to, what one could today term as 'situational' or 'circumstantial' homosexuality in prisons. He noted that prisons may in fact foster the homosexual tendencies of prisoners, whether these are based on sexual indifference or degrees of bisexuality (Gammon & Isgro, 2007:165; Meem et al., 2010:49). Here bisexuality, however, came to represent shared tendencies of maleness and femaleness within one individual, associated with what he regarded as hemaphroditism (Gammon & Isgro, 2007:165). This arises quite evidently in those instances where one's 'natural' object of sexual attraction is absent, resulting in sexual attraction between those individuals of the same sex. Alongside this example, he also sought to further 'normalise' homosexual attraction and posit it as just another example of further sexual variation, by providing several examples of more well known inverts such as Oscar Wilde, Edward Fitzgerald and Francis Bacon (Meem et al., 2010:49-50). He did the same for women, where he distinguishes between 'true' masculine lesbians and 'pseudo-homosexual' lesbians (Meem et al., 2010:50). The latter group, according to him, was an evident example of women who were unable to adequately seduce men, and as such, opted to engage in female courtship. Those who sought out the companionship of women, would endure "frustration or even...madness" based on the fact that, deprived of semen, women would not be able to fully experience sexual satisfaction (Jackson & Scott, 2010:57; Tamagne, 2010:168). As such, he identified three main 'causes' for homosexual tendencies – the absence of an object of 'natural' sexual attraction, disappointment in relationships with people of the opposite sex, and seduction by a same-sex partner (Meem et al., 2010:51). In addition to one or a combination of these factors, Ellis (quoted in Meem et al., 2010:51) still considered the probability of congenital predisposition when he noted:

...These three influences, therefore...example at school, seduction, disappointment in normal love, - all of them drawing the subject away from the opposite sex and concentrating him on his own sex, are exciting causes of inversion; but they require a favourable organic predisposition to act on, while there are a large number of cases in which no exciting cause at all can be found, but in which, from the earliest childhood, the subject's interest seems to be turned on his own sex, and continues to be so throughout life.

In his later book, *The Criminal* (1889), he furthered his attempts at normalising homosexuality. Here, based on recommendations forwarded by Symonds, he refuted references of homosexuality as an 'intermediate' or 'third sex' and described it as an "anomaly", a "sport of nature" and finally a "harmless quirk of nature" (Weeks, 2000:31). Through this, he critiqued associations between homosexuality and buggery, citing its rarity and also questioned the supposed 'effeminate' and grossly 'sensual' conceptualisations afforded to homosexuality (Weeks, 2000:31). In so doing, he underscored the unique nature of homosexuality as sexual variant and supported a call to challenge stereotypical depictions and judicial persecutions in this regard (Weeks, 2000:31).

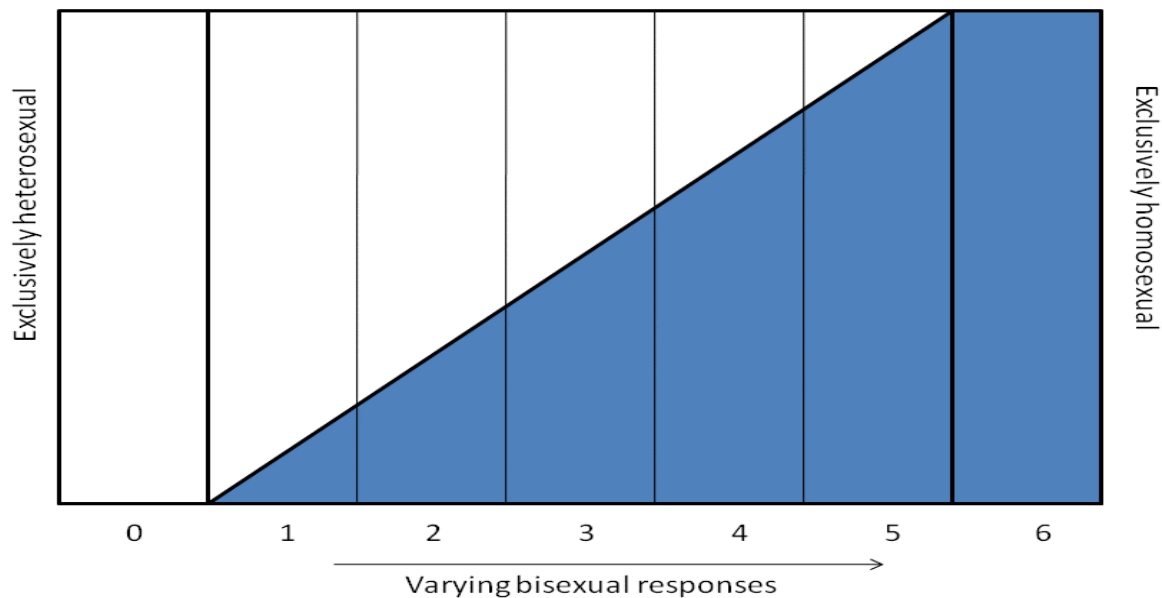
Such arguments, according to Meem et al. (2010:51), underscored the 'nature versus nurture' debates which characterised much of academic discourse in the later twentieth century. These accounts, although predominantly pathological in some instances as noted, also underlined what one could term, a 'democratisation' of sexual diversity (Meem et al., 2010:53). One such contribution came courtesy of zoologist Alfred Kinsey in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Originally known for his in-depth research of the gall wasp, much of contemporary references to Kinsey are based on his publications *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), both based on comprehensive interviews of 5 300 white men and 5 940 white women about their sexual histories, undertaken by both him and collaborators at the Indiana University in the United States. After the release of the first of the two publications, met with a plethora of responses, ranging from titillation to shock and outrage, an unprecedented two hundred thousand copies were sold (Eaklor, 2008:80). In addition to a meticulous interrogation of sexual practices deemed morally reprehensible by members of the mainstream public, including hundreds of questions on oral sex, anal sex and masturbation, Kinsey sought to provide an objectively scientific rather than moral account of homosexuality (Eaklor, 2008:80). Based on his interviews, he attributed homosexuality to a so-called stimulus-

response hypothesis which conceptualised homosexuality not as deviant, but rather as common (Jackson & Scott, 2010:6). In providing descriptive accounts of the sexual histories, which transcended a focus on aetiology of homosexuality, he arguably provided, according to Jackson and Scott (2010:7), the earliest sociological study of homosexuality since several social variables were incorporated contradicting universally pathological views on same-sex attraction. He focused on age, marital status, education, race, class and gender in his work (Ericksen, 1998:133), which in fact supports later views of proponents of postmodern sociology (Smuts, 2011) as well as lesbian and gay studies and queer theory (Connell, 2011:207; Savin-Williams, 2005; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008) on intersectional considerations of various social categories in understanding homosexuality.

This basically argued that all individuals, given the necessary physical stimulus, will experience sexual arousal regardless of its source (Meem et al., 2010:122-123). Based on this, his work contradicted a congenital and naturally 'innate' understanding of homosexuality, for it was only through human rationality that created static categories with corresponding attributes. To substantiate his argument, he devised a seven-point scale or continuum upon which individuals could position themselves, depending on their degrees of heterosexual or homosexual attraction, rather than merely adopting a polarised either-or approach (Jackson & Scott, 2010:6). In so doing, he refuted views which subsumed diverse formations of sexual diversity (such as bisexuality) into the categories of lesbian and gay, and emphasised its unique and autonomous nature (Gammon & Isgro, 2007:165). Known as the Kinsey scale and used by psychologists to chart human sexual attraction, the seven points on the scale represent fluidity in terms of human sexual and erotic dispensations (Meem et al., 2010:123). The scale is organised as *exclusively heterosexual* (0), *predominantly heterosexual with only incidental homosexuality* (1), *predominantly heterosexuality with more than incidental homosexuality* (2), *equally heterosexual and homosexual* (3), *predominantly homosexual with more than incidental heterosexuality* (4), *predominantly homosexual with only incidental heterosexuality* (5) and *exclusively homosexual* (6).

Figure 2: The Kinsey Scale

(Source: <http://fvsch.com/notes/2013/forecast/>)



Based on the self-reportage of his male respondents in the *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, Kinsey concluded that 37 per cent of the male population had engaged in some homosexual behaviour which culminated in orgasm, with about five to twelve per cent located on either the five or six axes of his scale (Eaklor, 2008:80; Jackson & Scott, 2010:7; Meem et al., 2010:123). In addition, he also noted that about ten per cent of men between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five identified as exclusively homosexual, hence the 'one in ten'-men as gay argument, used evidently in contemporary every day and academic communities. Although the 46 per cent of men who partook in his study indicated their sexual attraction to both men and women pointed towards a bisexual orientation, Kinsey's work primarily focused on behaviour and not identity, and as such he remained wary of such categorisation based on his specific focus and previous accounts which associated bisexuality with hermaphroditism (Eaklor, 2008:80). Ericksen (1998: 133) was, however, critical of the fact that Kinsey, during his twenty year period of research, never fully considered the "...historically specific and thus changeable" context in which he conducted the research. He points to the period between 1938 and 1948 which encompassed "...the most devastating war in history...[which] allowed many young American men to try new sexual pleasures while away from home" (Ericksen, 1998:133). Given this example, Ericksen (1998:133) argues that regardless of Kinsey's view of homosexuality in terms of behaviour and desire, rather than a fixed label, his provision of a "...series of estimates of homosexuality...each of his estimates assumed a fixed proportion of people with such tastes, again suggesting that

*Kinsey believed in an inherently static sexuality*⁶, rather than an ever dynamic series of behaviours and desires contingent on time and place. In addition to this point of critique, Kinsey's work was also subject to further assessment by others, particularly concerning his statistical sampling methods (Bullough, 1998:130). As part of the introductory pages of both books, Kinsey et al. (1948; 1953) noted that their objectives for undertaking the studies centred on discovering "...what people do sexually, and what factors account for differences in sexual behavior among individuals, and among various sections of the population", and "...how [individuals'] sexual experiences have affected their lives", respectively (quoted in Ericksen, 1998:132-133). Ericksen (1998:133) contends that notwithstanding the extensiveness of the sample group; several issues need to be considered. He points to the criticism of Cochran et al. (1953) in this regard. These statisticians, although sympathetic to the initial novelty of using random sampling through survey research and Kinsey's lack of doing so in his studies, were critical of his supposed "...100% samples" through which interviewers attempted to interview all of those potential respondents they approached. This, according to them, created a cluster sample since none of the interviews were obtained in an independent manner which, according to them, resulted in a reduction in the potential benefits the large samples could have provided.

Regardless of the potential emphasis of intersectionality in Kinsey's research, arguments in terms of its absence in the studies, was also subject to scrutiny. Consider Ericksen's (1998:133) reference to the fact that the majority of the respondents either resided or studied in the Midwest of the United States, particularly the state of Indiana, which presented biased results, since the generalisability of the research findings to countries outside America was not considered (Bullough, 1998:130; Ericksen, 1998:133; Herzog, 2006:40). This argument also related to Cochran et al.'s (1953) request for an explication of the extent to which homosexual individuals and prisoners were included in the study (Ericksen, 1998:133). Given the criticism, Kinsey did, however, attempt to justify his reasons for not using random sampling. He noted that this sampling procedure would have yielded its own inherent bias (Bullough, 1998:130) and an unresponsive respondent population, since "...randomly selected individuals would not agree to answer questions about their sex lives and...therefore, respondents had to be recruited" (Ericksen, 1998:133). Although Cochran et al. (1953) recommended the use of a small pilot random sample in order to validate his findings Kinsey refused to do so, since he did not believe that he needed any more data (Erickson, 1998:133-134).

⁶ Emphasis added.

Regardless, the proponents of these medical models initiated an understanding of “the homosexual”, as distinct and separate “personage” (cf. Foucault, 1978) in society, which eradicated the previously socially sanctioned understanding of same-sex attraction. The first of these categorised perspectives on gay male identity emerged in a homogenised and communal classification thereof.

2.4 IDENTITIES AS DEPENDENT ON COMMUNAL BELONGING

Sociologists were originally ignorant of the importance of sexuality in the broader framework of their focus which, according to Stein and Plummer (1996:129), resulted in the weakening of the discipline as a whole. But, as Seidman (1996:4) argues, “...[s]ociology’s silence on ‘sexuality’ was broken as the volume level of public sexual conflicts was turned up so high that even sociologists’ trained incapacity to hear sounds was pierced”. The emergence of particularly the lesbian and gay liberationist movement in the late 1960s, saw a slow yet gradual incorporation of sociological inquiry into homosexuality as social category, based on what Altman (1982:108) termed as the “...politicization of homosexuality” which spurred a gradual progression since the 1970s (in particularly America) from using concepts such as ‘oppression’ and ‘liberation’ of homosexuals, to terminology which emphasises discrimination and civil rights within a heteronormative context (cf. Altman, 1982:125). Much of the research and movements preceding these efforts sought to position homosexuals as an ethnic community within and seemingly separate from the larger heterosexual schema (cf. Seidman, 1997:120).

Of importance here is that lesbian and gay studies which, as modern theoretical paradigm, have been characterised by initial essentialist and later social constructionist components. Epstein (1998:135) articulates the fact that much of contemporary theory on homosexuality mostly centres on the so-called essentialist versus constructionist debate. Although imperative in its initial objective to restructure our thoughts on sexuality, he believes it to have “outlived its usefulness” (Epstein, 1998:135). In terms of **essentialism**, homosexuality is viewed as a biological and natural given, thus some ‘essence’ or ‘core’ which forms part of the genes and psyche of the individual. Equated with so-called ‘traditional’ views on sexuality, Epstein (1998:136) also links its basic premises to nineteenth century sexology, and particularly the work of Havelock Ellis and Richard von Krafft-Ebing. Proponents of essentialism “...stress the ‘natural’ dimensions of sex; and essentialist conceptions of homosexuality seek to account for such persons on the basis of some core of difference, whether the difference be hormonal, or medical, or a consequence of early child-rearing, ‘or just the way we are’” (Epstein, 1998:136).

Social constructionism posits homosexuality and its corresponding identities as social constructions, based on meanings imbedded in the cultural and social world. As such, the homosexual was seen as a 'social product' of an external societal context. Its proponents, including Gagnon and Simon (1973) and McIntosh (1968), argue that "the homosexual", as category, is merely a label created by both the individual sexual self as well as other external social actors (Epstein, 1998:135; Gammon & Isgro, 2007:172; Jagose, 1996:13). Two broader strands of sociological thought are mainly associated with social constructionism, these being symbolic interactionism, embedded in the original contributions of Blumer (1969), Goffman (1971) and Mead (1962) and later work on "sexual conduct" by Gagnon and Simon (1973), the labelling theory based on the contributions by McIntosh (1968) on the "homosexual role" and Plummer (1975) on "sexual stigma" (Epstein, 1998:136). Social constructionism saw a further resurgence in the early 1980s and was mostly informed by Foucault's (1978) contributions on sexuality.

In accordance with both positions, whether biological innate or socially constructed, gay men were, however, seen (and arguably may still be) as separate and unique sexual creatures in mainstream modern society. In keeping with this, an initial focus will be placed on gay 'ethnic communities' in several countries around the world, from the 1900s up to current late modern society (Altman, 1982; Castells, 1983; D'Emilio, 1983; Epstein, 1998; Levine, 1998; Warren, 1998). This will be done to emphasise the manner in which a need to identify as communal caricature, exemplified homosexual existence and reinforced or questioned the heterosexual/homosexual distinction across decades and two centuries. The importance of such spatial arrangements is highlighted in the work of Valentine (2002) and Warren (1998). Akin to the inherent differences between essentialism and constructionist accounts of homosexuality, Valentine directs attention to the theoretical differences between positivist and poststructuralist accounts of human geography. The proponents of the former align their views with that of essentialist, universal and homogeneous truths, whereas the latter observes the manner in which external social forces influence patterns of spatial inequalities (Valentine, 2002:145). As such, sexual orientation, as one of several social categories (race, class, gender), is socially constructed, and per implication always negotiated, reconfigured, fluid and "...in a process of becoming" (Massey, quoted in Valentine, 2002:146). In the discussion that follows, emphasis will firstly be placed on the role of particularly urban areas as sites of redemption for gay individuals since the early 1900s up to the late 1960s. This will be encompassed by an

exploration and demarcation of the 'gay ghetto' as both visible and invisible space (Warren, 1998) for sexual dissidents (cf. Valentine, 2002). As concluding remarks, focus will be afforded to sexual citizenship as part of a focus on the role of gay homophile and liberationist movements as well as the role of the epidemic AIDS in reinforcing a sense of ethnic identification or lack thereof.

2.4.1 **'Sexual orientation and the city': The need for gay spatial identification**

D'Emilio (1983:101) attributes the emergence of the homosexual identity with structural changes during the late nineteenth century. He ascribed the emergence of homosexuality to historical progression in general and capitalism and wage labour, in particular. Capitalism, which resulted in the proliferation of industrialisation and urbanisation, led to the fragmentation of the family as basic economic unit of production and institution for sexual procreation (cf. Eaklor, 2008:46). Simultaneously, and as direct consequence of industrial production in urban areas and the previous exaggeration of the family as basic unit of procreation, Eaklor (2008:47) highlights the fact that clearly delineated and separate public and private spheres were reproduced alongside gendered lines (cf. Ritzer, 2012). In establishing a public/male/masculine and private/female/feminine dichotomy, the medically identified homosexual was persecuted even further because of their supposed sexual inversion which could possibly serve as threat to the newly instituted economic order (Eaklor, 2008:247). Yet, regardless of threats to their variance in terms of the sex-gender-sexual orientation-model, changing attitudes on sexual relations started to emerge, with the possibility to establish sexual attraction (D'Emilio, 1983:20) outside the parameters of the previously revered social institutions of family and marriage (cf. Abraham, 2009; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995; Giddens, 1992; Ingraham, 1996; 2002). Associated with such structural changes and increased mobility of individuals, men were afforded the opportunity to autonomously seek out a relationship not previously sanctioned by their immediate nuclear and/or extended familial institutions (Abraham, 2009:265; Bech, 1997; D'Emilio, 1983). D'Emilio (1992:7) remarks in this regard that

...[i]n divesting the household of its economic independence and fostering the separation of sexuality from procreation, capitalism has created conditions that allow some men and women to organize a personal life around their erotic/emotional attraction to their own sex. It has made possible the

formation of urban communities of lesbians and gay men, and more recently, of a politics based on sexual identity.

However, the politics he alluded to only came later in the 1950s and escalated substantially in the late 1960s, in several Western cities (Eaklor, 2008:48; Gevisser, 1995; Rink, 2008; Visser, 2007). Before this time, the city provided sources for liberation and redemption of sorts which cemented the idea of a communal understanding of what it meant to be gay.

(a) ***The Western city as redeeming gay space between the 1900s and 1940s***

It was particularly urban centres across the world which provided individuals with solace. Valentine (2002:146) notes that several lesbians and gay men moved to cities based on what she dubbed the 'push-pull' migration factors. In contrast to the isolation experienced by sexual minorities in smaller towns or rural areas, the city offered an attractive alternative of sexual freedom and acceptance (Gray, 2009:7; Valentine, 2002:146). Such accounts of difficulty faced by lesbians and gays in rural America have been provided by writers including Gray (2009:7) and Weston (1998:40), the latter's work, cited by Valentine (2002:146), to highlight the dichotomous relationship between rural and urban homosexual experiences. Georg Simmel (1903, quoted in Abraham, 2009:91-92) exemplified this idea by associating the city to sites of "...intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli...[which formed the] psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality". Such intensification, according to Abraham's (2009:93) interpretation of Dr. George Beard's (1881) discussion of the attraction between individuals of the same sex, positioned much of the origin of the category of "the homosexual" (cf. Foucault, 1978) to the clean break modernisation made from ancient societies such as Greece, embodied in the emergence and proliferation of the modern city. In *Sexual Neurasthenia*, Beard (1898, cited in Abraham, 2009:94) argues that sexual perversion has a clear link with modern civilisation and cites several such cases in cities such as New York. In likening an effeminate demeanour to the sexual pervert, he notes that it was the overuse of mental rather than physical 'muscle', which led this individual to hate members of the opposite sex which makes them "...perverted; they hate the opposite sex, and love their own; men become women, and women men, in their tastes, conduct, character, feelings, and behavior" (Beard, 1898, quoted in Abraham, 2009:94; cf. Forth, 2008; Tamagne, 2010; Weeks, 1996). Although an exaggerated, oversimplified and

'sweeping' statement of sorts, Beard, as such, attributed the acquisition and inheritance of homosexuality as direct result of the emergence of the modern city.

In addition to Beard's work, the contributions of, amongst others, Krafft-Ebing and Ellis, discussed in section 2.2.2, also lend itself to a modern 'urban' interpretation of homosexuality. Krafft-Ebing (1903, quoted in Abraham, 2009:95) for example argues that "...[l]arge cities are hotbeds in which neuroses and low morality are bred" and cites the "...horror plays, adultery comedies, trapeze artists, nerve-shattering music, loud color patterns, strong wines, cigars, liqueurs, [and] exciting press reports on crimes and accidents [which unleashes]...savage passions" which lead to a rejection of "...physical and mental rest, sleep, family life and bliss", associated with more rural and heterosexual family life (Abraham, 2009:95). Based on Krafft-Ebing's views, Abraham (2009:95) contends that one is left to ponder the possibility then that homosexuality is produced by the city – a social constructionist notion. It was, in particular, the so-called new "...mental strain of urban life" which resulted in challenges to gender and sexual divisions, through amongst others men masquerading as women and acting in a more effeminate manner (Forth, 2008; Tamagne, 2010; Weeks, 1996). This, according to Ellis was evidence of the "...prevalence of sexual inversion in American cities...Ninety-nine normal men out of a hundred have been accosted on the streets by inverters, or have among their acquaintances men who they know to be inverted". Following these medical and, one would argue, pathological depictions, the period between the 1890s up to the 1940s brought a novel linkage between homosexuality and the city to the fore – gay and lesbian individuals providing accounts or depictions of themselves (Abraham, 2009:98). Abraham cites two prominent figures who presented insightful accounts of the social experiences of gay men in Germany and France, these being gay advocate and social scientist Magnus Hirschfeld and French novelist Marcel Proust.

Offering one of the first links between homosexuality and urban life, Hirschfeld's (1905) *Berlins drittes Geschlecht* (Berlin's Third Sex) formed part of a series of social studies on urban life, in which Berlin takes on the characteristic of representing those individuals "...living on the fringes or outside respectable society" (Abraham, 2009:99). Seeking to provide a balanced account of the mutually reinforcing emotional and sexual nature of homosexual existence, Hirschfeld (cited in Abraham, 2009:99) not only cited various urban settings occupied by homosexuals in Berlin which reinforced stereotypical depictions of gay men, but also argued that "...the love from which no new beings at all are born is also productive". He noted that, regardless of public

scepticism of whether these individuals "...could form social groups at all" (Abraham, 2009:99), homosexuals "...besides erotic needs...have a natural desire for expression and understanding, which they found most easily with their own kind of people" (Hirschfeld, quoted in Abraham, 2009:99). He refers to a number of public and private social settings in Munich, Hamburg, Amsterdam, London, Rome and Paris where homosexual men met others akin to them, including bars, bathhouses, tearooms, restaurants, dances and clubs and concludes, "...[e]ven if the majority of homosexuals live in voluntary isolation, and nowhere is as visible as populous urban centres, and even if homosexuals exclusively devote themselves to one single person, nevertheless, the number of those who look for social contact and expression with other homosexual people is really quite large" (Hirschfeld, quoted in Abraham, 2009:99). They do so in order to, as Downs (2006:76) later would argue, (over)compensate for a lack of stable familial and marital ties. Although they displayed this need for communal identification, certain gay men "...lack the spirit of solidarity" based on a lack of communal mobilisation to protect their human rights (Hirschfeld, quoted in Abraham, 2009:102). In linking the work of Proust to Hirschfeld, Abraham (2009:103) underlines the former's reference to gay men "...shunning one another" because of fear of arrest, inherent shame or internalised homophobia. Regardless of such isolation and corresponding secrecy, it was not necessarily a lack of internal motivation amongst gay men to establish links and relationships within homosexual circles, but rather the vilified interpretation of their supposed sexual inversion by an external social context, which stifled their efforts (cf. Becker, 1973; Lemert, 1967; Plummer, 1975). The city thus served as dualistic milieu which facilitated the parallel existence of an overt (passing) heterosexual lifestyle and an exclusive, secretive gay lifestyle (Abraham, 2009:104-105). The latter would be evident but went overtly unacknowledged within a seemingly heterosexual setting, to particularly homosexuals, based on verbal and non-verbal cues such as glances, laughing, attire of reserved mannerisms (Abraham, 2009:103).

The further development of an openly communal homosexual lifestyle was interrupted by the scarcity of monetary and social resources brought forth by the Great Depression in the States, but also through the persecution of homosexual individuals in Nazi Germany. German sexologists, including Hirschfeld, were at the forefront of presenting research which posited homosexuality as alternative sexual variant and fought for the abolishment of Paragraph 175 of the penal code in Germany, which would criminalise homosexuality (and then become law in 1871). Regardless, much of his work, including one of the twenty three volumes of the first gay publications of the twentieth century, *Jahrbuch*, as well as his Institute for Sexual Science, was

destroyed by Nazis who engaged in the persecution of Jews and homosexuals (Kaiser, 1997:xiii; Meem et al., 2010:70). The latter minority group was forced to wear a pink triangle to identify their sexual orientation, and through the further enforcement of the referenced German penal code (cf. Jagose, 1996), approximately 100 000 men were arrested between 1933 and 1945 through the criminalisation of sexual activity between men (not women) (Meem et al., 2010:71), with 5 000 to 15 000 sent to concentration camps where several died (Tamagne, 2010:192). Although originally tolerant of homosexual activity amongst its own members, a gay Nazi SA commander Ernst Röhm and several of his allies, were “...massacred...[for their]...corrupt morals...[as] sexual perverts” during the Night of the Long Knives by their Nazi counterparts in 1934 (Kaiser, 1997:xiii; Tamagne, 2010:191). To curtail the ‘spread’ of homosexuality, Heinrich Himmler developed the homophobic Nazi rhetoric, which linked homosexuals to Jews. Both groups were typified as effeminates, cowards, irresponsible, disloyal and descendants from a mixed race, which, according to him, was a “foreign import” (Tamagne, 2010:192-193).

In the United States, the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation also had an undeniable effect on homosexual experience especially after the Civil War. During this period, Americans were presented with prospects of better lives in the cities, which offered improved but correspondingly “...some of the...worst living conditions imaginable” (Eaklor, 2008:45) in relation to country life. Natural increases alongside immigration were two of the major factors which lead to a populace of almost 122 million people in major cities by 1930 (Eaklor, 2008:45). Associated with what was termed the Harlem Renaissance, which accounts for the period between the 1920s through to the Depression in 1930s America, gay men also became more visible, especially in urban communities (Meem et al., 2010:69). Although much of this era was centred on the proliferation of especially African American art, literature and music in the New York jazz scene (cf. Eaklor, 2008:57), this particular period heralded a more inclusive and accepting space for homosexuality. Several figures of this Renaissance, whether writers, poets, novelists, sculptors, composers or painters, also identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual. The context was characterised by a sense of acceptance, inclusion and empowerment of ‘queer life’ and encompassed drag balls (or *Faggot’s Ball*), akin to those in Portugal and Spain (cf. Meem et al., 2010), hosted at the Hamilton Lodge. In addition, Greenwich Village’s bohemian style also provided a milieu for sexual expression, sexual experimentation and public critique of heterosexual norms and institutions, the latter courtesy of an all-female club formed in 1912 called *Heterodoxy* (Eaklor, 2008:59). Time Square provided the location for what was termed

the ‘pansy craze’⁷, which one could arguably associate with the reinforcement of heteronormativity through the stereotypical depictions of gay men. Cautionary openness about one’s sexual orientation was, however, at the order of the day, since discrimination and homophobia dominated much of this seemingly tolerant social milieu on a larger scale (Meem et al., 2010:69). Such behaviour reflected Hirschfeld’s statement upon visiting America in 1893, “[h]omosexual life in the United States is somewhat more hidden than in the United Kingdom” (quoted in Eaklor, 2008:52).

(b) ***Post war: The ‘gay ghetto’ as influential space for gay communal identification***

Used in various configurations by sociologists, the majority, according to Levine (1998:194), define the ‘gay ghetto’ as “...an area of the city housing as segregated cultural community.” First used as historical denotation of the Jewish community and studies on internal and external forces which led to the formation of African American experience in especially New York, Detroit and Cleveland in the 1960s and 1970s, the concepts ‘ghetto’ and ‘ghettoized’ came to represent a drive towards cities for minority groups (Abraham, 2009:240). Levine (1998:194) identifies sociologists from the Chicago School in the early 1920s, Robert E. Park and Louis Wirth as the first to designate the use of the concept ‘ghetto’ as description of “...any urban neighborhood inhabited by a people socially segregated from the larger society and bearers of a distinct culture”. They incorporated groups based on race, ethnic origin, religion and supposed deviants, which encompassed prostitutes, bohemians and hobos. What made their conceptualisation most useful, according to Levine (1998:194), was the fact that it could be divorced from others who wish to associate it merely with history, and apply it to the ecology of urbanity, amongst others. He cites Wirth’s (1928:286) four exclusive features associated with ghettos, to exemplify its usage in studies of sexual minorities. These included *institutional concentration*, which refers to the “centralization of the ghettoized people’s gathering places and commercial establishments”, a *cultural area* which reflects the dominant values, beliefs and practices of these people within that area, *social isolation* which supposes a degree of segregation from a mainstream (and in this case, heterosexual) society and limited circumstantial interaction with heterosexuals (Levine, 1998:202), and finally, *residential concentration* characterised by homes occupied by the marginalised (Levine, 1998:195).

⁷Pansy is a concept used to refer to men who act effeminately, which is seen as an entertainment spectacle (Eaklor, 2008:59).

Three stages contributed to different meanings associated with the 'gay ghetto.' Firstly the 1960s liberationist use thereof to signal 'gay life' or a 'gay world', secondly the 1970s adoption of the term by gays and lesbians as designation of their geographical setting and social lives whilst, thirdly, the late 1970s and 1980s brought explicitly likened 'ghetto' with 'gay' and 'urban' (Abraham, 2009:243). Regardless of its usage, the ghetto as ideological construct, provided the advocates of gay and lesbian liberation with the opportunity to manage "...their relationship to the group to which they had attached themselves by coming out...[and] distance itself from the dominant contemporary cultural stereotypes of homosexuals" (Abraham, 2009:244). Castells (1983:138) underscores this point by citing one of the political leaders of the San Francisco gay community in the 1970s, Harry Britt who believed that "[w]hen gays are spatially scattered, they are not gay, because they are invisible". The seemingly (in)exhaustive debate between proponents of either an essentialist or constructionist affiliation is further exemplified in attributing an 'ethnic'-like quality to the 'gay ghetto', in so far as proponents of the latter saw it as an exacerbation of categorisation of gay men and lesbian women (cf. Castells, 1983:167), whereas liberationists would appeal to establish such a stronger sense of communal camaraderie (Abraham, 2009:244).

Regarded as one of the most imperative recent works on studies of homosexual communities, particularly in cities across the last century, Abraham's previously cited *Metropolitan Lovers* (2009) follows in the footsteps of amongst others, Altman (1982), Chauncey (1994), D'Emilio (1983), Kaiser (1997) and Loughery (1998) in providing an in-depth and comprehensive account of the features, needs and probable limitations associated with gay subcultures in particularly urban centres such as Boston, Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Washington, DC. She cites the emergence of the 'gay ghetto' in the 1960s, as reference to the "gay world" and "gay life" (Abraham, 2009:335). For some it pointed towards rhetoric of assimilation of the original homophile movements of the 1950s. Yet, "...political activity on behalf of gays was justified when 'there's already something of a ghetto pattern for homosexuals, because of the pressures put on them to confine themselves to certain vocations where they are 'expected' and to isolate themselves'" (Ebreo, quoted in Abraham, 2009:335). This may be associated with Goffman's (1963:23) reference to "...shamed groups" as located within "...urban milieus [which,] containing a nucleus of service institutions...provide a territorial base for prostitutes, drug addicts, homosexuals, [and] alcoholics". Abraham cites the contributions of Sontag (1964) and Newton (1972) on the role of especially cities to construct so-called "...urban cliques" and "...gay worlds", respectively, for so-called "...dishonored people" (Newton, cited in Abraham, 2009:230). Seen

as unnatural, such homosexual 'deviants' were (and arguably still are) provided with a setting which seemingly accounts for and accommodates such unnatural manifestations (Newton, in Abraham, 2009:229), a thought echoed by Achilles (1998:175). Novelist Edmund White (2009:2) recalls the redemptive milieu of New York for gay men in the 1960s, where gay men could exhibit public displays of affection.

Transcending Wittman's (1972) original account of "gay ghettos", in especially San Francisco's Castro District, as originally policed and exploitative, Weston (1998:40) emphasised the redemptive quality inherent in the need for a communal identity, which was most likely through migration to cities (Abraham, 2009:241). In keeping with the general objectives of the study on the probable reinforcement of the heterosexual/homosexual binary through gay communal identification, Weston (1998:34) argues that "...[d]uring the Great Gay Migration, countless individuals launched themselves upon a quest for community...[i]n the process they interpret themselves *through* that attachment".

In this regard, Hooker (quoted in Abraham, 2009:233) noted that homosexually constituent communities existed in all the major cities in both the United States and, in all likelihood, several other urban areas in the West. She continues by complementing Seidman's (1996:7) work by citing "...steam baths...gay streets, parks, public toilets, beaches, gyms, coffeeshouses [as opposed to]...newsstands, bookstores, record shops, clothing stores, barber shops, grocery stores, and laundrettes" as communal settings for gay men (Hooker, quoted in Abraham, 2009:233) as evident examples of gay life within urban centres. In addition, Abraham (2009:233) recounts *Life* magazine's declaration in 1964 that homosexuality, and its potential problems, existed in several cities across the United States. San Francisco became one of the most influential American cities in terms of the social, cultural, economic and political mobilisation of the gay community since the late 1960s (cf. Castells, 1983). Associated with an adventurous nature, because of its mining potential for fortune seekers and its waterfront and Barbary Coast where discharged sailors, travellers and lonely individuals met, San Francisco, according to Castells (1983:140), always provided a setting for those who sought to explore their fantasies, since it was a city with more relaxed social standards and morals, which blurred the lines between morality and immorality. Alongside the aforementioned cities, this city was deemed the most liberal and provided a plethora of gay contexts ranging from gay owned and operated businesses and bars, feasts and protests as well as gay-friendly residential areas

(Castells, 1983:143), all of which exemplify Levine's (1998) reference to the categorisation of gay individuals as "...ghettoized".

Building on novelist Edmund White (2009) and Susan Sontag's (1964) identification of the celebration of "camp" as "...an aesthetic and a style that gays developed to express the theatricality and the urbanity of their lives" in the 1960s, Abraham (2009:226) argues that the worlds of theatre (and per implication performance) and the city were conjoined. Newton, an anthropologist, illustrated the Chicago School's symbolic interactionist roots within an ethnographic study on gay female impersonators. Through this, she underscored the theatricality of everyday social experience and artificiality of homosexuality as social category (cf. Altman, 1972; Butler, 1990; 1993; Goffman, 1971; Sontag, 1964:279). Castells (1983:162) continues along these lines by highlighting the "...colour, imagination, and verve" of gay life and celebration in cities such as San Francisco during street fairs, Gay Freedom Day Parades and even Halloween. According to him, the populace and influence of gay men in cities, merge the liveliness of play, music, politics and networks of communication (Castells, 1983:162). This idea of conjoined 'otherness,' is emphasised in Freeman (2011) and Morrison's (2011) content analyses of the motion pictures *Brokeback Mountain* and *The Wizard of Oz*. What is particularly interesting in their work is the fact that they dualistically associate gay lifestyles with a search for freedom, an "elsewhere" (cf. Johnston et al., 2000:771) which is separate from a seemingly oppressive and restrictive heteronormative milieu. Yet, at the same time, they also contradict the work of others (Abraham, 2009; Castells, 1983; D'Emilio, 1983), since they associate such an "elsewhere" with secrecy (the mountain of the title), and the city with a heteronormative constraint. Regardless, the vibrancy offered by a more inclusive yet, overtly acknowledged restricted existence, these cities (or other redemptive spatial arrangements as it relates to 'the mountain'-metaphor) provided a degree of autonomy and freedom for those labelled as different or deviant.

An evident example in South Africa is Rink's (2008:212) reference to De Waterkant, a so-called "gay village" in Cape Town. He notes that the cover page of the 2007 edition of *Pink Map*, a comprehensive information guide for the "...pink traveller", included a "...pink passport" from "...The Republic of Cape Town". This provided a clear differentiation (and even exclusion) of heterosexual spaces, so as to "...ensure a pleasant stay" for gay and lesbian tourists (Rink, 2008:212), and identified specific gay-friendly restaurants, cafes, pubs, clubs and places where one would find sexual pleasure. On the homepage of their website, Pink South Africa (2012a;

2012b) refers to the progressive South African homosexual climate in general, and specifically cites Cape Town as “...the epicenter of gay life. It plays host to some of our country's most flamboyant queer events and celebrations such as Cape Town PRIDE Festival, the flagship massive Mother City Queer Projects costume dress party and The Out in Africa Gay and Lesbian Film Festival....Here you will discover true comforts and first class service along with incredible scenery, a vibrant, first world city on a third world continent”.

De Waterkant, a section of the suburb of Green Point on the periphery of Cape Town's CBD, has taken on an evident 'ghettoised' caricature because of its characterisation as 'gay village'. Yet, based on this, this concentration of an 'other' provides, according to Rink (2008:207), a utopian space. In contrast with the original urban gay and lesbian enclaves in the early 1920s in Harlem, racial segregation in the South African context, does not necessarily guarantee an entrance to a space in which gay men and lesbian women can 'perform' (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Goffman, 1971) their sexual orientation beyond the watchful eyes of possibly hostile heterosexual communities (Rink, 2008:208). Although such a postmodern inclination may in fact seek to 'normalise' homosexuality and denaturalise the presumed dominance and stability of heterosexuality, it still renders itself quite homogeneous, separatist, exclusionary and as 'other'. In adopting the 'ghettoized' model of cities like Amsterdam, New York and San Francisco, De Waterkant creates a 'mythical' account of community without affording some much needed attention to several inequalities, whether based along racial, social or material lines (Elder, 2004, quoted in Rink, 2008:211). To prove this point, Rink (2008:212) undertook a content analysis of several advertisements for gay clubs in this village, which in fact perpetuated the 'ideal type' male image as white, young, masculine, muscular and presumably financially affluent. Such depictions emphasise a double segregation of sorts, based on both racial and sexual exclusion – white versus black, gay male versus lesbian female and gay male versus 'straight' male (Rink, 2008:212).

Included in Figure 3 is an example of an Amsterdam Action Bar-advertisement, which alongside The Hot House and Navigation, are all situated in De Waterkant.

Figure 3: Amsterdam Action Bar-advertisement
 (Source: <http://www.capetown.tv/images/slider/201205-amsterdam.png>)



Visser's (2007) research, however, centred on the creation of homosexual spaces from heterosexual ones, which included the South African city of Bloemfontein, he believed to be a "homonormalised" space. He argues that under the Apartheid regime and even during early post-Apartheid, very little was done to accommodate gay men in adequate leisure settings, such as bars and clubs in 'smaller' cities like Bloemfontein (Visser, 2007:220). These men would engage in so-called 'club tourism' on weekends, travelling to Johannesburg and Pretoria for the best look and feel associated with such venues, since they "...wanted to experience 'the gay life in the big city and see what it was all about'" (Visser, 2007:220). Defining 'leisure time' as "...time spent 'going out'", many of his respondents stated that they seek out leisure settings which are gay friendly, but not necessarily gay *per se*. Such patrons would cite these settings' provision of spaces to be themselves, 'cruise' for sexual hook-ups and live out their diverse and unique identities (Visser, 2007:223-224). His main proposition contradicted earlier Anglo-American 'gay spatial arrangements' which reinforced the heterosexual/homosexual binary. He argues that his findings, although restricted to one particular city, challenges the perceived threatening nature of straight-coded spaces (Visser, 2007:226), which clearly contradicted the 'utopian'-like straight/gay segregation evident in Rink's (2008) analysis of *Pink Map* and De Waterkant depictions. In several 'heterosexualised' spaces, such as The Mystic Boer and Oolong in Westdene, gay liberation since the mid-1990s afforded a typically youthful patronage one would describe both as "fabulous" and "liberal" in terms of the latter, and "relaxed" and

“...with an interesting blend of people...who leave one another alone” (interviews quoted in Visser, 2007:221). As such, he proposes a movement towards a “...’straightening’ of gay space and the ‘gaying’ of straight space, as potential positive steps towards achieving the homonormalisation of leisure space” (Visser, 2007:226).

Based on research by several of the cited and quoted academics in the foregoing section (Abraham, 2009; Altman, 1982; Castells, 1983; 2004; Chauncey, 1994; D’Emilio, 1983; Levine, 1998; Valentine, 2002; Warren, 1998), I will now turn my gaze towards a differentiation between the more ‘visible’ gay subculture in bars and clubs, and the more ‘invisible’ and ‘secretive’ groups in their residential milieus.

(i) *The visible gay cultural space: The homosexual bar and health club*

The populace of gay-friendly cities, like Cape Town and San Francisco and several of the other cited examples, reflect Valentine’s (2002:146-147) argument on gay migration, in so far as such tolerant contexts encouraged gay men to move and settle there. Bars, clubs, bookstores as well as other commercialised institutions emerged, which were owned by and catered for the specific needs of their homosexual patrons (Levine, 1998:199; Valentine, 2002:147). Although originally more secretive in the 1950s through to the 1970s, these institutions have become more visible since the 1980s (Levine, 1998:196; Valentine, 2002:151; Warren, 1998:183). In addition to word-of-mouth accounts, published directories, tourism guides (depicted in the annual *Spartacus International Gay Guide*) as well as newspapers and magazines directed towards the gay market provide information on where to access gay-themed entertainment, beaches, parks, gay-friendly vacation accommodation and dating personals (Coon, 2012; Levine, 1998:196; Rink, 2008).

Evident examples in South Africa include the previously entitled *Link*-newspaper, now titled *Exit*, the more upper class *Gay Pages*-magazine or the discussed specialised *Pink Map* (Pink South Africa, 2012b). The name *Exit*, associated with a supposed emergence from the ‘closet’ for men who bought it, originated as newsletter for the first South African homosexual liberationist movement in 1985 (Cameron & Gevisser, 1995:8). In addition to providing an A to Z register of gay bars, bathhouses and clubs, it also serves as a source for health advice, sections on entertainment and a ‘classifieds’ section for those in search of either confluent sex or stable relationships (Cameron & Gevisser, 1995:8; Croucher, 2002; Exit, 2012; Gevisser, 1995:48).

Based on several studies on the role of the homosexual bar as visible cultural space for gay men to establish a sense of communal identification (Abraham, 2009; Achilles, 1998; Altman, 1982; Castells, 1983; D'Emilio, 1983; Levine, 1998; Murray, 1998; Valentine, 2002; Warren, 1998), examples of South African leisure spaces proliferated since the 1940s up to its current day configurations. Gevisser (1995:39) argues that, akin to its Western counterparts, South African gay bars, clubs and discos resulted from supposed 'imports' of men who had spent time in Amsterdam, New York and San Francisco. Initial examples included The Stardust in Durban, Wings in Cape Town and the Dungeon or Big D in Johannesburg. Although other gay dance venues existed before, their unquestionable "openness" (Gevisser, 1995:39), longevity and mere size, transcended the earlier configurations. The Dungeon's patrons were mostly Afrikaans-speaking, and they were provided with an array of interior design choices and informational sources, ranging from pictures of male torsos, religious iconography (the Star of David) and AIDS education posters (Gevisser, 1995:39).

Several themes have emerged which typify the contributions made by these more public gay spaces. The discussion to follow will identify **seven** of these. The **first** positions the gay bar as a **leisure and sociable** context for gay men. Leisure time usually takes the form of a secretive and stigmatised experience for several gay men who attempt to avoid any public identification of their homosexuality, particularly within their work and familial lives. One is thus left to assume that a sense of freedom, "...letting your hair down" (cf. Warren, 1998) and more fully realising the 'I'-component of the self (cf. Mead, 1962) are mainly associated with personal, 'after hours' time, and not at work. Patrons use these contexts to meet new people for the purpose of friendship or even furtive sex (Warren, 1998:184). As such, **secondly**, it serves as facilitator for **anonymity** for those gay men who wish to remain in the 'closet'. Such anonymity may, however, be compromised in certain situations – even from within the gay circle itself. As one patron of a gay bar in the 1970s recalled, "...[g]ay circles can be sort of gossipy and closed, and there tends to be a great deal of talk and gossip outside the bars about – 'well, I saw so-and-so in the bar'" (quoted in Warren, 1998:185).

Thirdly, it is seen as a **mobile, flexible and adaptable** context. Much of this is associated with the threats posed by legislative institutions including the police force and constant raids in especially the 1950s and 1960s in, amongst others the United States and South Africa. The institution is able to quickly close its doors, relocate and reopen, without too much trouble. This, according to Altman (1982:21), in a juxtaposing manner, provides stability amid a flexible and

uncertain social context. A **fourth** theme exacerbates the heterosexual/homosexual binary since it establishes a **segregated** community of homosexual men, separate from mainstream heterosexual society. Such a separate community may posit closeted gay men, who may occupy prominent positions in the world of business, for example, to avoid such contexts and subsequent contextual labelling⁸, despite their need to either identify with other gay men or engage in regulated sexuality (Warren, 1998:185). In addition to American “homosexualization” (Altman, 1982), some of the earliest configurations of the previously mentioned communities of “brotherhood” (cf. Abraham, 2009; McIntosh, 1968; Plummer, 1998b:85), included gay men in England, who were described as so-called ‘mollies’, who were patrons of so-called ‘molly houses’, which according to Bray (1995:84) “...merged into a coherent social milieu”.

In addition to a distinction from heterosexual communities, segregation is also implied through the specialised nature of certain bars. Warren (1998:185) refers to bars which cater for a particular clientele, whether it be cruising bars for sex, restaurants for the more discerning gay man, or those ones who are frequented by specific races, ethnic groups or even sailors. Hekma (2010:333) cites the thematic nature of gay bars across the world. Not only is the physical athleticism deemed as a prerequisite for gay men, but certain patrons seek out a particular ‘thematic’, ‘theatrical’ or even ‘performative’ persona when attending these bars. This could include so-called ‘trades’, thus men who identify as gay based on the contextual circumstances – a sailor, working class youth, soldiers or clones, machos and leather men (Hekma, 2010:333). Regarding the South African context, it is also interesting to note that such segregation also manifests along racial lines, with findings from studies in the 1990s that some white gay men would organise themselves outside gay leisure activities associated with the black communities, ranging from bars and clubs to the annual Gay Pride Parade (Gevisser, 1995:82; Visser, 2007:224). Black gay subcultures of the later 1950s and 1960s were reflected in *Drum* magazine and the *Golden City Post* in articles written by their journalists who were ‘on’ or ‘apart of the scene’, a scene which provided a healthy alternative lifestyle for black youths who may otherwise engage in criminal activities such as loitering, drug usage or gambling (Chetty, 1995:118). A later configuration of black gay leisure activity was evidenced in the kwaTema chapter of the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW)⁹, where parties were held at homes and shebeens, the latter profiting from the regularity and dependable source of income afforded by its gay patronage (Gevisser, 1995:68). South African studies

⁸Labelling of an individual as gay based on his presence in a gay bar (Warren, 1998:185).

⁹A discussion on GLOW will be provided in section 2.3.2 (b) on the nature of South African gay and lesbian liberationist movements.

(Visser, 2007:223) also reported on the segregation between more 'masculine' and 'straight acting' gay men and 'effeminate' ones, with a clear indication from the former group that they do not seek out or go to bars where they are surrounded by a "...load of queens".

A **fifth** theme associated with gay leisure spaces highlights its **permission** and **control over sexual relationships** between gay men (Gevisser, 1995:69; Tamagne, 2010:181; Visser, 2007:220). Due to this, the bar takes on a 'fickle' character of sorts. This is associated especially with the importance the perceived overcompensating gay male (cf. Downs, 2006:76) ascribes to youth and physical appearance. New faces, regardless of age, quickly become old and predictable (Warren, 1998:184), whereas the importance of "...health, athleticism, nature and youth" (Rizzo, 2010:212), associated with consumer culture, becomes all the more important (Alvarez, 2009; Bech, 1997). In so doing, Achilles (1998:177) argues that a degree of safety in place of the sexual promiscuity of parks and streets is provided (cf. Abraham, 2009:100), alongside a sense of respectability (Achilles, 1998:176; Rizzo, 2010:211). Whereas a dichotomous relationship may have characterised the heterosexual community in terms of single and/or coupled relationships, gay men were able to easily separate love and sex, exuding the belief that the two should be experienced in a myriad array of non-monogamous relationship schema (Hekma, 2010:335). Achilles (1998:176) refers to the use of warning bells and lights in the 1950s and 1960s to alert patrons of possible police raids in American gay bars. Following such raids, patrons who escaped identification or arrest, would display pride in having been part of such an "escapade" (Achilles, 1998:176) and even pass on advice to new patrons on managing such situations. This safe haven of sorts was imperative, since stigmas associated with homosexuality led to the victimisation of gay men as powerless preys in cities in the form of theft, extortion, arrests and blackmail (D'Emilio, 1983:51).

A **sixth** theme underlines the bar as **secondary socialisation agent**, based on the fact that gay men are given the opportunity to interact with others 'like them' in an attempt to fully contemplate and express their social and sexual selves (Warren, 1998:185). As such, it is deemed as a sexually 'defining' place (Altman, 1982:21; Warren, 1998:184), since one is left to assume that other patrons are also homosexual. In adopting the 'ghettoized' depiction of homosexuals, Altman (1982:21) notes that the gay bar performs this socialisation or 'coaxing'¹⁰ (cf. Canfield, 2007:385) function originally likened with the family or church in heterosexual

¹⁰ The 'coaxing'-metaphor basically involves support from the broader heterosexual community and families for gay and lesbian families to provide advice or 'coax' the latter if necessitated (Canfield, 2007).

society, referencing the account of a lesbian woman who noted, "...bars have been and remain...the focal point of the gay and lesbian community....they shape the culture of gay life, even as they are shaped and changed themselves....They, nonetheless, are *our territory*¹¹, even with all the control that the *outside world* exerts"¹².

A **final** theme relates to the **introduction of mainstream heterosexual society to gay life**. Although such a theme clearly articulates an essentialist and binary logic, so-called 'mixed bars' with female impersonators on stage facilitate the metaphor of performance which attempts to avoid a clash of the seemingly different worlds of heterosexuality with homosexuality (Hekma, 2010:332; Warren, 1998:186). Such a provision may unfortunately prove to aid attempts to 'entrap' gay men, because of the efforts of police officers or other possibly homophobic patrons who wish to victimise sexual minorities, as was the case with arrests made several times at New York's Stonewall Inn (Jagose, 1996; Kaiser, 1997), San Francisco's The Black Cat (Achilles, 1998; Castells, 1983) and the so-called Forest Town Orgy in Johannesburg (Gevisser, 1995:32). Such raids were very evident in the 1950s and 1960s and owners of these establishments faced arrests and imprisonment if their bars were characterised by 'disorderly conduct', 'obscene behaviour' or even a display of same-sex affection (Achilles, 1998:176). In addition, such an 'introduction' facilitates and further reinforces the idea of the homosexual as 'exotic' other (cf. Seidman, 1996), in so far as heterosexual tourists or interested parties will attend such settings in order to satisfy their curiosity of homosexual lifestyles. In so doing, Valentine (2002:147) believes that this presents gay and lesbian activities and experiences as "spectacles" for heterosexual consumption, which in many respects eradicates a clear-cut boundary between the once safe spaces for homosexuals, something Warren (1998:189) terms as a territorial invasion of sorts. Examples on a worldwide level are annual Gay Pride Parades in countries such as the United States, Australia and South Africa. Although one could interpret these occurrences as politically and culturally progressive and even rebellious, it may provide what one participant in Rothmann's (2011) study on gay fathering termed as an "...exaggerated misinterpretation" of gay life. Based on this, gay individuals move from the privacy of shadowy existence to adopt a public performative persona, and in effect proclaiming "We're here! We're Queer!" (Valentine, 2002:155). In so doing, not only do heterosexual individuals enter into homosexual settings, but *vice versa*, a reciprocal entrance into supposed heterogeneous settings which was represented in the explorative study of Visser (2007).

¹¹Emphasis added.

¹²Emphasis added.

Contradicting the potential benefits of these predominantly gay spaces, Bech (1997) and Connell's (1992) work present a **less libertating view** of bars and clubs. One of the gay male participants in Connell's (1992:744) study, for example, recalled the "...notoriously antisocial...very cold" nature of gay bars. This participant recalls his first attempt at marginal involvement which resulted in his introduction to anal sex and being coerced into doing this and, as such, being "raped" by the gay patrons of the bar. Bech's (1997) work referenced the study of Dannecker and Reiche (1974) undertaken in West Germany. The latter identified five features associated with meeting places for gay men. In terms of the first, the researchers argued that communal gay contexts are characterised by a **short-term** focus, cultivated by confluent and casual sex (Bech, 1997:248). As such, these contexts facilitate **alienation** and no **authentication** of the gay male identity, since relationships are mainly established in order to engage in sexual intercourse and, as a result, a distinct distance, rather than close-knit reciprocally beneficial bond, is established. This happens, according to Bech (1997:111), in order to safeguard the patrons of gay bars and clubs from "...being recognized and unmasked" by the "generalised other" (cf. Mead, 1962) in mainstream society. Individuals are also, **thirdly, reified** in so far as one's chosen sexual partner is reduced to an object, "...to be used and disposed of" as part of an attempt to experiment with your sexuality. Gay men, are thus, **fourthly, instrumentalised**, in order to experiment with one's sexual identity and possibly formulate a more "coherent" (cf. Mead, 1962) sense of self. **Fetishism**, in turn, convenes the preceding features and typifies the central importance of communal gay settings as valuing "...only the surface of the other person, or only a part of him" (Dannecker & Reiche, 1974, cited in Bech, 1997:112), his "sensuous" self (Cass, 1984:116), rather than any other component of his being.

Parallel to the more visible and relatively speaking, less secretive community of gay men, other gay men sought to group together in more clandestine settings.

(ii) *The invisible gay residential space: Gay homes*

Regarded as the more secretive gay space (Warren, 1998:183), younger gay men believe this to be the setting in which older men position themselves, because the latter are not able to compete sexually in the more overt bar scene. These residences, whether owned or rented, are seen as the most important private spaces for gay men, away from the watchful eyes of

mainstream heterosexual society (Castells, 1983:158; Warren, 1998:187). Abraham (2009:249) in accordance with Castells (1983:158), identifies gay men as the sources for the repair, 'urban renovation' and maintenance of the aesthetic quality of older buildings and houses (particularly in San Francisco). Three consequences, according to Castells (1983:158), which underscored the idea of gay identification as dependent or influenced by communal belonging, arose from this. Firstly, gay affluent professionals sought to buy older homes in more depleted communities in an attempt to establish a communal attempt at gentrification. Secondly, a communal survival 'instinct' mobilised gay men, possibly discriminated against in the labour market, to buy, renovate and later sell houses to earn a living. Finally, they formed so-called collectives to purchase and renovate houses in those instances where individuals or individual couples could not afford real estate on their own. This did not merely express an economic need, but mirrored initiatives by other counter-culture collectives (such as ethnic minorities, bohemians, etc.) of the 1960s to replace possibly non-existent familial ties and support systems (Castells, 1983:159). In discussing the nature of these private residential spaces, I wish to implore the reader to understand its importance as not only part of a more public residential community, but also as a personal space for the individual gay man and its subsequent influence in terms of a self-reflexive understanding (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010; Mead, 1962) of his gay self.

Warren's (1998:188) work has especially been groundbreaking in this regard. In a study undertaken in several American cities, including Boston, Chicago, New York and San Francisco, she contends that these homes are usually typified by a concise, precise and personalised style. She argues that gay men or couples, within the age bracket of thirty up to about fifty, undertake quite extensive and expensive care of their homes, spending most of their disposable income on buying, designing and maintaining their homes (Castells, 1983:160; Warren, 1998:188). Although these homes may differ in size and price, they do display a homogeneous style of sorts, for as she notes, "...[t]he style is one of subdued elegance and neatness, with exact placement of objects and combinations of colors, textures, and surfaces; idiosyncratic and personal touches; and great care, cleanliness, and tidiness" (Warren, 1998:188). Echoing the notions of Hirschfeld (1913, cited in Abraham, 2009:99) and Valentine (2002), Castells (1983:167) argues that when gay men "...occupy a building, and make it distinctive and valuable...[it] has beauty, comfort and sensuality, and is saying something to the city while expressing something to its own dwellers". In using the American city of San Francisco as example, he continues by noting that "[i]t is a fact...that gays improved the quality of housing and urban space, mainly through renovation and maintenance" (Castells, 1983:160). The

objective for such intricate design is associated with certain gay men's need to preserve their private and secretive lives, something which amazes Warren (1998:188). She reiterates the symbolic practice of performance (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Goffman, 1971) by directing the reader's attention to the fact that the hefty financial burden accrued by gay men in perfecting their homes, is associated with setting the perfect stage for both themselves and their guests for a safe and autonomous existence as gay men (Castells, 1983:160; Goffman, 1971:19). Regardless of the implied privacy, the objective, according to Warren (1998:189), is to create "...a place where the expression of the true self can be allowed", expressed courtesy of participants in his study in remarks such as "letting my hair down", "being myself" or "...where the walls can be allowed to fall, where the mask worn in straight interactions can be dropped".

Abraham (2009), however, signals Altman's (1982:32) rejection of this connection, in so far as the latter, while acknowledging the association between the increased visibilities of gay men in cities with the so-called "homosexualization" thereof, points to variance in the so-called gentrification of urban development. His argument also finds representation amongst some gay men who 'denounce' the apparent link between gay men and renovation, arguing that this may result in further stereotypes and stigmatisation. Castells (1983:166) does however contend that one should acknowledge the propensity of gay men for interior and exterior design, without a corresponding exacerbation of prejudice and stigmas which may accompany it.

Regardless of whether one were to associate such attempts at gentrification as innate quality of gay men or an exaggerated stereotype, both these more visible and secretive spaces emphasise a sense of belonging and community amongst these 'ghettoised' men, amidst a climate of heterosexual disavowal and hostility.

2.4.2 The lesbian and gay movement: A case of 'pathology abandoned'?

A clear signifier of the problematic relationship between essentialism and constructionism, came courtesy of the emergence of the noted distinct gay and lesbian communities in the United States in the 1970s (Epstein, 1998:140). Directly aligned with much of lesbian and gay studies' and early sociological focus on homosexuality, posited it homosexual as "...a social stigma to be managed; they analyzed the ways homosexuals adapted to a hostile society...as part of a deviant sexual underworld of hustlers, prostitutes, prisons, tearooms, baths, and bars" (Seidman, 1996:7). The latter served as evident demarcation of an exotic and distinct

community of individuals who expressed a need to identify a sense of belonging and sameness. Originating from homophile and later liberationist movements, proponents of lesbian and gay studies sought to provide insights into the lived experiences of these two sexual minority groups which transcended a mere medical and pathological model of explanation. It should be noted at the outset, that homophile movements, and their later counterparts of gay liberation and feminist movements, differ substantially in terms of each of their underlying principles and objectives, as will be evident from the discussion that follows.

(a) ***The origin and development of Western homophile and liberationist movements***

Homophile movements, according to Jagose (1996:22), wanted to educate mainstream and minoritised society on issues related to homosexuality, in addition to attempts to influence political reform which would ideally result in increased tolerance, integration and decriminalisation of homosexuality (Epstein, 1998:138). Its origin is traced to the end of the nineteenth century in Europe, corresponding with the account of the creation of the social subject category of “the homosexual” in subsection 2.2.2. Based on legislative, medicalised and religious condemnation and criminalisation, these organisations attempted to protest against “institutionalised prejudices”, such as the noted Paragraph 175 of the penal code in Germany (Jagose, 1996:23). Such attempts included open letters and addresses by Karoly Maria Benkert and German neurologist Magnus Hirschfeld’s insistence on the congenital and corresponding harmless nature of homosexuality. Other examples of such movements ranged from the *British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology* in 1914 and the American based *Chicago Society for Human Rights* in 1924, both more conservative in nature, with education rather than legislation as main objectives (Jagose, 1996:23-24; Meem et al., 2010:75).

D’Emilio (1983:65) cites the emergence of, amongst others, the *Mattachine Society* in the United States in 1951. Such organisations started to emerge largely based on the changing climate in, amongst others, the United States, where homosexuality had taken on the label of “...a subject of serious concern” (D’Emilio, 1983:52), which corresponded with more aggression and hostility, courtesy of heterosexual society. The society was loosely affiliated with the then Communist Party and transcended a mere educational focus for its members, by incorporating a moderate collective political consciousness as future goal to retaliate against their perceived marginal position within mainstream hegemonic society (D’Emilio, 1983:68). One participant of such a group recalled that “...the freedom to open up...really, that’s what it was all about. We

had found a sense of belonging, of camaraderie, of openness in an atmosphere of tension and distrust” (D’Emilio, 1983:68). It gained more visibility (Meem et al., 2010:75) with its publication of a magazine entitled *One*, of which the content exemplified gay pride (Jagose, 1996:25) and branched out into several chapters in cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Boston, Chicago and Washington, D.C. by the late 1960s (Abraham, 2009:231). Regardless, Meem et al. (2010:75) cite the publication of an article in *Time*-magazine during this period which still represented homosexuals as “...sad, sick, and even sexually predatory”. The organisation’s communal nature and emphasis on sameness (cf. Epstein, 1998:142), based on its linkages to its Communist origins under McCarthyism, later however led to an opposition between its founding pro-Communist and anti-Communist members, with the latter advocating an assimilationist orientation, “...insisting that homosexuals were people like everyone else and that it was more productive for them to co-operate rather than be militant [as advocated by founders] with experts in the fields of medicine, law and education in order to effect change” (Jagose, 1996:26). Based on the founders’ decision to avoid election, the organised opposition took charge and changed the objectives and structure of the *Mattachine Society* drastically, with dominant social norms, individualism and the so-called “...wisdom of [heterosexual] experts” replacing a distinctively affirmative, collective and self-affirming homosexual community (Jagose, 1996:26).

This thought also resonates in Stein and Plummer’s (1996:130) overview of the nature of the earlier focus of lesbian and gay studies. They note that two strands of thought originally typified the earliest accounts of this paradigm, these being either empirical and/or theoretical (Stein & Plummer, 1996:130). Much of the empirical studies which originated in the early nineteenth century sought to provide in-depth accounts of the aetiology of homosexuality. The homosexual individual was the object of study and researchers wanted to account for “...every nook” of homosexual existence, particularly as it pertained to communal lives, thus replicating the social and sexual divide between heterosexual society and a perceived inherent “...exotica of difference” (Stein & Plummer, 1996:130) of homosexuality. Sociological discourse enmeshed itself within these perceived unproblematic accounts of sexuality. Sexuality studies occupied the so-called “...margins of the [sociological] discipline” (Stein & Plummer, 1996:129). These academics associated such a lacklustre focus with the particularistic inclination of the earliest sociological thinkers which underscored their perceived ignorance of the importance of sexuality and gender studies to the sociological discipline (Stein & Plummer, 1996:129). Through later theoretical work, however, social scientists started to address issues relating to the social

construction of homosexuality, particularly based on the emergence of lesbian and gay liberationist movements.

The origin of **liberationist movements**, in contrast, is primarily associated with the Stonewall Riots on 27 June 1969, where a police raid at the Stonewall Inn – a New York gay and drag bar – resulted in resistance and a weekend of riots in which its transvestite and working class gay male patrons were involved (Abraham, 2009:230; Castells, 1983:138; Jagose 1996:30; Seidman, 2003:64). This, according to D’Emilio (1983:233) saw the rise of a novel form of protest which transcended the so-called “...quietest position...[in favour of a dedication] to improving conditions for homosexuals” (Jagose 1996:30). Homosexuals wanted to construct their own community and culture as affirmation against perceived hostile society and consequently challenge sexual, gender and other social inequalities (Seidman, 2003:65). According to Jagose (1996), several distinct features emerged as a result of the three-day riots. These included, a central setting, thus specific cultural site of conflict reminiscent of a nascent gay culture, it stressed a sense of self-determination, it challenged the status quo through militant action in contrast to the homophile movement’s more assimilationist approach, and finally, scandalised mainstream heterosexual society through a dissemination of ideas on difference rather than similarity (Jagose, 1996:31). She justifies her work by quoting Weeks (1985:191) who also identifies certain conditions as necessary for the proliferation of politicised sexual identities, including a large group of individuals facing similar oppression, a homogeneous geographical setting, identifiable oppressors, specific events which spur social change and an intellectual leadership with clearly defined goals, as per Gramsci’s (cited in Swingewood, 1999:64) concept of hegemony.

As result, the political organisation called the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was formed. Based on its refusal to be subjected to traditional understandings of family and its corresponding role expectations (Rizzo, 2010:213), its emergence spurred the creation of similar radical formations across the world, including a namesake movement in Britain, *Front Homosexuel d’Action Révolutionnaire* (FHAR) in Paris and *Homosexuelle Aktion Westberlin* in Germany (Rizzo, 2010:213). In contrast with the homophile movements which sought integration, the liberation front identified transformation of the societal whole alongside other minorities (based on class and ethnic positions) as necessary, in order to curtail modes of oppression, encompassed by racism, imperialism as well as homophobia (Meem et al., 2010:94; Rizzo, 2010:213-214). Proponents of the liberationist movement believed that it was “...too late for liberalism...too late,

that is, to expect inclusion in society through polite requests for reform”, and as such appealed to its members to express their private homosexual self in public. This necessitated ‘coming out’, for the closet was seen as an “...emblem of oppression, an interiorization of homophobia that could only be overturned by coming out and speaking out” (Rizzo, 2010:215). This objective is also evident in Abraham’s (2009:232) description of the liberationist movements:

...Repudiating the second-class status of homosexuals, gay liberation asserted the health rather than the sickness, the pleasure rather than the sufferings, of the homosexual men and women it would publicly redefine as ‘gay’. Arguing that lesbian and gay lives were deformed, and hostile fantasies of homosexuals maintained, by heterosexuals’ demand that queers conceal their sex and their emotions, gay liberation’s key tactic was ‘coming out’.

Coming out thus meant taking on a ‘group membership’ of sorts, proclaiming one’s once private identity to your (in)significant others, asserting statements such as ‘Gay is good’ and wearing buttons and shirts which read “Gay and proud”, “Faggot” and “How dare you presume I’m heterosexual?”, amongst others (Abraham, 2009:232; Altman, 1972:109). During this time, as typified by Altman as a possible emergence of the “homosexualization of America”, there was a definite sense of community amongst gay men and lesbian women, whether social or political. The gay bar, in contrast with its 1950s and 1960s form, became a more visible and safer context for particularly gay men, although its patrons were frequently critiqued by more politically inclined sexual dissidents, for wasting their time on frivolous activities (Meem et al., 2010:96). Regardless, both the bar, as social setting and its more public political GLF-counterpart, served mutually important and beneficial functions during this period. The bar sought to provide pamphlets on local clinics, information on gay political figures as well as addresses for gay-friendly businesses (Gevisser, 1995; Meem et al., 2010:97). The political motives manifested the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in October 1979, where between 75 000 and 100 000 people marched to Washington, D.C., a pet project of the late San Francisco city commissioner Harvey Milk (Meem et al., 2010:96). Altman (1971:310) quite graphically and explicitly emphasises the importance of a shared consciousness amongst members of the gay community by noting that it created “...a heightened sense of awareness of our position in society and a comprehension that we are not so much f*****d up as f*****d over, it is an essential ingredient of the insurgent culture, and one that is likely to have considerable influence on its peers.” Wittman (1972:159) however

contended that proponents of the GLF adopted a utopian-like objective in advocating a disappearance of the constraining categories of 'homosexuality' and 'heterosexuality' when noting, "...[w]e'll be gay until everyone has forgotten that it's an issue. Then we'll begin to be complete people".

But, regardless of such social and political visibility, the 1980s brought with it the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Regarded as the most prominent source for further communal identification amongst particularly gay men, the effects of the epidemic were especially evident in the United States. Originally associated mostly with gay men, doctors termed it the "gay related immune deficiency" (GRID) or "gay cancer" (Meem et al., 2010:97). Before later reports highlighted the fact that other groups were themselves also victims, amongst others drug users and prostitutes, much of the initial focus was on gay men, especially when American actor Rock Hudson declared that he was HIV-positive and gay, at a press conference in 1985. Several restrictive measures, rules and regulations were implemented to clamp down on saunas and backrooms associated with sexual pleasure (Meem et al., 2010:97). Under his presidency in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan never publically alluded to AIDS before the death of Hudson. In addition, based on the fact that the transmission of the virus was mostly associated with drug use and anal sex, the government never attempted at identifying it as a public health concern or provide the necessary funding for research or treatment thereof. It was even thought necessary by certain politicians, to quarantine gay men who were HIV-positive (Meem et al., 2010:97). Since most governments associated AIDS with homosexuals initially, "...despair and anger" (Hekma, 2010:342) were created amongst the gay community, since it further reinforced the idea of homosexuals as separate and marginal groups. Abraham (2009:280) comments in this regard that AIDS brought unprecedented attention to gay men in urban areas, resulting in an exacerbation of fears amongst the heterosexual community concerning such potential consequences of gay promiscuity. Maps were even drawn up which outlined the rates of infections in certain urban centres across the United States (Abraham, 2009:280). In contrast, sex venues were however not closed in European countries, based on the belief that these contexts could be used to provide information on the scourge of AIDS and, according to Hekma (2010:338), proved quite successful in their efforts. Several business owners in these countries, amongst others bar owners, were some of the first to hand out condoms to their patrons to promote safe-sex.

Based on the apathetic response from their governments, individual physicians and gay health groups mobilised their efforts to provide solace to AIDS patients. Organisations that resulted from this included the Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York, the San Francisco AIDS Foundation and AIDES in Paris (Hekma, 2010:343). The formation of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) in 1987 in America, sought to herald a new era of aggressive political provocation directed towards the apathy of governments. This organisation popularised the use of the slogan "Silence = Death", as it related to the silence of the government on the AIDS issue (Meem et al., 2010:98). Richardson and Monro (2012:14) argue that HIV/AIDS initiated a dual purpose for liberationist movements – to both "...revitalize' and professionalize the gay...movement in the US", and also to include other sexually dissident groups subjected to the disease on a national and international level. They cite the contributions made by organisations such as the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA) and the International Lesbian and Gay Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) which have globalised lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues, professionalised LGBT politics and established transnational networks to gain funding for social, political, legislative and health issues (Abraham, 2009:281; Richardson & Monro, 2012:15).

The origin of the liberationist movements in the United States and other countries was, in many respects, mirror-images of such changes in South Africa.

(b) ***South African gay and lesbian liberationist movements: Towards a case for democratisation***

Although the progressive and enviable Constitution of South Africa made it in May of 1996 the first country to explicitly prohibit any form of discrimination against people on the basis of sexual orientation, very little was done prior to this moment to mobilise gay men and lesbian women to attain this (Croucher, 2002:315). One of the earliest attempts, courtesy of Mark West, a member of the University of Natal's Students' Representative Council, spearheaded the formation of the South African Gay Liberation Movement in 1972, yet had to dismantle it later based on a police investigation into its operations (Gevisser, 1995:43). Three years prior to this, however, the first most prominent moment during the pre-1980s to galvanise the homosexual community, emerged in the form of the Law Reform Movement. It was initiated by gay and lesbian activists who sought to oppose the proposed criminalisation of homosexuality under the Apartheid regime's amendments to the Immorality Act of 1957 (later renamed the Sexual Offences Act) in 1968 (Gevisser, 1995:31; Retief, 1995:100). The Apartheid government wanted to criminalise

homosexuality as an 'alien' import punishable by compulsory imprisonment of up to three years (Croucher, 2002:315; Gevisser, 1995:31). Much of the apprehension directed towards homosexuality was associated with the fears of members of government of the threat posed by particularly wealthier English and Jewish men, who wanted to corrupt innocent Afrikaner boys (Gevisser, 1995:31). This necessitated the mobilisation of a number of white, middle-class gay men to raise an amount of R40 000 to afford the services of a lawyer to prevent the enactment of such legislation.

Their attempts were not futile, since the proposed legislation was not implemented, but found representation in three specific amendments to the act. These included that the age of consent for men to engage in homosexual acts was raised from 16 to 19 and that sexual toys, in particular dildoes, should be outlawed. The third was the "...infamous 'men at a party clause' which criminalised "...any 'male person who commits with another male person at a party any act which is calculated to stimulate sexual passion or to give sexual gratification'" (Gevisser, 1995:35). This clause, according to Gevisser (1995:35), was "absurd", since a party was defined as "any occasion where more than two persons are present". Such a rigid definition was based in part on parties such as the source of these amendments, the so-called "Mass sex orgy" in Forest Town in 1966, where nine men were arrested for "masquerading as women" and another for "indecent assault on a minor" (Gevisser, 1995:30). Two years later, the arresting police officers reported their "...disgust' and 'repulsion'" (Gevisser, 1995:30) of these acts to a Parliamentary Select Committee, predominantly based on the prevailing nationalist notion of the time, that "...homosexuality is a decadent, upper-class import 'contaminating' the purity of the mythologised – either Afrikaner or African – race" (Gevisser, 1995:31). The police head office even went as far as to circulate a memorandum amongst the different South African Police (SAP) commissioners, which warned that homosexuality was "...practiced between male persons throughout the country and that offenders are now pursuing an organised *modus operandi*", resulting in a 'witch-hunt' of sorts through informers which would infiltrate parties to curtail the new 'queer conspiracy' (Gevisser, 1995:31; Retief, 1995:101). The Law Reform Movement, as attempt to inhibit the criminalisation of homosexuality, was however mostly patronised by white, middle-class members, with no other evident examples of political initiatives amongst the black community, to pursue gay rights (Croucher, 2002:318). As with its Western counterpart, much of the 1970s and early 1980s revolved around a proliferation of gay men in urban areas across South Africa including Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria and even Potchefstroom (Gevisser, 1995:18). Seidman's (1996:7) references to studies on the gay

hustler, prostitute or oversexed homosexual culture, were also evidenced in the previous section's overview of bars, bathhouses and clubs of the 1960s and 1970s.

Only in 1982, did the first national gay organisation emerge in Johannesburg. The Gay Association of South Africa (GASA), mirroring the noted 'disco scenes' of the 1970s, mostly provided a social milieu of sorts, where a further lack of intersectional social variables pertaining to race, class and ethnicity was erased, with its elite white, middle-class membership. Its mission statement even underscored its lack of democratisation, a "...non-militant non-political answer to gay needs", which would eventually result in its quick demise (Croucher, 2002:318). In not supporting one of its few black members Simon Nkoli, who was part of the "...fledgling black interest group" (Reid, 2005:29) within GASA, and who was on trial for high treason (Cock, 2003:36) in the anti-Apartheid struggle, their grievous lapse in judgement resulted in scorn from both its members in South Africa and those of the International Lesbian and Gay Alliance (ILGA). In defending their stance, the National Secretary of GASA, Kevan Botha stated that "...we cannot begin to enter any debate on political structures or ideologies, neither our own country's nor any others" (Croucher, 2002:318), underscoring Reddy's (2010:19) reference to gay and lesbian identities as "racialised" (cf. Forth, 2008) based on its limited configuration as white, male and middle-class. Directing the critique of racism towards ILGA's own unrepresentative diversity in terms of racial inclusion, the latter did not expel GASA as member until 1987, but suffered other attacks for its passiveness in terms of the South African anti-Apartheid struggle (Croucher, 2002:319). In light of this, the subsequent gay organisations had to establish and display an evident linkage with the social and political turmoil of South Africa, manifesting the creation of a new organisation, Gay and Lesbians of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), of whom the members were mostly black, chaired by Nkoli. Under his leadership, GLOW sought to address the struggles of gay individuals, attesting to the fact that homosexuality was an omnipresent racial problem embedded within a larger political struggle (Croucher, 2002:319). Nkoli for example noted that "I'm fighting for the abolition of apartheid, and I fight for the right of freedom of sexual orientation. These are inextricably linked with each other. I cannot be free as a black man if I am not free as a black man" (quoted in Cock, 2003:36). But it was through the creation of the proficient Organisation of Lesbian and Gay Activists (OLGA) in Cape Town, aligned with an affiliate organisation to the African National Congress (ANC), called the United Democratic Front (UDF), that much change would be heralded in the early 1990s (Croucher, 2002:319).

With the unbanning of the ANC in 1990 and the initiation of negotiations to form a Government of National Unity, OLGA's ties with the UDF lead to the placement of gay and lesbian lobbyists in the midst of influential ANC representatives, to identify the importance of such basic human rights. Originally, such rights for gays and lesbians were contested by several of the ANC-members such as the ANC's representative in Britain in 1987, Solly Smith and Ruth Mompoti, a leading member of the ANC's then executive (Croucher, 2002:319; Tatchell, 2005:148). In an interview with Peter Tatchell (2005:148) in 1987, Mompoti noted, "...I cannot begin to understand why people want lesbian and gay rights. The gays have no problems. They have nice houses and plenty to eat. I don't see them suffering...this problem...seems to be fashionable in the West". This echoed Smith's (quoted in Tatchell, 2005:148) earlier assertion that same month in a newspaper article, in which he argued that the ANC's attention could not unnecessarily be diverted from their fight for majority rule, of which sexual dissidents were to be excluded. Responding to this, however, was then Director of Information for the ANC Thabo Mbeki. In a November 1987 telex to Tatchell, he reaffirmed the ANC's commitment to the abolishment of all discrimination brought to the fore by Apartheid. An extract from the telex read as follows:

...We have...never been opposed to gay rights, that position remains unchanged....As you know, we are always interested to see as many people as possible involved in the struggle against Apartheid. We therefore appreciate the initiatives undertaken by gays to involve themselves and other people in this struggle. About this there can be no question....We would like to apologise for any misunderstanding... (quoted in Tatchell, 2005:149).

Yet, later in May 2004 at a parliamentary debate in his capacity as President of South Africa, Mbeki was met with applause in his commitment to several developmental programmes in the country, which again, although one could argue, implicitly, erased the presence of lesbian and gay issues from other issues deemed imperative within a democratic society (Richardson & Monro, 2012:90). He noted that, "...[a]s with all our other development programmes, the Black Economic Empowerment process will focus on the challenge of the empowerment of **women, people with disabilities, and the youth**¹³" (quoted in Richardson & Monro, 2012:90), with no mention of sexual minorities. Regardless, in the years preceding the legal acknowledgment of sexual orientation as part of the South African Constitution, an organised mobilisation for the

¹³ Emphasis added.

rights of sexual dissidents facilitated a synergised attempt of about 42 organisations across South Africa to form the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) in 1994 which resulted in the eventual explicit Constitutional protection of sexual minorities. Its constituents comprised 55 per cent of African and 26 per cent female members, an initial progressiveness towards the realisation of intersectional social themes, which underscored the importance of class, race, gender, sex, age and religious affiliations, amongst others, as intervening variables in understanding sexual minority rights (cf. Murray, 2002:92; NCGLE, 2005:215; Richardson & Monro, 2012; Ritzer, 2012; Savin-Williams, 2005; Smuts, 2011). This underlined Nkoli's earlier reference to the inseparability of his race and sexual orientation. As part of their objectives, they highlighted the importance of retaining an explicit reference to sexual orientation in the Equality Clause of the final Constitution, to campaign for a decriminalisation of homosexuality, challenge discrimination and train representatives to serve as leaders in this endeavour (NCGLE, 2005:212-213). Included in sections 9(3) and (4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, the equality clause reads:

...The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth (quoted in Croucher, 2002:320).

Following in its wake, several legal judgements solidified the NCGLE's commitment to the advancement of lesbian and gay rights in South Africa. Consider for example their victories in abolishing the crime of sodomy in 1998 and affording same-sex couples equal rights pertaining to immigration regulations (1999), pension benefits (2002), recovering funeral expenses (2003), adoption (2002) and marriage (2006), whether billed as civil union or marital union (Reddy, 2010:22-23). Yet, as with the cited racial segregation in lesbian and gay communities and its organisational forms, so too is there still an evident rights-based segregation and incongruence between Constitutional prescriptions and civil society re-enactment thereof (Reddy, 2002:164; Richardson & Monro, 2012:89).

Evident causes for concern have arisen over the last few years, which necessitate a critical contemplation and practical enforcement of sorts. These include hate-crimes directed towards particularly black lesbian women. Bosch (2007:226) for example refers to studies which point to

the fact that lesbian women may be twice and gay men four times as likely, than their heterosexual counterparts to be victimised based on their sexual orientation. This is mostly attributed to the fact that police reports do not necessarily distinguish between violence directed towards individuals based on sexual orientation and other more general crimes and makes the accurate reportage of such harassment and victimisation nearly impossible (Bosch, 2007:226). Lesbian women have become evident targets for attacks, attributed to the adherence of members of predominantly black communities to the conservative, religious and traditionally ascribed African perspectives associated with sex, gender and sexual orientation (Cock, 2003:40-41; ILGA, 2012b; Muholi, 2004; News24, 2011; 2012a; 2012b; Nkabinde & Morgan, 2006; Ochse, 2011; Potgieter, 2005; Rankhotha, 2005; Smuts, 2011; Women24, 2011). The torture and murders of an openly proud lesbian, Zoliswa Nkonyana in 2006, the beheading of Thapelo Makutle, a transgender man who also identified as gay in the Northern Cape Province and murders of eight gay men in Johannesburg, supposedly by a serial killer targeting dating sites (OUT, 2012b), have lead representatives of the ILGA to pronounce, “[o]n the whole, Africa is failing its gay citizens...the majority should never be given the opportunity to preside over the fate or rights of a minority” (ILGA, 2012a). Members of the organisation even encourage a critical reflection on a “conspiratorial” thought of whether “...African elites [are] trying to distract their populations from more pressing issues, such as development, education, land redistribution and housing in their respective countries” (ILGA, 2012a).

Positing it as a Western imperialist and colonialist import of secular, not religious or indigenous values, Cock (2003:41) quotes Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe’s infamous 1995 declaration that “...gays are perverts and their behavior is worse than pigs,...[t]hey are lower than dogs and pigs, for these animals don’t know homosexual behavior” (cf. Reddy, 2002:164). He even encouraged his countrymen “...to take the law into its own hands, to arrest homosexuals, to report, and deport them’...[since it] was ‘unafican and in conflict with black culture” (quoted in Cock, 2003:41). Although enmeshed in Zimbabwean culture, a letter to the Johannesburg-based newspaper, *The Star*, from one of its readers a while later, commended Mugabe since “...‘he espouses and cherishes our traditions and customs. Homosexuality is an aberration to all thinking Africans and indeed to most of civilized mankind...which must be punished and locked up” (quoted in Cock, 2003:41). Dlamini (2006:131), Muholi (2004:123) and Reddy (2001:83) contest Robert Mugabe’s claim of homosexuality as being “un-African”. They ascribe homophobia in Africa and the South African society, to the influence of Western colonialism and the Christian religion. They cite several historical and anthropological studies

which provided ample examples of same-sex behaviour in Northern and sub-Saharan Africa across the centuries (Mutua, 2011:459; Nkabinde & Morgan, 2006; Patanè, 2010:271; Wallace, 2010:257-262)¹⁴.

Although somewhat reminiscent of Mead's (1962) earlier reference to the superior quality of human thought as source for "reflexiveness", Mugabe's interpretation of homosexuality leaves little room for positive reflexivity in which the 'I' would take precedence over the 'me'. Smuts' (2011) study of lesbian identity formation in Johannesburg is of particular value in this regard. This is attributed to the fact that she underlines the necessity to ascribe to an intersectional approach when studying the identity construction of sexual minorities (cf. Gevisser 1995:50-58; Reddy 1998:67). Her study reaffirmed how the incongruence between the South African Constitution, on the one hand, and the enforcement of its provisions in civil society, on the other, afforded sexual minorities little leeway to construct their sexual orientation. She attributed this to the manner in which the divergent influence of her participants' individualised "...intersecting multiple identities of class, race and religion" and fears of stigmatisation, provided the platform for a fluid understanding of lesbian identity. According to her findings, the women would continuously move towards the next stage in their identity construction and then revert back to the initial stages, based on a lack of the necessary material or human resources, depending on their class, race and religion (Smuts 2011:38). This fluidity, as such, determined each of her participants' access to a "...matrix of power...and...the extent to which [they] can tap into this power, and gain agency" (Smuts 2011:38; cf. Cock, 2003:42; Foucault, 1978:36).

Against this background, the so-called "democratisation" of sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, have become imperative objectives. Several South African contributors, whether academics, activist or writers (Cameron & Gevisser, 1995; Cock, 2003; Croucher, 2002; Epprecht, 2010; Ndashe, 2010; Reddy, 1998; 2001; 2006; 2009), have emphasised the necessity of such an approach to homosexuality within what is regarded as an "enviable" (cf. Itaborahy & Zhu, 2013) Constitution. In an extract from an interim report of the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (2005:1), it is argued that although democracy in South Africa provided lesbian and gay individuals "...full citizenship", it was imperative to "...now claim our citizenship". This resulted in a shift in focus on decriminalisation of homosexuality, to an assertion of the human rights through recognition of their identities (Reddy, 2009:342). Reddy's argument is supported by others like Ndashe (2010), who as part of several

¹⁴ The debate surrounding examples of same-sex behaviour and emotion in the African context is provided in subsection 2.2.1 of this chapter.

recommendations and identified challenges facing those committed to same-sex equality in Africa in general, and specifically South Africa, emphasise the importance of identity assertion. Through decriminalisation in other African countries, one may not necessarily ensure an eradication of homophobia, but alleviate some of the fear and stress faced by such individuals who face harassment, arrests and imprisonment based on their sexual orientation (Ndashe, 2010:6). Reddy (2010:21) asserts this idea, in so far as he equates decriminalisation with a creation of identities entrenched in the acts of political resistance and underlines a right to citizenship and a social sense of belonging. In a sense then, through the democratisation of same-sex conduct, homosexuality was in fact 'sexualised' through an adoption of a more secular configuration of sexuality, in contrast to religious doctrines and indigenous practices (Reddy, 2010:18).

Through this, one may be able to underline the adversities of not only the 'G' (gay men) in the LGBTI-acronym, but rather magnify those other marginalised sexual minorities whose rights are violated through legal, medical and social homophobic tendencies (Ndashe, 2010:7). This will require strategic affiliations and partnerships whose pro-homosexual individuals, groups and organisations, of whom may be expected to substitute the absence of educational, familial, legal, medical, and religious and social services, based on either's homophobic inclinations (Ndashe, 2010:8; Sanger, 2010:262). In this regard, prior and current lesbian and gay activists have attempted to fill this void through several initiatives, including political rallies, outreach programmes, publications and a linkage with a human rights agenda. This took place without a rational attempt to further 'ghettoize' sexual minorities through the avoidance of forming a separate political party, for example (Croucher, 2002:327-328). Notwithstanding such a purposeful attempt at diversification rather than essentialism, the influence exerted by a mobilised sexual minority *community*, to redress further marginalisation from the past, current injustices or possible future threats of criminalisation and retraction of LGBTQ-rights, exemplify not only its fragile externally solidified 'otherness' (Epstein, 1998; Gamson, 1995; Seidman, 1996), but also its internally diversified (cf. Tong, 2008) nature, as per distinction between a modern and postmodern understanding (cf. Cock, 2003:45; Ritzer, 2012).

The latter sets out to stress the omnipresence of Mead's (1962) "reflexiveness", or as Giddens (1992) and Jackson and Scott (2010) would term it, "...self-reflexivity", to fully encapsulate intersectional differences, critique modern hegemonic prescriptions, refute a binary-based subordination of women as 'other', and afford agency to the social actor (Ritzer, 2012:363). This

is associated with the emergence of the so-called 'new left', which comprises several historically oppressed groups such as homosexuals, environmentalists and feminists. The proponents of postmodernism provide a somewhat 'animated' version of the inherent political and social potential of all people (Cock, 2003:44), advocating for an articulation of supposed static conceptions of culture based on recognition of its inherent diversity (cf. Weeks, 1985:210).

2.4.3 The ghettoised gay male epitomised as ethnic minority

As evident in the foregoing section, the exemplary, progressive and indefatigable contributions by gay liberationist movements (and corresponding mainstream judgements) in the United States and South Africa, have both been linked to the homogenisation of the homosexual experience and further exacerbation of stereotypical depictions of 'otherness,' exacerbated in medical models which sought to stigmatise it as pathology. This is attributed to the so-called inherent irony associated with the constructionist orthodoxy, which in especially the late 1970s and 1980s came to define it alongside essentialist models (Epstein, 1998:135; Gamson, 1995:391). In many respects, this dichotomised relationship between essentialist and constructionist accounts of homosexuality presented two additional underlying 'dualisms' – 'sameness' versus 'difference' and concurrently 'choice' versus 'constraint'. Constructionists presented heterosexuality and homosexuality as similar in terms of their social construction, thus affording both groups a degree of choice. Proponents of essentialism, on the other hand, believe that there are inherently natural differences between the two with one dominating the other through certain constraints – thus sexuality as fixed orientation (Epstein, 1998:142). Epstein suggests transcending this particular debate, by affording homosexual life an 'ethnic' quality (cf. Gamson, 1995:391). He acknowledges that one may critique an adoption of the social category of ethnicity to homosexuality, based on amongst others the fact that ethnic culture is handed down through generational socialisation, something that is lacking in gay culture. He asserts, however, that one has to be mindful of the specific definition used for ethnicity to assess its potency for application to homosexuality.

He distinguishes between a primordial approach, which in relation to sexuality, corresponds with an essentialist position since it signifies ethnicity as "...absolute ascription", whereas optionalist-approaches provide a leeway of sorts in its "vulgar" (Epstein, 1998:147) account of ethnicity that may be "...shed, resurrected, or adopted as the situation warrants", echoing thoughts on "circumstantial" or "situational homosexuality" (Esterberg, 2002:219; Gammon & Isgro,

2007:166). Horowitz, according to Epstein (1998:147), provides an intermediate position between the two, which may substantiate the application of the ethnic model to the gay subculture, when he states:

...Ascription is, of course, the key characteristic that distinguishes ethnicity from voluntary affiliation. *Ethnic identity is generally acquired at birth. But this is a matter of degree.* In the first place, in greater or lesser measure, there are possibilities for changing individual identity. Linguistic or religious conversion will suffice in some cases, but in others the changes may require a generation or more to accomplish by means of intermarriage or procreation. In the second place, collective action, in the sense of conscious modification of group behavior and identification, may affect shift of boundaries...It is, therefore, a putative ascription, rather than an absolute one, that we are dealing with...Ethnicity thus differs from voluntary affiliation, not because the two are dichotomous, but because they occupy *different positions on a continuum*¹⁵.

Much of this is also associated with Epstein's (1998:148) reference to the resurgence of "new ethnicity" during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. He cites Bell's (cited in Epstein, 1998:148) work which distinguishes newer and older forms of ethnic mobility. "New ethnicity" established a link between emotive *and* instrumental objectives, thus seeking the realisation of socio-political goals alongside degrees of affectivity. It was also future orientated, always attempting to improve the group's position within society in contrast to the preservation of historical roots as evident in older models of ethnicity. It also sought to critique mainstream hegemonic societal prescriptions, thus serving as reaction to 'mass society' by attempting to disaggregate and de-assimilate from mainstream values. Finally, it also organised itself around a specified and localised geographical space or community (cf. Abraham, 2009; Castells, 1983; Levine, 1998; Warren, 1998). Although one should not discount the reciprocal interplay between the 'older' and 'new' conceptualisations of ethnicity, much of this novel resurgence of ethnicity, emerged in 1970s America during the same period gay and lesbian identity was "...taking on an ethnic cast" (Epstein, 1998:148). Because of this, Epstein (1998:148) justifies the application of the "ethnic model" to discussions on gay and lesbian identities, in so far as

¹⁵Emphasis added.

...gay ethnicity is a 'future-orientated' identity linking an affective bond with an instrumental goal of influencing state policy and securing social rewards on behalf of the group. Like the other ethnic groups, gay ethnicity functions typically through appeals to the professed beliefs of the dominant culture, emphasizing traditional American [democratic] values such as equality, fairness, and freedom from persecution. And finally, in neo-ethnic fashion, gay identity (in the case of *male* identity in particular) operates by using the control of a specific space to influence urban political decision-making.

In making sense of the so-called gay 'ethnic' identity, Epstein steers clear of an exaggerated emphasis on the role of either constructionism or essentialism as each relates to the understanding of homosexual identity formation. He explains his decision to do so by citing the unavoidable and reciprocal influence both have on each other. He continues

...ethnicity must be understood as something that is neither an absolute inescapable ascription nor something chosen and discarded at will; as something neither there from birth, nor something one joins like a club; as something that makes one neither fundamentally different from others, nor fundamentally the same. It is in the dialectics between choice and constraint, and between the individual, the group, and the larger society, that 'identities', 'ethnic identities', and 'gay and lesbian identities' emerge (Epstein, 1998:151).

Thus, regardless of the fact that constructionist theorists sought to position sexuality, in general, and homosexuality, in particular, as social constructions embedded within the so-called 'fictitious' heterosexual/homosexual binary, everyday gay men attempted to 'harden' these categories as if to position themselves as sexual minority groups (Epstein, 1998:135). Gamson (1995:391), Jagose (1996:3) and Weeks (2000) emphasise this point by directing our attention to the strained relationship between those who favour essentialist views of homosexuality in contrast with social constructionists. Altman (1982:146-148) identifies four broader generalisations about gay men specifically, which have been used to position them as ethnic minority within society. These include that a particular gay lifestyle exists to which all homosexuals conform, that all aesthetics within or about gay lifestyles (whether material or non-material) are produced by gay men and have an intrinsic gay message or meaning, and that all artistic expressions produced by gay men are part of that particular gay culture (Altman,

1982:147). In terms of the latter, Altman (1982:147) quotes two writers, with John Perreault noting that “...in some sense gay art is any art done by an openly gay man or lesbian”, whereas contradictorily writer Gore Vidal points to a heteronormative influence in such definitions when he states, “...the heterosexual dictatorship not only recognizes its enemies, but defines them in its own terms”.

Altman (1982:148-152) further explicates this somewhat homogenised understanding of gay culture in critiquing one of its underlying principles – claims to a so-called “gay sensibility” (Seidman, 2002a:275). Such a sensibility may dualistically imply that one is either born gay and correspondingly displays characteristics implicit in this sensibility – in terms of certain innate “...insights, qualities, or sensitivities alien to others”, which he downplays as “...clearly nonsense” (Altman, 1982:148). On the other hand, that such a sensibility is produced through being part of a minority (Altman, 1982:148). Citing several commentators such as George Steiner, Susan Sontag and Edmund White on features associated with a “gay sensibility”, Altman (1982:150) refers to “solipsism...and a strategy of opposition”, “parody, theatricality, an emphasis on style” and “...a particular insight into emotions and human relations” as distinct qualities of particularly gay men. In considering the probability of the existence of such a distinct “gay sensibility” (cf. Seidman, 2002a:275) which manifests a gay culture (or *vice versa*), he notes that both may be a consequence or may originate from a shared sense of sublimation (cf. McCormick, 2009:154) or need for affirmation (Altman, 1982:149). Along these lines, Weeks (1986:15) argues that the critical debate between an adoption of either an ethnic-like or constructionist view of one’s homosexuality, has been crucial in studies on homosexuality in the past sixty years, in so far as

...[essentialism] is a method which attempts to explain the properties of a complex whole by reference to a supposed inner truth or essence, the assumption ‘that in all sexological matters there must be a single, basic, uniform pattern ordained by nature itself’...Against such an approach [the next section, in accordance with Weeks’ work] shall argue that the meanings we give to ‘sexuality’ are socially organized, sustained by a variety of languages which seek to tell us what sex is, what it ought to be – and what it could be.

Citing the role of especially gay and lesbian liberationists, Plummer (1998b) notes that these groups sought to render their targeted identities as even more privileged and sacred, and as

such confined their communities as separatist entities outside the realm of heterosexual domain. Such ideologically and literal isolation further resulted in distinctions within and between members of the homosexual community themselves. These attempts of “self-categorisation”, according to Plummer (1998b:85), resulted in “...an ever increasing self-imposed segregation” (cf. Castells, 1983; Gamson, 1995:393; Valentine, 2002:148) and one could argue reinforcement of their “gay sensibility” (Altman, 1982:147: cf. Seidman, 2002a:275). Although this may be considered as constructive, based on the fact that these creations emerge from *within* rather than from external sources, it may however *retain* an essentialist and homogeneous depiction of homosexuality.

Thus, although there may be an existent gay vision shared by this supposed minority group, much of this vision and subsequent self-imposed definitions, affiliations and possible internal and external defence strategies as part of the group, were influenced by external social influence, as per Vidal’s reference to ‘heterosexual dictatorship’. This presupposes the ‘socially constructive’ rather than ‘naturalised’ (read medical) conceptualisation of homosexuality. Originally considered an attempt at openness to self-definition or categorisation on the part of the gay male, it legitimised a view of homosexuality as different from the perceived normal, moral and acceptable heterosexual community (cf. Namaste, 1996; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008). Although relatively denaturalised, this otherness went hand-in-hand with further polarisation, stigmatisation and prejudice.

2.5 LEARN YOUR LINES: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF A ‘HOMOSEXUAL ROLE’

Much of the focus which social constructionists identify as their main impetus in studying homosexuality is based on Mary McIntosh’s (1968) initial identification of the “homosexual role” in mainstream Western society. Plummer (1998b:85) contends that theorists do not necessarily question its existence, but rather consider *when* the role emerged, its *content* and its *influence* on social actors’ lives. This particular subsection will provide a discussion of the contributions of social scientists in studying homosexuality regardless of their views on these questions posed by Plummer (1998b).

2.5.1 McIntosh and the “homosexual role”: A critical reflection

As noted, one of the earliest accounts of the social construction of the gay male “species” (cf. Foucault, 1978) came courtesy of McIntosh’s (1968) reference to the “...homosexual role”. Regarded as “the” seminal work on the social construction of homosexuality (Weeks, 2000:54), it only gained momentum with the publication of Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* almost a decade later (Marinucci, 2010:17). McIntosh (1968:182) juxtaposed her work with earlier medical models which defined homosexuality as “...a condition characterizing certain persons in the way that birthplace or deformity might characterize them”, characterisations which posited homosexuality as social problem. Challenging essentialists’ claim of homosexuality as natural category, Epstein (1998:137) encapsulates McIntosh’s contribution by stating, “...although every known society has examples of homosexual *behavior*, only recently has there arisen a conception of ‘the homosexual’ as distinctive type of *person*”. She identified a twofold problem with such a conceptualisation. Firstly, if homosexuals were suffering from a condition, such a thesis basically differentiates between those who suffer from it, and those who do not (McIntosh, 1968:182). This according to Weeks (2000:55), leads to superficial distinctions between amongst others, heterosexual men and gay men, thus a clear-cut dichotomous sexualised categorisation, for as McIntosh (1968:192) argues, “...in terms of behaviour, the polarization between the heterosexual man and the homosexual man is far from complete in our society”. A second problem, according to her, is the fact that adopting the disease model (cf. Herdt, 1992), one becomes preoccupied with the causes of homosexuality (Weeks, 2000:56). She notes that such an approach exacerbates a distinction between “...permissible and forbidden behaviour” (cf. Rubin, 1993:13) and in fact “...contain[s] deviant practices within a relatively narrow group”, which according to her results in the following:

...The creation of a specialized, despised and punished role of homosexual keeps the bulk of society pure in rather the same way that the similar treatment of some kinds of criminal keeps the rest of society law-abiding (McIntosh, 1968:183-184; cf. Foucault, 1978).

Such characterisations further fuel self-fulfilling prophecies within these individuals, leading the homosexual man, for example, to regard this deviancy model “...as legitimate for him and he can continue in it without rejecting the norms of society” (McIntosh, 1968:184) through social control mechanisms. She recommends an alternative focus on “the homosexual” occupying and

portraying a social role rather than suffering from a condition. She continues that in "...modern societies where a separate homosexual role is recognized, the expectation, on behalf of those who play the role and of others, is that a homosexual will be exclusively or very predominantly homosexual in his feelings and behaviour" (McIntosh, 1968:184). She identifies further expectations, especially those of external social actors who collaborate in the construction of this distinct role, by ascribing stereotypical traits to it, such as effeminacy, sexual seduction of minors and uncontrollable sexual urges (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000; Gagnon & Simon, 1967a:60). Gagnon and Simon (1967a:60) provide a similar argument, noting that the "...patterns of adult homosexuality are consequent upon the social structures and values that surround the homosexual after he becomes, or conceives of himself as, homosexual rather than upon original and ultimate causes" embedded in medical etiological explanations. They cite several external societal institutions and factors, ranging from the family and religion to the workplace and political spheres (Gagnon & Simon, 1967a:62-65), which may impact on the lives of homosexuals, as it does its heterosexual counterparts. These contributions are further complemented by Plummer (1975:18), who from an interactionist position argues:

...men in everyday life [are always] busily constructing images of how they expect others to act in given positions (role-taking), evolving notions of how they themselves expect to act in a given position (role-making) and how imaginatively viewing themselves as they like to think of themselves being and acting in a given position (role identity). No 'role structures' pre-exist that men simply 'fit into'...the actual process of role construction is an emergent, unstable, constantly negotiated activity (cf. Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962).

As such, McIntosh's (1968:184) denaturalisation of homosexuality accordingly unmasked the supposed objectivity of medical scientists, in so far as she thought them to be "...diagnostic agents in the process of social labeling". They did not, as Weeks (2000:61) contends, 'invent' homosexual existence, or the thought that homosexuality was an inborn trait, but rather initiated an ongoing need to "...regulate subcultural developments" such as homosexuality which seemingly destabilised heterosexual society (or understandings thereof). Reminiscences of the work of Lemert (1967) and Goffman (1963) abound in both Gagnon and Simon and McIntosh's views. Lemert's (1967:40) distinction between primary and secondary deviance posits the homosexual man as 'the other' (cf. Herdt 1997:179), who blatantly interfered with the existing

social organisation of heterosexuality as dominant sexual form in Western society. Homosexuality, as such, only becomes this 'other', immoral or deviant construct, based on the definitions and meanings disapproving members of the heterosexual community impose on it (i.e. secondary deviance) (cf. Epstein, 1996:149; 1998:137). Because of this, the individual's intrinsic so-called primary deviance unbeknownst to society is in fact exacerbated on a secondary level by those who wish to oppress and eradicate it through processes such as social conditioning, primary and secondary socialisation and the subsequent production of the individual's personality (cf. Oakley, 1974:113; Parsons, 1959:265; Weeks, 1996:42). In so doing, both heterosexual and homosexual individuals conform to a 'blueprint' of what their respective sexual orientations dichotomously should imply. Thus, regardless of a distinction between views of homosexuality as 'condition' or 'role', external social forces still presuppose it as a separate kind of human agency, by for example negating reference to its existence during primary socialisation of children (cf. Whitam, 1998:80). This assumes that homosexuals take on a "...discreditable" stigma (Goffman, 1963:12) based on prejudiced assumptions within a heteronormative society, and in fact may conform to the characteristics of the group(s) of which they form part, as in Goffman's reference to the "with relationship". Within this relationship, the homosexual associates with a specific type of person, in this case another homosexual individual, and in turn reflects homogeneous behaviour (cf. Bray, 1995:92).

The "homosexual role", according to McIntosh, started to emerge in late seventeenth century England, and typified a specific subset of homosexual men. What was particularly interesting in her work was the fact that she underscored the need for gay men to belong to other 'like-minded' people in a distinct subculture. This role afforded them this opportunity, although it went hand-in-hand with societal prejudice, social exclusion and explicit differentness. Her approach differed from that of leaders of the homophile movement who sought to justify tolerance and equality for homosexuals based on an ascribed, rather than her noted 'achieved' status, through social categorisation (Weeks, 2000:58). Her response to such critique highlighted the fact that many homosexual men in fact welcomed such stereotypical depictions and labels, in so far as they provided a clear set of expectations and prescriptions they were expected to adhere to (McIntosh, 1968:184). Associated with this, one could cite Plummer (1998b) who asserts that the once relegated task of labelling by mainstream heterosexual society was now also evident from within the homosexual community itself. Research by Abraham (2009:274), Castells (1983), Kaiser (1997), Levine (1998) and Loughery (1998) emphasised McIntosh's work. In their comprehensive discussion of the emergence of gay subcultures in especially urban areas in the

United States, it was evident that many gay individuals moved to cities like San Francisco, New York and West Hollywood because it provided them the opportunity to define themselves as 'gay' (Abraham, 2009:241; Weston, 1998:34). Here gay men would be able to 'construct' themselves autonomously, outside the constrictions of their parents' homes, as a so-called "...'gay people': sexual subjects in search of others like themselves'...the city is a homeland because of those others, the group, the possibility of community" (Weston, 1998:49).

There were several gay activists (particularly during the 1970s and early 1980s), who sought to eradicate depictions of homosexuality as a social construction, based on their belief that such a view would only exacerbate social and sexual divisions and ideas pertaining to the labelling of others as well as inhibit efforts to devalue, what they termed, 'arbitrary and oppressive divisions', and attempts to demand 'people' rather than 'gay power' and equality, regardless of sexual orientation (Abraham, 2009:244). Yet, on the other side of the spectrum, gay activists attempted to also establish reciprocal respect, tolerance and acceptance, by advocating for a re-creation of a group of homosexuals, by empowering a previously disadvantaged, secret and oppressed group "...into a genuine community of sister- and brotherhood" (Abraham, 2009:244; cf. McIntosh, 1968).

Criticism has however been directed towards McIntosh's use of the concept 'role'. Whitam (1998:77) believes homosexuality to be neither a role nor pathological condition, but merely a variant of sexual orientation. He raises two points of critique. Firstly, he notes that by applying 'role' to homosexuality, McIntosh in fact violates the conventional usage thereof in sociology. Roles, according to him, have a "...prior existence in the social structure...[but] homosexuality does not" (Whitam, 1998:77). As such, McIntosh confuses homosexual orientation with the homosexual subculture. The latter does not create homosexuality, but is rather a result thereof, thus, one cannot assume that there is a specific role (or roles) to emulate beforehand. Based on his own research, he substantiates his argument in the following way:

...a few homosexuals did not become aware of homosexual attractions until their twenties or in rare instances their early thirties. This phenomenon of the late bloomer is probably not due to contact with the homosexual subculture but to the fact that Western societies – rather than providing for a homosexual role – empathetically *do not* provide a homosexual role nor do they provide the

emerging homosexual any way of conceptualizing or dealing with his homosexuality (Whitam, 1998:79).

He cites an example of novelist E.M. Forster's autobiographical *Maurice*, as a struggle associated with understanding of one's homosexuality without access or assimilation into homosexual subcultures (Whitam, 1998:79). A second point of criticism centres on the understanding of homosexuality as an ascribed status. Roles, according to him, should be "...ascribed in the sense of age or sex roles, in which individuals are socialized into such roles" (Whitam, 1998:77). McIntosh's use of role, according to Whitam, assumes that boys are thus, in fact, socialised into a homosexual role. He refutes this by noting that children are predominantly socialised in accordance with the cisgender model (cf. Schilt & Westbrook, 2009), thus establishing a definite link between their biological sex, gender and sexual orientation (e.g. male-masculine-heterosexual). As such, most parents are usually shocked or dismayed upon their confrontation with the realisation that their child might be homosexual. He thus questions the use of the labelling theory as appropriate to explain homosexuality, for several of the gay respondents in his own study reported "...knowing that they were or would become homosexuals without having heard the term *homosexual* or its equivalents and without knowing that such behavior existed in the adult world" (Whitam, 1998:80).

Weeks (2000:59) counterpoints such research and critique by noting that the main focus should not necessarily be on the validity or the invalidity of the use of 'role', but rather on an exploration of its implications on the historical and social configuration of mainstream society. Here emphasis should be placed on the influence the 'relational' nature of homosexuality with heterosexuality, in terms of the latter's traditions, rituals and relations (and subsequent labels and stereotypes) have on the former's construction (cf. Butler, 1990:140; Collins, 2004:16; Ingraham, 2002:74; Johnson, 2009:67; Weeks, 2000:60; West & Zimmerman, 2002:45). As such, McIntosh does not refute the existence of homosexuality prior to the homosexual subculture and its later distinctive 'role(s),' but implores an objective exploration (as echoed by Weeks) of the effects of such a subculture on the definitions, meanings, configurations and actions of those who may freely choose to either assimilate or isolate themselves into/from such subcultures. Whitam (1998:80,83) himself, contends and even cites others (Ford & Beach, 1951) who point to the undeniable role of heterosexuality as "...the dominant sexual activity for the majority of the adults in every society" and investigating the source of such heterosexuality

(as per Gagnon & Simon, 1967b) as pre-eminent source for understanding or distinguishing itself from the sexual orientation of homosexuality.

One may, because of this, consider that although the “homosexual role” does not necessarily create homosexuality *per se*, it does underscore the inherent power relations which influence understandings of homosexuality from outside (i.e. heterosexuality) but also from within (i.e. homosexual individuals) (cf. Gagnon & Simon, 1973; McIntosh, 1968; Simon, 1996:40-44). By merely negating the influence several sources for gender and sexual orientation in contemporary late modern society (whether courtesy of the heterosexual or homosexual community) may have on someone who may possibly be gay or lesbian, as evident in Whitam’s (1998) work, is quite careless, since a sense of ‘differentness’ will unavoidably translate into some or other adopted role or and/or orientation through careful self-reflexivity (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010; Plummer, 1996; Savage & Miller, 2011). Weeks (2000:61) notes that the process of (socially) constructing and classifying individuals in accordance with their sexual preferences, whether it be because of medical, legal, religious or familial institutions, further underscored the need for individuals to be defined (by others) and to define themselves, based on external conceptualisations. Although McIntosh’s work did not explicitly challenge heterosexuality as social creation, as is the case with much of the work of proponents of lesbian and gay studies, Weeks (2000:67) cites her in a 1981 Postscript in which she acknowledges that “...what needs to be understood is heterosexuality and that you can’t understand homosexuality without locating it in sexuality in general” (cf. Derrida, 1998; Fuss, 1991; Namaste, 1996; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008).

Before the discussion turns its critical gaze towards heterosexuality in order to ‘locate’ the socially constructed nature of homosexuality therein based on postmodern theoretical contributions, a consideration of the varied phases through which gay men may progress as part of a rationalised effort to better understand and accept their sense of ‘differentness,’ will be provided.

2.5.2 ‘The long and winding road’: Gay identity as rationalised theme

Although the phases of homosexual identity construction in its multiple, myriad and contrasting forms, have been used in several models courtesy of amongst others, Cass (1979), Coleman (1982), Connell (1992), Dank (1979), Downs (2006), Miller (1998a), Plummer (1975; 1996),

Troiden (1998) and Worthington et al. (2002), and provided invaluable insights into the experiences of sexual minorities, it has been the target of criticism. Savin-Williams (2005:76) refers the positive influence of such models in its initial exposure to the problems and experiences faced by sexual minorities in a supposed heteronormative environment during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.

Coleman (1982:39), Plummer (1998b), Smuts (2011) and Troiden (1998:276) concede that the passive adherence and unquestioned adoption of the linear progression depicted in these phases disown the diverse and intersectional experiences implicit in it. As such, each of the four typify their respective stages and/or phases as ideal types which seek to represent generalised patterned behaviour based on empirical observations and accounts of the life histories of gay men and lesbian women (cf. Troiden, 1998:261), contingent on several social, political and cultural factors. Smuts' (2011) adoption of Cass' (1979) model in her study on the identity development of black lesbians in Johannesburg, South Africa, reinforces this point. She underlines the contributions of Foucault (1978) when stating that

...Coming out should be understood in terms of a matrix of power, and that the extent to which lesbian women can tap into this power, and gain agency, is dependent on each woman's intersecting multiple identities of class, race and religion...lesbian women often skip stages and return to earlier ones due to factors such as stigma. Identity development is thus a life-long ever-changing phenomenon, and as a consequence lesbian [and per implication gay] identities can be described as fluid (Smuts, 2011:38).

Her words also resonate in Savin-Williams' (2005:74) argument that one should be weary of accepting the monolithic understanding of the model, which have shown "scant" empirical bases (Eliason, 1996:53) in terms of its practical validity through application to the lived experiences of gay men. In addition, he cites criticism from feminists in particular who believe that such a model advocates a dominant white middle-class ethnocentric bias and implies an adaption of homosexual individuals to its linear step-by-step progression when coming out, rather than *vice versa*.

Regardless of such critique, it is necessary to include this discussion to exemplify the experiences of some (if not all) homosexual men in addressing questions on their sexual

orientation and whether its presence or absence further reinforces and/or challenges the heterosexual/homosexual binary logic in contemporary late modern society. But to avoid the risk of both external and self-criticism of merely adopting such a linear model, the discussion will 'repackage' the phases as recurring themes gay individuals may encounter throughout their (de)constructive identity objective. To incorporate the contributions of the cited academics on identity construction, the reader is provided with a conflation of their similar and divergent phases, stages or steps, in five themes (also see Troiden, 1998).

(a) ***Theme 1: A sensitised acknowledgement***

During this initial phase, Cass (1979) believes that individuals may experience a sense of possibly 'being homosexual', and in many respects, it serves as "...potential basis for subsequent interpretations of self as possibly homosexual" (Troiden, 1998:267). It is here where the symbolic interactionist will attempt to uncover the social setting, situations and interactive encounters with others which lead an individual to contemplate the possibility of being homosexual (Plummer, 1975:135). As such, an individual is not rendered passive based on several psychological, biological or structural accounts, but rather someone who actively engages in the social construction of interpretations and meanings. The potentially gay man recognises that elements of his behaviour (whether they be actions or thoughts) may be associated with homosexuality (Cass, 1990:248). As such, a period of "crisis" arises (Coleman, 1982:32; Downs, 2006:63; Konik & Stewart, 2004:818) in the life of the individual, in so far as he is forced to "...identify ...gay desires in [himself], [thus] confront [his] very existence" (Benkov, 1994:29). Such an irrational and unexplainable crisis (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010:122-125) may provide the basis for later processes of further alienation, denial, repression, rationalisation (Coleman, 1982:33) and a heightened sense of self-reflexivity in terms of the self-presentation to others in a potentially hostile social environment (Jackson & Scott, 2010:130). In his seminal work on the so-called 'career stages' of homosexuality, Plummer (1975:135) identifies probable explicit or subtle sources for such a realisation for the gay man.

Explicit examples may include a genital act (for example masturbation) with another man, which in turn may result in (or may be the result of) an emotional connectivity or daydreaming of fictional sexual encounters with someone of the same sex. In addition, he cites a fascination with certain objects interpreted as 'masculine' in nature including the physical male body (penis, bottom) and clothing, which may come to dominate his perception of his possible homosexual

orientation (Plummer, 1975:135). In contrast to his work, Bell et al.'s (1981) and Doyle's (1983) work highlighted the fact that it was not as much emotions or genital behaviour which influenced a heightened sense of difference, but rather social experiences during childhood relating to gender expectations. Their work does, however intertwine with Plummer's (1975:135) reference to more subtle sources of homosexual identification which manifests in a conflation of gender with sexual orientation. He cites the example of a young, fragile and frail boy who perceives "...himself as 'not like other men'", which results in a definition of himself as homosexual (cf. Plummer, 1975:135; Savage & Miller, 2011). He underscores this thought by arguing that because of this "...sense of 'differentness' – only later to be translated into sexual differentness – which cuts them off from everybody else: the boy who prefers to be alone, or the boy whose interest is in the arts and literature finds himself distinguished markedly from his 'football crazy' peers" (Plummer, 1975:135-136; Plummer, 1996:71).

Such a sense of being different or marginalised from the rest of their peer group found further resonance in several quotes from Bell et al.'s (1981:74) studies which include, "I had a keener interest in the arts", "I couldn't stand sports so naturally that made me different. A ball thrown at me was like a bomb" and "I began to get feelings I was gay. I'd notice other boys' bodies in the gym and masturbate excessively" (cf. Plummer, 1975). In their groundbreaking effort to advocate support and guidance to particularly teenage gays and lesbians in the 'It Gets Better'-internet campaign, Savage and Miller (2011) recount the suicide of Billy Lucas, a young boy in the United States as a result of his peers' encouragement, based on their ignorant conflation of his perceived non-masculine gendered behaviour with his perceived gay sexual orientation, something the boy could not come to accept. As such, although an individual may construct a conception of himself as homosexual through self-identification and self-reflexivity, the social context within which the individual is embedded, serves as undeniable source for much of this identification (Plummer, 1975:136; Simon, 1996:40-44). Hauser (1962:147), as quoted in Plummer (1975:136) recounts the experiences of a young teenage boy who mirrors the situation cited by Savage and Miller:

...I was told, when I got myself into trouble, that I was dirty, filthy, queer. I did not even know what it was so I was told that this meant that I would never be able to love a girl, that I could never have kids, that I had 'had' it, and would most likely end up my life in prisons for having been caught interfering with

small children....I was half hysterical and I simply could not understand what they meant.

Such initial miscomprehension may find further resonance in a second set of thematic relevance to identity construction, **identity confusion and shame**.

(b) ***Theme 2: Identity confusion and shame***

This particular stage, according to Troiden (1998:267), is characterised by an individual's internal turmoil pertaining their uncertain sexual orientation, thus "...those first conscious and semi-conscious moments in which an individual comes to perceive himself as a homosexual" (Plummer, 1975:135). This stage or theme encompasses an individual's hesitant recognition of being homosexual ("I *may* be homosexual"), and proceeds towards a potential acknowledgement of this identity ("I probably *am* a homosexual") (Cass, 1990:248). Initially, individuals undertake a so-called identity *moratorium* during which they question their sexual identity and, as a result, do not commit to a particular identity category (Konik & Stewart, 2004:819).

They attempt to understand and establish an identity through an "...active exploration". Worthington et al. (2002:26) explicate this experience as "...exploring, evaluating or experimenting with one's sexual needs, values, sexual orientation, and/or preferences for activities, partner characteristics, and modes of sexual expression". This usually manifests in late adolescence for gay males and may be further inhibited by several factors, including *altered perceptions of the self, a concurrent experience of heterosexual and homosexual arousal, stigmas attached to homosexuality* and the *lack of accurate and sufficient information on the subject matter* (Troiden, 1998:267-268).

(i) ***Factors which inhibit homosexual identification***

Regarding the *altered perceptions of the self*, gay males cited feelings of differential sexual attraction, rather than the previous phase's gender incongruence, at the age of nineteen (19), based on a lack of heterosexual attraction and an onset of homosexual sexual feelings (Bell et al., 1981, cited in Troiden, 1998:268). As such, genital and emotional experiences dominate the societal influence evident in the first phase.

In terms of *heterosexual and homosexual attraction*, only a very few (28 per cent) of gay men never experienced heterosexual arousal, whereas only 21 per cent never had a heterosexual sexual encounter (Bell et al., 1981:100)¹⁶. Troiden (1998:268) attributes much of this confusion to the perpetuation of binary logic in Western societies which provide an ‘either-or’ approach to sexual orientation (cf. McIntosh, 1968; Namaste, 1996; Roseneil, 2002; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008). *Stigmas*, as evident from Goffman (1963) and Plummer’s (1975; 1998b) work also serve to further confuse gay adolescents. This is attributed to the fact that overt discussions or identifications as homosexual may be discouraged in certain contexts, which exacerbate feelings of guilt, shame, self-disgust and self-hatred resulting in secrecy and isolation (Cohen & Savin-Williams, 1996:115; Downs, 2006:44-45; Du Plessis, 1999; Gonsiorek, 1995:24; Plummer, 1975:144-145; Plummer, 1998b:94; Troiden, 1998:268). Downs (2006:42) reaffirms this argument when he notes:

...most – if not all – gay men start at [the] place of being overwhelmed with the shame of being gay in a world that worships masculine power. ...This is the start of his journey as a gay man, and it is by far the most difficult and damaging. He’d do anything not to be gay. He suffers immensely the pain of knowing that he can’t change the one thing that makes him so different from other men. He imagines that being gay will ruin his life completely, and *there is nothing he can do to change it*.

The importance associated with the cultural prescriptions for gender and sexual behaviour, according to Blumstein and Schwartz (1990:310), “...emerges from the circumstances and meanings available to individuals; it is a product of socialization, opportunity, and interpretation” (cf. Butler, 1990; 1991; 1993; Goffman, 1971; Ingraham, 1996; 2002; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Mead, 1962). If a hegemonic ideal is enforced within society, “compulsory heterosexuality” (Rich, 1993:227) is further emphasised as normative prescription of acceptable sexual behaviour through, amongst others, hegemonic masculinity (Burke & Nelson, 2001:211; Butler, 1990; 1993; Connell, 1992; 2005; Rich, 1993; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008; Segal, 2007:56) to which men should aspire to conform. Because of this, gay men may not be regarded as ‘masculine’ due to views which equate effeminacy with gay men (cf. Benkov, 1994:30; Connell, 1992:736; Tamagne, 2010:192-193). Herek (1986, quoted in Connell,

¹⁶ This particular study was based in the United States and conducted amongst 979 homosexual and 477 heterosexual men in the San Francisco Bay area during 1969 to 1970. Interviews were used as main research method, comprised of a 175-page interview schedule of 200 questions on the sexual development of respondents during childhood and adolescence (Bell et al., 1981:9-13).

1992:736) reaffirms this argument when he notes that "...to be 'a man' in contemporary ...society is to be homophobic – that is, to be hostile toward homosexual persons in general and gay men in particular". As result then, it is in fact not the homosexual individual *per se* who should be viewed as deviant, but rather that his or her supposed deviance and "discreditable" personhood (Goffman, 1963:12) results from external stigmatisation which may "...create the potential for pathology, despair and tragedy" (Plummer, 1998b:95).

This thought relates to the fact that individuals may be ignorant of issues pertaining to homosexuality, based on the lack of sufficient information on the topic or access thereto. Troiden (1998:269) remarks in this regard that: "...before they can see themselves as homosexual, people must realize that homosexuality and homosexuals exist, learn what homosexuals are actually like as people, and be able to perceive similarities [as evident in ethnic model discussion] between their own desires and behaviors and those of people labeled socially as homosexual". He argues that information has become more readily available over the last few years, as evident in several 'coming out'-books, textbooks and courses presented in schools and universities¹⁷.

(ii) *Responsive strategies to identity confusion*

In order for the individual to resolve such uncertainty intensified by these factors, he might seek to explore different strategies within this phase (Cass, 1979; Downs, 2006; Plummer, 1975; Troiden, 1998). These will be grouped into three broader subthemes, being *denial and repair*, *avoidance* and *redefinition*.

With regard to the **first**, the individual **dismisses** and refutes any possibility of being homosexual (Cass, 1990:248). This is reinforced through further attempts of so-called reparative strategies as attempt to eliminate any form of homosexuality through professional help of doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists or counsellors (Troiden, 1998:269).

The **second** strategy is that of **avoidance**. The individual acknowledges the potential of being homosexual, but abstains from homosexual behaviour, because he regards it as undesirable (Cass, 1990:248; Plummer, 1975:142). Based on the referenced structural influences courtesy of external social actors, the gay male may embed himself in devaluation pertaining to his probable homosexual orientation, which exacerbates a lack of access to gay communities and

¹⁷These will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

fuels secrecy and guilt (Plummer, 1975:142). Such internalisation of negative perceptions related to public disavowals of homosexuality during the stage of secondary deviance (Dank, 1979:123; Lemert, 1967), may result in several forms. Troiden (1998:269) for example cites a quote from one of his gay respondents who sought to *inhibit* any homosexuality which he saw as a passing phase, "I figured I'd go straight and develop more of an interest in girls if I got even more involved in sports and didn't spend much time on my art". Two other contradictory attempts at avoidance may lead to either *limiting opposite-sex exposure* or *heterosexual immersion*. In terms of the first, the gay male attempts to limit heterosexual dating, fearing that the girl will notice his homosexuality if he "...wouldn't get erect when we petted" (Troiden, 1998:269). To eliminate any further homosexual tendencies, some adolescents would establish heterosexual relationships varying in degrees, through mere dating to regular sex "...with as many women as possible" (Troiden, 1998:269). Others may limit their *access to information on homosexuality*, fearful that research would correspond with their own personal experiences, something which would result in a confirmation of their homosexuality, which in turn may facilitate the creation of what is termed "...a closet queen" (Dank, 1979:124), thus someone who may consciously avoid knowledge of or contact with other self-identified gay men. Dank (1979:124) argues that it is especially this "...closet queen who has most internalized the negative societal stereotype of 'the homosexual'. It is to be expected that such persons would suffer from a feeling of psychological dissonance". As one 29-year old 'closet queen' who was only peripherally involved with other homosexuals recalled:

...I was never comfortable with them. I was repressed and timid and they thought I was being high hat, so I was rejected. It never worked out; I was never taken in. I felt uncomfortable in their presence and I made them feel uncomfortable. I couldn't fit in there, I never wanted to, never sought to; I was scared of them. I was scared of the brazen bitches who would put me down (quoted in Dank, 1979:125).

Assuming such anti-homosexual postures is also identified as strategy of avoidance. Here the gay individual either attacks or ridicules other homosexuals based on a sense of internalised homophobia, thus a hatred of their own same-sex erotic feelings (Troiden, 1998:269). Of interest in this regard, is the fact that such self-hatred should rather be directed towards homophobic heterosexuals since, according to Plummer (1998b:95), it is their ignorance which fuels such phobia, and not that of the homosexual individual. Regardless, those facing such degrading feelings in terms of their perceived homosexuality, may seek escapism and a route to

coping, which manifests in the use and abuse of chemical substances such as drugs and alcohol (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:240; Atkinson, 2002:120; Goldfried, 2001:982; Petrovic, 2002:145; Plummer, 1975:142; Renn, 2000:130; Troiden, 1998:270). A final strategy used to avoid an assumption of a gay identity or identification with other self-identified homosexuals, may result in the process of *passing*. This entails a conscious “stigma evasion strategy” (Troiden, 1998:272) on the part of the potentially gay male. Although he may define himself as gay or homosexual, he attempts to conceal his secretive sexual orientation during his interactions with particular groups, such as heterosexuals, whereas he discloses it in the presence of other gay men. In so doing, he creates and leads a “double live[...]

 (Troiden, 1998:272).

A **third** strategy to deal with identity confusion, exemplifies the gay man’s attempt of a redefinition of this irrational and unexplainable subjectivity of his sexual self (Cass, 1979; Jackson & Scott, 2010:125; Troiden, 1998:270). In terms of my discussion on using gay (cf. Collins, 2004; Johnson, 2009), which assumes some degree of freedom and sexual fluidity, one could also consider the role of Foucault’s (1978) triplet (cf. Weeks, 2000:60) linkage of discourse/power/resistance, in constructing, maintaining and reinforcing and/or deconstructing, negotiating or destabilising definitions associated with homosexuality. This thought clearly aligns with a reconsidered conceptualisation which men use in terms of neutralisation (Plummer, 1975:137). A humorous side-note to his discussion of this process reads, “...a note on ‘not going homosexual’...”, thus a contemplation as to why, given the multitude of individuals available to potentially ‘become’ gay, why so few authenticate a stable homosexual role (Plummer, 1975:137). He identifies two strategies of neutralisation as possible explanatory means, homosexual disavowal and homosexual deference. The first, according to Troiden (1998:270), supports Plummer’s belief that men may either regard their same-sex attraction and/or activity as a ‘special case’, thus once-off occurrence, or view themselves as ‘temporary’ bisexual.

Homosexual disavowal results in characterising homosexual tendencies in such a way as to validate and justify the behaviour within particular contexts through the use of ‘accounts’ (Dank, 1979; Downs, 2006:46; Plummer, 1975:140). These contexts may take the form of *economic transactions* between boys and gay men, *gay social contexts (bars, tearooms and clubs)*, *migrant labour* and *prison life* and even *pornographic forums*, whether through DVD viewing or internet exposure. Citing a classic study conducted by Reiss in 1961, on delinquent boys who ‘hustled’ adult male homosexuals, Plummer (1975:140) considers the *economic connections*

established to varying levels of homosexuality, also commented on in the South African research of so-called white Afrikaner 'LK-numbers'¹⁸ and black African sex workers¹⁹ (Gevisser, 1995:26; McLean & Ngcobo, 1995:158). Both underscore the identification of several rules associated with this divergent sexual and economic relationship between the boy and his client, including the importance of economic incentive rather than establishing an emotional or sexual connection, exclusivity afforded to only oral sex (and per implication an adoption of the male role) and the importance of neutrality on the part of both (Plummer, 1975:138). A problem associated with this study centred on the lack of its longitudinal follow-ups with the boys which may have highlighted a later self-identification, on the part of these boys, as homosexual (Plummer, 1975:138).

A second context revolved around the thoroughly discussed '*ethnic-like context of gay clubs, bars, tearooms and bathhouses*'. Several of their patrons may in fact identify as heterosexually married men who engage in same-sex sexual activity based on the sexual, rather than emotive connections. An account of one respondent in a study by Humphreys (1970, cited in Plummer, 1975:140) emphasises this point when he notes, "I guess you might say that I'm pretty highly sexed...but I really don't think that's why I go to tearooms. That's not sex. Sex is something I have with my wife in bed. It's not as if I were committing adultery by getting my rocks off...in a tearoom. I get a kick out of it". Other classic examples included the so-called 'beat scene' in Greenwich Village in New York in the 1960s and 1970s, which according to Polsky (1967, quoted in Plummer, 1975:139) displayed "...a very high tolerance of sex-role ambiguity" amongst its male patrons, regardless of their sexual identification. These 'scenes' were occupied by young men and women who wrote poetry and stories on their personal disillusionment with the capitalist materialistic and conservative mores of 1950s America. Sexual freedom, whether reflected in homosexual or bisexual formations, was at the order of the day in their native New York and San Francisco settings (Eaklor, 2008:82). Some of its patrons' work became infamously associated with the beat scene as well as sexual rebellion, including Allen Ginsberg's 1956 poem *Howl*, which depicted gay sex as well as drug usage and was the subject of an obscenity trial (Eaklor, 2008:82). Such gatherings, according to Jack Kerouac (cited in Eaklor, 2008:82), who coined the phrase 'Beat Generation', served as linkage to the interrelated worlds of sex and creativity, as evidenced in his relationships with men (Gore Vidal)

¹⁸Named after a well-known property rental agency, these Afrikaner boys, usually teenagers from working class backgrounds, would engage in sex-for-pay at café-bios (cinemas in Johannesburg) where wealthier patrons would go for a movie, dinner and engage in sexual intercourse with these 'rent-boys' (Gevisser, 1995:26).

¹⁹The work of McLean and Ngcobo (1995) focused on interviews with 30 black African men who engaged in sexual intercourse with older men for payment. As 'rent-boys,' they were denoted by the African term *skesana*.

and women (Neal Cassady). Similar scenes were also evident in London. The so-called Bloomsbury group, comprised of homosexual writers including Dora Carrington, Virginia Woolf and E.M. Forster, displayed "...plain sex talk [and]...openly supported Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness*" (Meem et al., 2010:70), which was one of the first novels which depicted lesbian life as alternate sexual lifestyle to heterosexuality.

Thirdly, "circumstantial" or "situational homosexuality" within the contexts of migrant labour and prison life, also serves as particularly South African examples of homosexual disavowal. Esterberg (2002:215) argues that such typologies provide men with the opportunity (and permission) to deconstruct and even negotiate (cf. Johnson, 2009) their masculine categories within certain social settings (cf. Reddy, 1998:66). These include, according to Dlamini (2006:128), mine compounds, in which a short lived and socially sanctioned sexual relationship manifests between older men and younger miners, as well as same-sex sexual intercourse between male prisoners, as per Gear's (2007) study, which takes on the form of violent rape or consensual homosexual sex.

A final example which aligns with the process of *homosexual disavowal* and which has prevailed quite evidently over the last few years is the consumption of *gay male pornography* in capitalist society (Cante & Restivo, 2004:144; Escoffier, 2009:325; Thomas, 2010:67). In keeping with the emphasis on the scripted, dramaturgical and performative quality of one's social and sexual self (cf. Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962; Ritzer, 2012), its inclusion seems all the more appropriate, in order to further explicate the world of theatricality and performance in gay pornographic films and internet content as resources for sexual selfhood. On the one hand, men, regardless of their sexual orientation, are afforded the opportunity to consume male-on-male pornographic images in secret (Williams, 2008:150) without threat to their perceived heterosexuality and in fact be educated, 'coaxed' or socialised in gay male sexual behaviour (Ellis & Whitehead, 2004:198-202). Consider for example websites such as Only Dudes (2011) which directs sexually 'inquisitive' users to sites which celebrate male-to-male sex, such as Cody Cummings (2011), Next Door Buddies (2011), Rod Daily (2011) and Tommy D (2011). Each of these sites provide examples of sexual fluidity in terms of gender and sexual orientation, proven by the caption, "...something for everyone..." on Tommy D. On the other hand, actors who engage in these sex scenes are given a much needed scripted 'account' to justify their behaviour to attain fame or financial gain (Escoffier, 2003:537). Others, however, have in fact argued that heterosexism and homophobia are in fact reinforced through gay male pornography, since it

posits actors as 'gendered' beings in a male/female, masculine/effeminate and dominant/submissive-dichotomist relationship (Kendall, 2004:120). This "...makes gay male pornography the homophobic threat that it is. The purpose of homophobia is to ensure that gay men are bullied into rejecting any sexual expression that undermines male power" (Kendall, 2004:120).

Regardless of such factors which may lead to a further homosexual identification and subsequent disavowal, others embrace a gay male identification. Plummer (1975:141), in this regard poses the question as to "...how the minority sensitive to homosexuality become stable homosexuals" as process of *deference*. He, like several others (Abraham, 2009; Altman, 1982; Dank, 1979; D'Emilio, 1983; Downs, 2006; Jagose, 1996) has documented the degree to which such individuals assimilate into an existent milieu of supportive groups, attachments and commitments which may prevail in the stage that follows.

(c) ***Theme 3: Identity tolerance through marginality***

According to Cass (1979:229), despite an increased sense of being homosexual, the individual still experiences levels of discomfort and "...[c]ontacting other homosexuals is viewed as 'something that has to be done' in order to counter the felt isolation and alienation from others". She further underscores the idea of 'tolerating' the gay identity by noting

...[y]ou feel sure you're a homosexual and you put up with, or tolerate this. You see yourself as a homosexual for now but are not sure about how you will be in the future. You usually take care to put across a heterosexual image. You sometimes mix socially with homosexuals, or would like to do this. You feel the need to meet others like yourself (Cass, 1984:156).

Research in the United States has indicated that individuals are prone to move towards and imbed themselves within environments that provide support and solace, whereas those individuals, who lack such a network of liberation, are deprived of opportunities to fully realise their identity (Kroger, 1993, cited in Konik & Stewart, 2004:821). Such experiences echo Plummer's (1975:146-147) identification of three central problems gay men face based on the possible hostility towards homosexuality, emphasis placed on gender-appropriate behaviour, and a further enforcement of guilt, secrecy and a state of solitariness. These include a lack of access to other homosexual individuals, the persisting problem of guilt as supposed 'deviant',

and the problem associated with the meaning of a gay identity, thus "...how to evolve a satisfactory self-image and sense of identity" (Plummer, 1975:147).

To alleviate this, the gay man enters into "...those [marginal] social situations in which individuals are potentially confronted with incompatible normative expectations of belief, attitude and behavior as a consequence of their simultaneous occupancy of two contradictory ...statuses" (Lindquist & Hirabayashi, 1979:88). In line with Goffman's (1963) "with relationship" and the individual's attempt to eradicate the noted disjuncture pertaining to his 'self', he may wish to explore several social settings associated with gay men, including clubs, bars, bathhouses, a bench or cafés (Achilles, 1998:177; Altman, 1982:21; Bech, 1997:111; Downs, 2006:94; Du Plessis, 1999:70; Gevisser, 1995:28; McClean & Ngcobo, 1995:158; Warren, 1998:185). He does this, according to Cass (1990:249), to initiate a "...rehearsal of [his] homosexual role", as also evidenced in the work of McIntosh (1968). If the individual were to view these contexts as beneficial in terms of a communal identification with other gay men, it may in fact result in the initial steps of "...homosexual identity formation" (Troiden, 1998:272), thus a "tolerance" rather than gradual acceptance of his gay male identity (Cass, 1990:249). But, if these settings were to be interpreted as negative, a decline in self-esteem and eventual isolation from the gay community may ensue (Cass, 1990:249). Regardless of the potential benefits afforded by these bars and clubs, as discussed in the research of Altman (1982), Levine (1998) and Warren (1998), Bech (1997) and Connell (1992) have however both commented on the exploitative and predatory nature of these contexts.

In order to transcend the noted sexual instrumentalisation, the gay male may progress towards an introduction to two central themes which serve to reinforce a stronger sense of immersion (Connell, 1992:744) within a homosexual existence, namely **identity acceptance** and **assumption**.

(d) ***Theme 4: Identity acceptance and assumption***

In assuming this identity, Troiden (1998:270) argues that homosexuality becomes both a self-identity as well as presented identity, the latter directed towards both or either heterosexual and homosexual communities. Such a process, termed by Coleman (1982:35) as explorative, provides the basis for 'coming out' to a larger society, but also "...coming *in* to an existing gay milieu" (Connell, 1992:744). The process necessitates the gay male to acknowledge the importance of external validation from either community, and per implication run the risk to be

rejected (Coleman, 1982:34). 'Coming out', according to Plummer (1975:147), takes on several meanings. He cites the work of, amongst others, Gagnon and Simon (1967b:181) who refer to this as "...a point in time when there is self-recognition as a homosexual, and the first major exploration of the homosexual community". Dank (1979), however, regards it as an individualistic and personal occurrence, thus "...identifying oneself as homosexual", without external labels or proclamations, a view which contradicts the Gay Liberation Front's (GLF) belief that 'coming out' should take place within a public heterosexual realm. His own definition assimilates each of these meanings, when he notes that it is the process "...by which individuals pass out of the moratorium...and are 'reborn' into the organized aspects of the homosexual community" (Plummer, 1975:147).

Regardless of whether one 'comes out' or not, it is imperative for a gay individual to adapt to some or other configuration of a gay 'way of life', redefining previous conceptualisations and construct a new "self-image" and "self-valuation" (Plummer, 1975:148), as per, for example, the "ethnic model" (cf. Epstein, 1998) and a "gay sensibility" (cf. Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a). Individuals, who progress to this stage, experience a greater sense of security and "identity pride" (Cass, 1990:250) in terms of their sexual orientation. This may manifest in an increased contact with members of the homosexual community, as well as the establishment of a network of homosexual friends (Cass, 1990:249; Troiden, 1998:272). A respondent from Connell's (1992:245) study likened the process of 'coming out' to a celebration of sorts, when he stated: "...[r]age, rage, rage! Let's do everything you've denied yourself for 25 years. Let's get into it and have a good time sexually. And go out partying and dancing and drinking". Entering into a gay milieu, the newly identified homosexual male will be expected to confront several developmental tasks to alleviate some of the "...awkwardness and intensity" (Coleman, 1982:36) of this stage. These include a secondary socialisation (cf. Parsons, 1959) of sorts into interpersonal interactive or communicative skills, emphasis on developing a social rather than mere sexual self-esteem and (yet also) sexual education courtesy of counsellors and sexologists to further master "...a sense of personal attractiveness and sexual competence" based on a so-called developmental lag during the presumably 'heterosexualised' adolescent years of the gay man (Coleman, 1982:36).

Unfortunately, the management of stigma and prejudice may also initially manifest the strategies of passing or overcompensation. In terms of the first, gay men might define themselves as homosexual, but refrain from publically proclaiming such an identity to their heterosexual counterparts and in effect, lead so-called 'double lives' (Troiden, 1998:272) through "...careful,

even torturous, control of information” (Humphreys, 1972:138). Through “...blending in” by possibly adopting gender-appropriate behaviour in amongst others, their workplace, such individuals may also regard a public proclamation of their sexual orientation as irrelevant, reinforcing Troiden’s (1998:275) reference to Warren’s (1974:94) notion of “...avoidance without hiding” through an enhanced sense of self-reflexivity (Jackson & Scott, 2010). Others may however reinforce a commonly held (mis)perception of contemporary gay men – the manner in which they compensate for the shame brought to the fore by the first and second phases. In doing this, homosexual individuals retain a degree of inferiority in relation to heterosexuals. To transcend this they may attempt to, as noted by Downs (2006:76), become “validation junkies”. In ascribing to such an approach, they constantly attempt to obtain the approval of their “generalised other” (cf. Mead, 1962). This manifests in their need to exceed the expectations of a heterosexist society which assigns importance to physical beauty, luxury and material wealth (Downs, 2006:80; Jackson & Scott, 2010).

(e) ***Theme 5: Identity synthesis***

In transcending the noted developmental lag, Benkov (1994) and Downs (2006) refer to the idea of constructing an authentic gay self as proof of what Cass (1984; 1990) regards as an “identity synthesis”, Coleman (1982:39) as an “identity integration”, Connell (1992:744) an “identity consolidation” and Miller (1998a:512) an “open endorsement” and “championing” of a homosexual identity. The significance of a so-called multidimensional homosexual identity arises in so far as the sexual orientation of the gay male is posited as only one of several components (whether sexual, political, cultural) of his social self (cf. Castells, 2004:264). Connell (1992:744), for example, refers to the establishment of a stable and meaningful relationship with another man as proof that the individual embraces and defines his homosexual identity as an ‘expressive’ human condition (Troiden, 1998:273).

In ‘synthesising’ one’s gay identity, you “commit” (cf. Troiden, 1998:273) yourself to a particular identity category and you in fact “adopt...[it] as a way of life”. In so doing, Troiden (1998:273), in quoting Plummer (1975:150), argues that it becomes less viable to perform your gender and sexual orientation in such a way as to emulate heterosexuality and it becomes “...increasingly difficult to misrepresent” (Troiden, 1998:275) yourself to others. Homosexuality is posited as a “...valid self-identity” (Troiden, 1998:273) and through the disclosure of your identity, you are, as argued by Cass (1984:156), “...prepared to tell [almost] *anyone* that you are homosexual”. She continues:

...You are happy about the way you are but feel that being homosexual is not the most important part of you. You mix socially with homosexuals and heterosexuals [with whom] you are open about your homosexuality (Cass, 1984:156).

Regardless of the undeniable relevance and influence each of the four themes may encompass, Savin-Williams (2005) advocates a differential developmental trajectory to fully capture the idea of an intersectional path towards identity synthesis (cf. Smuts, 2011). He recommends a movement away from a linear and monolithic model of sequential stages which presume to advocate a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of a select few homosexual individuals, and rather seeks an emphasis on the underlying heteronormative forces which influence such a construction (cf. Ohnstad, 2009:358). Such a conception challenges an essentialist understanding of a supposed universal existence of homosexuality alongside heterosexuality in society. "The homosexual", nonetheless, has become the benchmark against which social constructionists would be able to study and critique the interactive processes through which the category is constructed, labelled and stigmatised (Epstein, 1998:138), yet without dually challenging heteronormativity as taken-for-granted truth. How then, do we transcend mere acceptance with transgression? (cf. Butler, 1990)

2.6 THE GAY ACTOR AS HETERONORMATIVE PUPPET: THE 'PERFORMATIVE' QUALITIES OF QUEER THEORY

Queer theorists seek to "...dramatize incoherencies" (Gamson, 1995; Jagose 1996:3) associated with the work of proponents of lesbian and gay studies. This is attributed to the fact that the latter did very little to critique the supposed stability and "blessed" (Rubin, 1993) nature of heterosexuality and in fact reinforced an essentialist, assimilationist and monolithic understanding as to what binary thinking pertaining to gendered and sexualised categories should involve (Adam, 2002:18; Connell 2009:95; Roseneil 2002:29).

This section provides a comprehensive critical explication of queer theory as a postmodern and poststructuralist theoretical paradigm. The discussion includes a focus on the divergent meanings ascribed the concept 'queer' and paradigm of 'queer theory', followed by an emphasis on several of its central themes. It concludes with a critical consideration of the use of queer theory as it relates to the study of sexual minorities.

2.6.1 Defining 'queer theory'

The origin of the concept 'queer' is attributed to the contributions of Teresa De Lauretis (Giffney, 2009:4; Halperin, 2003:339). Its initial use at the University of California in Santa Cruz in 1990 focused on the contemplation of lesbian and gay studies from a more critical stance, by attempting to unmask its implicit discourses as well as its limitations in studying sexual dissidents (Giffney, 2009:4), as well as its essentialist and assimilationist accounts of communal identification (Gamson, 1995:391). Queer theory, in a sense, became not only a theory about perceived 'queer' individuals, but rather a theoretical paradigm by self-professed 'queer' academics (Plummer, 1992:5) who wanted to institutionalise a new way of viewing sexuality within both academic and activist contexts (Hall & Jagose, 2013:xvi). In so doing, Plummer (1992:5) contends that such individuals transcended the so-called *first wave* of theorising on homosexuality courtesy of pathological accounts based on medical definitions and entered into the *second wave*. This, although critiqued extensively by proponents of queer theory, provided the basis for a possible *third wave* of theorising about sexual orientation. In keeping with its emphasis on the inclusion of diverse, plural and marginalised sexualities, subsequent attempts at defining it have proven just as pluralistic. Warner (1991:xxvi), the originator of the concept heteronormativity, associates queer with a "...preference [which represented]...an aggressive impulse of generalisation; it rejects a minoritising logic of toleration or simple political interest-representation in favour of a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal". As such, it underscores the contestation associated with the perceived stable meanings of modernised categories of, amongst others, gay and lesbian (Butler, 1991:13; Fuss, 1991:2; Grace et al., 2004:303; Jackson & Scott, 2010:22; Sedgwick, 1993; Stein & Plummer, 1996:133) and wishes to 'recycle' more historically 'conservative' sociological theories (Goffman, 1963; 1971; Lemert, 1967; Mead, 1962) and 're-signify' and 're-invent' an identity or identities (Conley, 2009:34) in attempting a critique of the perceived dominance, stability and morality associated with heterosexuality and the binary between it and homosexuality (Ault, 1996:323; Brontsema, 2004:1; Butler, 1993:234; Fuss, 1991:2; Grace et al., 2004:303; Halperin, 1995:46; Jackson & Scott, 2010:21; Namaste, 1996:199; Roseneil, 2002:31; Rubin, 1993:13; Sedgwick, 2008:1; Stein & Plummer, 1996:135; Warner, 1991:26).

Homosexuality may, according to Stein and Plummer (1996:135), be normalised by queer theory, in so far as the supposed superordinate status of heterosexuality (and heteronormativity) is rendered unstable and deviant. According to Fuss (1991:1), the focus of much of lesbian and

gay studies exacerbated the distinction between the categories of 'the heterosexual' and "the homosexual" (cf. Foucault, 1978), since individuals were "...classified as one or the other" (Seidman, 2008:243). This reiterates Blumer's (1969:69) earlier discussion of the liberated social self as active social agent in daily constructions and deconstructions of internal and external stimuli, as these relate to his social (or in this case, sexual) identity. He notes that conventional sociological procedures sought to provide an organised account of existing societies, identified possible factors which 'play upon' it and in effect necessitate change or how this 'play' changed the society. In so doing, the indelible parts of individuals as "...acting units in social change" (Blumer, 1969:73) are ignored. Blumer (1969:73) in fact, although implicitly and quite before his time, implored social scientists to undertake a more 'queer' reading of contemporary society in order to refute views of individuals as merely "...persons constructing individual and collective action through an interpretation of the situations which confront them" (Blumer, 1969:74).

In addition to De Lauretis, much of queer theory's proliferation is also associated with the emergence of the activist group Queer Nation which originated in the 1990s across cities in the United States (Epstein, 1996:152). It was first formed at an ACT UP meeting in New York in 1990, without any clear objective. In time, however, in contrast with the original homophile movements in the 1950s and gay and lesbian liberationist movements in the 1960s, it attempted to introduce a so-called "politics of difference", rather than commonality (Jagose, 1996:77). Its critique of both heteronormative and essentialist theories on homosexuality, are credited as main sources for "...popularising queer" in the United States. Phillips (1994:17) thought it to be an "...oxymoronic formulation, since it 'conflates an ethnic model of origins and difference with a body of theoretical work which seeks to dismantle potentially essentialist models of identity'". In effect, it was argued that it introduced claims to so-called 'queer nationalism', which encompassed an 'Americanisation' of the term and would possibly, based on critics, in effect echo mainstream understandings of nationalism. This, as result, would only further exacerbate and reinforce an essentialist, assimilationist and ethnic model for sexual minorities (Jagose, 1996:107). In this regard, Halperin (1995:63) reiterates such a contradictory objective which conflates diversity with commonality, in noting that it only sought to provide "...young lesbian and gay radicals [with a movement based on] no other issue than that of sexual orientation". In so doing, their efforts corresponded with Butler's (2008:32) warnings against the unification and subsequent homogenisation of understandings pertaining to the concept 'queer', when she cautions, "...I worry when 'queer' becomes an identity. It was never an identity. It was always a

critique of identity. I think if it ceases to be a critique of identity, it's lost its critical edge". It is quite ironic then, that De Lauretis (1994:297) herself, possibly foresaw such critique and the demise of queer theory when she noted that it had become, in only three years, a so-called "...conceptually vacuous creature of the publishing industry".

Regardless, several themes have come to characterise much of the work of queer theorists over the last twenty years.

2.6.2 Queer theoretical themes

These themes encompass **reclamation of the concept 'queer'**, a **denaturalisation of heterosexuality**, the **symbolic dualism of 'the closet'**, and an **anti-assimilation and homogenisation** approach to studying homosexuality.

(a) ***Reclamation of the concept 'queer'***

Reclamation of the concept 'queer' has been posited as one of its most important themes (Epstein, 1996:153). This underscores taking back ownership of a derogatory concept previously used by homophobic and ignorant oppressors against homosexuals, in an attempt to inflict harm through verbal abuse and humiliation. Used interchangeably with the concepts *gay* and *lesbian*, Brontsema (2004:5) argues that although *queer* shares some denotation, it is by no means synonymous with these more modern creations. This formed the underlying theme of her judicious demarcation of three main perspectives on the reclamation theses of the concept *queer*, as evident from the reactions accrued since its inception in the 1990s. These include firstly, those who oppose such reclamation, based on its direct link with pejorative motivations on the part of its users, secondly, those in favour of its use based on a separation from such pejoration, and finally, those who self-consciously use it in direct linkage with a pejorative objective (Brontsema, 2004:6-12).

Related to the **first** perspective whose opponents oppose its use, thus *pejoration as inseparable from the use of queer*, it is argued that those who use the concept *queer*, do so in an attempt to further reflect their disgust and disrespect towards homosexuals. This will reinforce a perceived homophobic society's already existent fears, stereotypes and prejudice pertaining to those different from them without any transformative effect, and as such posits the concept as stable and fixed as it relates to its meaning and ownership by a heterosexual society (Brontsema,

2004:6). Critics of this argument, however, point to the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of language and recommend reclaiming the concept as a means of transcending its former negative connotations (Brontsema, 2004:7). This view is exemplified in a study of McCormack (2011a; 2011b). Based on his study of social interaction between members of schoolboy rugby teams in Britain, Pascoe (2007, cited in McCormack, 2011b:664) provided a reconceptualised consideration of homosexually-themed language which was dependent on the specific context in which it was used and not homogeneous. “Fag discourse” served as regulatory and disciplining principle along the gendered masculine category rather than sexual orientation, and as such, it did not attempt to further marginalise or discriminate against sexual minorities (McCormack, 2011b:668). Such meaning complicates understandings of homophobic language, because the use of ‘fag discourse’ is very context specific. It could either be used to wound a heterosexual individual who displays behaviour associated with homosexuality, or merely denote castigation or a joke amongst a group of male friends. Regardless, it manifests a further centralisation of heterosexual normativity. Although ‘fag’ could still be directed as derogatory slur, this particular context lends itself to its usage as pro-gay, rather than discriminatory (McCormack, 2011b:668).

“Gay discourse” is also evidently pro-gay, since it could either refer to sexuality in one context or behaviour deemed ‘rubbish’, in another. McCormack (2011b:670) employs the concept of ‘cultural lag’ to explain the positive association of gay discourse. He argues that team members may in fact use phrases like ‘that’s so gay’ and ‘don’t be gay,’ yet divorces their usage of the concept and phrases from earlier pathological associations with it (McCormack, 2011b:669-670), which is in direct opposition to one student’s comparison of ‘that’s so gay’ to a racial slur, which “should not be tolerated, especially in the classroom” (quoted in Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:250). Such an interpretation thus serves to critique research which does not take cognisance of the particular context, interpretation or meanings of users of supposed homophobic language. McCormack (2011a:352) contends that homophobic remarks, and per implication behaviour, should be considered as “...temporally and spatially situated and that male [or all] students are not uniformly homophobic”. Although one could emphasise its overly (and overtly) simplification of debates that centre on the nature of homophobia and its emphasis on the importance of hegemonic masculinity, it does however highlight the contradictory meanings individuals ascribe to terminology. Burn et al. (2002:33)²⁰ reiterated this finding in

²⁰Burn et al’s (2002) study focused on an examination of subtle, indirect heterosexism towards lesbian, gay and bisexual students. The 175 college students (members of LGBT-type campus clubs) were given scenarios of spoken views or assumptions of

their research, where it was particularly lesbian women and bisexual individuals who found remarks, which could be interpreted as homophobic, offensive, rather than their gay male counterparts. They attributed this to the fact that probable offensive discourse is more frequent in male culture, and as such, not perceived as too offensive by some gay men (Burn et al. 2002:34). This may in fact reflect Brontsema's (2004:12) belief that perceived discriminatory language may be used based not on homophobia, but rather ignorance of the intricate nuances afforded to the concepts.

Related to the **second** perspective which supports the foregoing references to reclamation, its proponents believe that *queer can in fact be used without any undue pejorative meaning*. In order to divorce the concept from its derogatory associations, expropriation is deemed as necessary to neutralise it and afford it a positive meaning (Brontsema, 2004:8). Through neutralisation, the concept queer is rendered "...ineffective, [and will] nullify its force...Paradoxically, a successful reclamation reaches its death at the same time it reaches its goal" (Brontsema, 2004:8). Both the perceived perpetrators and supposed victim are sensitised to its use to such an extent that it does not incite further anger or fear but rather renders as positive outcome. This is viewed as *the* goal associated with reclamation, thus a 180 degrees turnaround (Brontsema, 2004:8). Those who oppose such perspective argue that it is in fact not as easy to completely divorce the original discriminatory associations of queer from an ever persistent homophobia, which Brontsema (2004:8) likens to other forms of discrimination, including sexism and racism.

The age of homosexual individuals comes into play in both of these perspectives with pain experienced by victims, as the determining factor (cf. Epstein, 1996; Gamson, 1995:395; Halberstam, 2005b). Those who oppose the use of the term are usually older and have differential experiences from those who do not need to 'pass' as heterosexual or necessarily hide their sexual orientation in late modern society. Paradoxically, and one may argue ironically, the largest contingent of individuals who seek to reclaim and use *queer*, have in fact not necessarily experienced as much (if any) direct homophobia. As one older respondent in referring to a younger gay man noted, "...I am sure he isn't old enough to have experienced that feeling of cringing when the word 'queer' was said" (quoted in Gamson, 1995:395). This,

heterosexuals towards non-heterosexuals. Participants were enrolled at the following universities: California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, University of California in Santa Brabara, University of Wisconsin, University of Wyoming and the University of Saskatchewan (Canada). The participants were then given the opportunity to respond to each scenario, and indicate to which extent they found it offensive.

according to Gamson (1995:395) may be directly associated with the fact that the younger generation, as noted, are not as acquainted with police brutality and societal ostracism, amongst others, which were very evident in earlier decades. But, in providing a dualistic account of age, Halberstam (2005b:221) argues that adult men, armed with the necessary theoretical arsenal, may now be able to reclaim the concept as means to transgress the pain and segregation suffered at the hands of a hostile society. On the other hand, she directs our attention to the changing face of the once revered and mutually beneficial same-sex relationship between older and younger men. Whereas the practice of, amongst others, *pederasty* was built on reciprocation of support and understanding (Aldrich, 2010; Alvarez, 2009; Halperin, 1995; Hupperts, 2010), late modern society posits younger gay men as ‘attacking’ older men through adopting and celebrating the concept *queer* (Halberstam, 2005b:222-223). This, according to Brontsema (2004:6) fuels older gay men’s anger over their younger counterparts’ “...arrogance and disrespect”. This thought underlines Halperin’s (1995:63) earlier reference to the supposed contradictory objective proponents of queer theory initially identified during their ACT UP meeting in New York – the disjuncture between essentialism and diversity, assimilation and provocation.

A final perspective, which opposes both the foregoing views, seeks to retain a pejorative objective through stigma exploitation. This thus involves a critical explication and exploration of the underlying motivations and reasoning behind the preservation of heteronormativity in an attempt to subvert homosexuality (Brontsema, 2004:10). One is left to critically consider the ‘normalising’ forces at work in the social construction of “the homosexual” (cf. Foucault, 1978), and why it is distinguished from the normal, acceptable and moral heterosexual (Brontsema, 2004:10; cf. Rubin, 1993:13). However, associated with the call for plurality and diversity, which implies a more individualised orientation on the part of the sexual dissident, one such individual may not necessarily be able to exert the necessary influence to undertake an inquiry of this nature, a point critiqued by several proponents of lesbian and gay studies (Jagose, 1996). This also underscores the noted interchangeable manner with which the concept *queer* is used with gay. One should keep in mind that both modern and postmodern theories have a degree of exclusivity within academia, and is not necessarily readily available for use by individuals outside it. Such individuals, and even those within academic settings, may overlook the finer nuances associated with these concepts and use it interchangeably based on ignorance, and not based on a prejudiced and discriminatory inclination (cf. Brontsema, 2004:12).

(b) ***Denaturalising heterosexuality***

A second central theme is best described by Stein and Plummer (1996:135) who argue that proponents of queer theory “...turn their deconstructive zeal against heterosexuality with a particular vengeance”. This assumes that although previous influential studies, courtesy of social constructionists such as McIntosh (1968) as well as attempts by liberationist movements in the 1960s, have emphasised the manner in which external social forces influence homosexual individuals, very little was done to progressively critique the creation, maintenance and reinforcement of the heterosexual/homosexual binary. This involves a critical study of not only homosexuality, whether it be its aetiology, nature and influence on mainstream society, but rather a focus on the manner in which the political economy of gender through heterosexist patriarchy is formed and then impacts on the organisation of social, political, gendered and sexual relations (cf. Connell, 2009; Walby, 1990). In so doing queer theory in fact reiterates Butler’s (1991:23) assertion that “...heterosexuality is always at risk in the act of elaborating itself is evidence that it is perpetually at risk...it ‘knows’ its own possibility of being undone”. In her interpretation of Butler’s contributions, Colebrook (2009:14) argues that regardless of the mentioned heterosexist constraints to which individuals conform, the mere presence of a clear set of expectations, signals the possibility of transcending it through so-called ‘activation’ and an introduction of difference and instability. We thus no longer only study the so-called margins of what Rubin (1993:11) affectionately termed her “charmed circle” or the lower levels of her erotic pyramid, but rather the centre and higher levels occupied by the monogamous heterosexual (cf. Stein & Plummer, 1996:138; Vance, 1998:168). Rubin’s (1993:11) work on the bureaucratisation of heteronormative and “compulsory heterosexuality” (Rich, 1993:227) in relation to other peripheral sexual dissidents is echoed in the work of De Lauretis (1993) and Rich (1993).

Rubin (1993:11) argues that modern Western society’s understanding of sexuality manifests a “...hierarchal system of sexual value”, which places reproductive heterosexuals at the top of the erotic pyramid, followed by unmarried monogamous heterosexuals, with gay and lesbian couples in stable relationships “...verging on respectability”. So-called “despised” sexual castes at the bottom of the hierarchy include bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, sadomasochists and sex workers (Rubin 1993:12). The last-mentioned occupy the so-called outer limits of this hierarchy, whilst those on the higher levels occupy the “charmed circle” of sexuality. By drawing this ‘imaginary line’ between the two, several social and political institutions, including psychiatry, religion and popular culture, create and maintain the notion “...that there is one best

way to do it [sex, sexuality, gender], and that everyone should do it that way”, and as a result be rewarded with positive sanctions and corresponding labels of “...certified mental health, respectability, legality,...institutional support and material benefits” (Rubin 1993:12).

Butler’s (1990; 1991; 1993) exemplary work on gender (and per implication sexual orientation) as ‘performance’ should be noted here. Her arguments, to be adapted later by Collins (2004), Ingraham (2002), Jackson and Scott (2010), Johnson (2009) and West and Zimmerman (2002), to name but a few, basically posited the sexual and gendered self as a set of repetitious actions embedded in a so-called “heterosexual matrix” (Butler, 1990:47). Such a matrix, akin to Rubin’s “charmed circle”, supposes that one is born and subsequently socialised into adopting a given culture’s compulsory prescriptions about gender and sexual orientation (Butler, 1991:28). Foucault’s contributions on discursive practices also come into play here, because they contradict an essentialist understanding of gender and sexual orientation, since Butler (1990:33) believes gender to be “...an ongoing discursive practice...open to intervention and resignification” (Butler, 1990:33), thus open to a reconfiguration of sorts based on external social forces in a larger cultural scenario (D’Emilio, 1983:99; Foucault, 1978:36; Johnson, 2009:66; Reddy, 2006:155; Rubin, 1993:12; Simon, 1996:44; Valentine, 2002:154; West & Zimmerman, 2002:43). This, according to Butler (1993:7; 2013:19), is exacerbated by a constant reinforcement of “heterosexualised hegemony” through a repetition of unquestioned ritualised performances (cf. Ingraham, 2002:74; West & Zimmerman, 2002:43). One will only through such repetition and subjection, be recognised as social and sexual self by those with whom one performs (Colebrook, 2009:14; Plummer, 1998a:590).

Embedded in this matrix, individuals knowingly or unknowingly conform to these specific gendered prescriptions, whether it is associated with the hegemonic male or “...emphasised” female (Connell, 1987:183). The hegemonic male is typified as an aggressive, unemotional, competitive and dominant individual, thus someone who embodies an “ethic of justice” (Connell, 1987:186; Ritzer, 2012:463). Those individuals who exude an “emphasised femininity”, are regarded as “...soft, submissive, sexually coy, alluring or flirtatious” (Bradley, 2007:48). Proponents of postmodern or poststructural thought, such as queer theory, argue that a rigid adherence to such a distinction disregards the inherent diversity and plurality to be associated with gender and sexuality (Bradley 2007:47). Related to critique of such deterministic accounts, Connell (1987:186) juxtaposes hegemonic and subordinate configurations of masculinity and femininity, respectively, with diverse forms of gender categories (in relation to dominant ones).

Comprising homosexuality and other 'softer' forms of masculinity (Bradley, 2007:47), so-called "subordinate" masculinities, according to Segal (2007:113), are regarded as purported "traitors to the cause" of the perceived acceptable heterosexual male. Such a distinction may, as I have argued elsewhere (Rothmann, 2013a:23), emphasise a seemingly interchangeable and relational link between a man's sex, gender category and sexual orientation (Schilt & Westbrook, 2009:461), thus one necessitating the other. It is particularly such an argument that emphasises the importance ascribed to aligning or disengaging the supposed connection between one's gender, with your sexual orientation (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010:63). But such disengagement has proven to be somewhat problematic, as argued by Jackson and Scott (2010:63), in their work on the "rationalisation" of gender and sexuality in contemporary society. As such, queer theory encouraged a reconsideration of these heteronormative expectations in order to identify the "...patterns of absences and silences through which texts deny same-sex desire [and] revealed how the manufacture of a reviled 'homosexual' in western societies has often be a method by which 'heterosexuality' and 'family' assured themselves of their superiority" (Adam, 2002:19). This thought is exemplified by Wittig's (1992:40) attention to the ever omnipresence of heterosexuality as privileged and model sexual arrangement.

The notion of repetitive acts and its subsequent 'naturalisation' of heterosexuality and men and women as so-called "heterogenders"²¹ (Ingraham, 1996:169) also form a significant part of Jackson and Scott's (2010) reference to the "rationalisation of sexuality" in late modern society. Regardless of the fact that Rubin (1993:33) has made it abundantly clear that gender and sexuality are two distinctly separate areas of social science interrogation, each still has an undeniable influence on the other. Sedgwick (2008:30) echoes this notion by underlining the subtle invisible heteronormative and possible patriarchal objectives in advocating a conflation of the two, since it serves to retain the polarised understanding of heterosexuality and homosexuality, as per the cisgender model (cf. Schilt & Westbrook 2009:461). Taking this into account, she believes that social science requires an autonomous theory (or one could argue, amalgam of two) to explicate the reasons that centre on the maintenance of such a conflation which exacerbates the binary, for which social constructionists provided the basis, and queer theory could now elaborate on. This serves to explain the adoption of Jackson and Scott's (2010) reference to the rationalisation of sexuality, to apply it to a 'rationalisation of being gay',

²¹ This concept reaffirms the preceding references to the taken-for-granted centrality and 'normality' associated with gender as informed by patriarchal and heteronormative prescriptions (Ingraham, 1996:169).

thus the provision of a so-called blueprint for gay men to adhere to when constructing their identities.

A great deal of emphasis is placed, particularly in Western secular society, on the importance of gender-appropriate behaviour, which if deviated from, serves as source for alarm (Troiden, 1998:267). To retain the supposed order, stability and autonomy associated with the foregoing reference to the supposed ideal type gendered being in late modern society, exemplified in a masculine heterosexual male, high degrees of self-control should be exerted over himself, as Jackson and Scott (2010:57) term it, exercising “...mind over matter”. In so doing, the individual will strive to master the dualisms and threats internal and external to his perceived stable, masculine and heterosexual gendered and sexual self (cf. Schilt & Westbrook 2009:461). Dating its origin to the era of Enlightenment and specifically the late nineteenth century, proponents of postmodernism argue that those who wanted to retain the stability and dominance of men over those who were supposedly *alien* to them, amongst others women, were always aware of the possible instability and threatened nature of the heterosexual masculine ideal (Butler, 1991:23; Jackson & Scott, 2010:56). They direct our attention to the fact that postmodern theorists have long sought to underscore the undeniable dualisms existent within the presumed dominance of the masculine heterosexual male in modern society, and are of the opinion that more emphasis should, as such, be placed on these, including “...nature and culture, mind and body, reason and unreason, thought and emotion, order and chaos – all of which are implicated in the opposition between male and female” (Jackson & Scott, 2010:56). One could arguably, and quite easily, apply such an argument to the heterosexual/homosexual binary logic, in so far as much of the subversion of the “gay sensibility” (cf. Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a) has been associated with the perceived normal, moral and acceptable position of heterosexuality in society, as has been evident from the preceding sections in the chapter.

The so-called rationality of sexuality is thus associated with attempts to govern the so-called ungovernable inherent sexual urges of the ‘manly’ man. He was seen as predestined to have control over his sexual needs and desires in order to wisely ‘invest’ his “...bodily resources...[thus] a triumph of reason over passion” (Jackson & Scott, 2010:58). For if he were to succumb to his genital and animal-like urges and irrational desires, his potential to fittingly govern the ungovernable sexuality of passive women, would be inhibited. The inner self of the male was identified as the source for such rational governance, where much of his reason co-existed with his natural (and per implication irrational emotive) ‘true self’ (Jackson & Scott,

2010:59), which immediately recalls the earlier reference to Mead's (1962) debate on the interplay between the self's dynamic and true 'I' and conforming 'me', and Goffman's (1971:64) reference to a social actor's need to establish a balance between his own and the expected performance. As noted in Chapter One, Stein and Plummer's work (1996) posits heterosexuality as determinant sexual formation and not the ideal and taken-for-granted dominant sexual orientation in society. This is ensured through, what Ingraham (2002:74) identifies as performed rituals and rules which reinforce much of heterosexuality's taken-for-granted stability. An example of the difficulty associated with this institutionalised arrangement, was provided as part of a monologue delivered by American singer and actress Barbra Streisand, during her 1994 comeback concert. During the first part of her concert, she used several songs to reflect on her past romantic relationships:

...Since the sexual revolution men and women don't know how to act with each other...When a woman goes out with a man for the first time, does she automatically assume that he'll pick up the cheque? What if she makes more money than he does? If she offers to pay, is that a threat to his masculinity? And if she does pay will he expect *her* to put the moves on *him* after dinner? There's so much to think about nowadays...It used to be so simple (Bergman & Bergman, 1994).

Much of this complexity is part of the rationalisation of sexuality. Regardless of the fact that rationality was (and has still been) retained as source for regulating and understanding sexuality in general, a shift occurred in late modern society in terms of its primary emphasis. No longer was sexual behaviour spoken about as predominantly in terms of its pathological and unhealthy effects outside the institution of marriage, especially for women, but it has ordained as imperative for psychological and emotional health. Yet, although such an altered conceptualisation supposes a greater degree of fluidity and autonomy for men and women, its practice is still dependent on its heterosexual classification as per Rich's (1993:227) reference to the importance of "compulsory heterosexuality" and Warner's (1991:26) "heteronormativity". By adopting principles akin to the early 1900 labour process, Jackson and Scott (2010) typify sexuality as a 'taylorised' process. The original meaning associated with Taylorism centred on the manner in which workers were provided with specialised tasks and skills to be mastered in the labour process. This was associated with 'scientific management' of labour for the purpose of mass capitalist production, which in effect deskilled workers, in so far as no individual worker

was comprehensively skilled to produce one product on his/her own, but only a small constituent part (Jackson & Scott, 2010:61). In likening sexuality to such a process, a contradictory picture is provided for. Taylorised sex, provides specific sexual skills to men and women, which according to a rationalised hypothesis, is no longer inherently natural to individuals (Jackson & Scott, 2010:61). As such, men and women are taught to perform sexually, thus in a manner of speaking, taught to do something which one would assume is a natural precondition. This has the effect that

...sex itself became civilized. Old anxieties about the debilitating consequences of sexual excess gradually gave way to new emphasis on the need for sexual experience in the quest for improved sexual performance....sex acquired new purposes: individual fulfilment in the service of *maintaining heterosexual coupledness*²². This led to an emphasis on sexual skills and an increased Taylorization of sex, the production of *rationalized means*²³ of producing pleasure (Jackson & Scott, 2010:61).

Such 'rationalised means' may manifest Butler's (1990) and Goffman's (1971) reference to gendered performances, since changing views on sexuality prioritised the importance of skilful enactment of heteronormative prescriptions. Although room was afforded for sexual exploration through this 'reskilling' of men and women, constraints which emphasised the noted "heterosexual coupledness" in place of other sexual orientations, were retained (Jackson & Scott, 2010:62). By engaging in sexual relations in the twentieth century, women were no longer labelled deviant or pathological for doing so (cf. Meem et al., 2010:44-45), but were given leeway to express their sexual needs, yet only "...in service of male sexual needs" (Jackson & Scott, 2010:62), critiqued by several feminist writers (cf. Rich, 1993; Rubin, 1993). This underscores West and Zimmerman's (2002) debate on "doing gender" and Johnson's (2009) work on "using gender". In the case of the former, a differentiation is made between three main components which comprise the 'gendered'-nature of Western civilisation – sex, sex categorisation and gender (West & Zimmerman, 2002:43). The first refers to the biologically given sex with which an individual is born, whereas sex categorisation incorporates specific cues associated with either men or women, ranging from dress code, use or lack of makeup, hairstyle and physical mannerisms. Having little influence or choice about one's biologically

²²Emphasis added.

²³Emphasis added.

given sex, these provide you with the opportunity to either conform to or challenge this biological given. In obtaining this, an individual may ascribe to a specific gender, whether this is masculine or feminine (regardless of the biological sex). Although such a notion implies a great degree of personal freedom and choice, West and Zimmerman (2002:46) emphasise the fact that an individual is always held accountable in terms of his/her gender, which is associated with processes of gender assessment (cf. Ohnstad, 2009:364). This entails that individuals are subjected to intense scrutiny as it relates to the 'performance' (cf. Butler, 1990:xiv) of their particular gender.

As part of their judicious demarcation of Mead's (1962) "social self", Jackson and Scott (2010:127) reiterate earlier work by Halperin (1993:426) and Rich (1972, quoted in Halperin, 1993) by discussing the manner in which the rationalisation of sexuality in modern society through the provision of specific guidelines and advice, underline the significance of a healthy sexual existence as necessary for individuals' health in general. They highlight the manner in which mainstream media, amongst others, skill and 'reskill' individuals to master their sexual urges in terms of both their physical behaviour and underlying emotions. This is done through sex manuals, advertising, 'how to do it' DVDs and magazines (Jackson & Scott, 2010:63). They argue that "...[b]eing 'good at sex' is increasingly equated with other indices of 'having style' like wearing the right clothes or having the right mobile technology – a qualification for and an indicator of our worldly success and social integration" (Jackson & Scott, 2010:63; cf. Alvarez, 2009:119). Jackson and Scott (2010) apply Mead's (1962) distinction between the individual's 'I' and 'me' to the construction and potential deconstruction of sexual actor's gendered and sexually orientated 'self'. As noted in Chapter One, both are so-called active 'agents' which continuously, through self-reflection, interact with the other. Depending on a particular social context, a gay man may, for example, need to recall past experiences (i.e. primary socialisation, previous relationships, homophobia, etc.) to determine which of the two 'agents' should dominate the other (Jackson & Scott, 2010:126).

In this regard, Johnson (2009) applies the work of Collins (2004) by building on and critiquing the progressive contributions made by especially West and Zimmerman (2002). Based on Collins' use of ritual theory, Johnson focuses her study on the manner in which individuals do not necessarily (and by implication passively) conform to the heteronormative gender regime in society. She argues that social actors will only engage in interaction or relationships with others if they may potentially obtain emotional rewards in return (Johnson, 2009:66). As such,

individuals negotiate their respective roles and identity within a particular relationship, based on their strengths and capabilities and the satisfaction they may accrue, rather than merely conforming to a set of predetermined ‘gendered’ or sexual guidelines. Giddens’ (1992:147) reference to “institutional reflexivity” and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s (1995) work on individualism resonate here. Both underscore the manner in which our contemporary society affords you the opportunity to self-consciously reflect on the institutions and relationships of which you form part. This provides the opportunity to compile a ‘wish list’ of sorts of the ‘perfect relationship’ in which contentment and love may be embedded, regardless of social categorisation in terms of race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. In adhering to such an approach, individuals in fact ‘use’ rather than ‘do’ gender, sex and sexual orientation (cf. Gagnon & Simon, 1973) and become active social actors who mobilise their interactions with others in such a way as to achieve their desired emotional energy as outcome (Collins, 2004:108; Johnson, 2009:134). Based on this, arguments in favour of the eradication of unnecessary categories and constraints associated with individuals’ gender and sexuality (and by implication sexual orientation) are encouraged (cf. Lorber, 2005:76). Such arguments are embedded in postmodern theories which postulate the critique of the heterosexual/homosexual binary as well as the ‘taken-for-granted’ dominance of heterosexuality and underscore the importance of fluidity, pluralism and diversity related to one’s sexuality, gender and sexual orientation (Epstein, 1996:152; Namaste, 1996:198; Roseneil, 2002:29; Sedgwick, 2008:10; Stein & Plummer, 1996:135). Plummer (1998a:594) notes in this regard that the “...ultimate challenge of queerness,...is...the questioning of unity, stability, viability...of sexual identities”. Yet, what one should acknowledge in this regard, is the fact that such negotiation still takes place within a larger heteronormative context on a smaller scale and may not necessarily translate into society’s understanding of gender and sexual orientation on a macro scale (cf. Johnson, 2009). One such source of rationalisation is the use of popular magazines targeted towards both heterosexual and homosexual niche markets. Evident examples of these are depicted in the following two South African cover pages of the *Men’s Health* July 2011 and *Gay Pages* Winter 2012-issues, directed at the male heterosexual and male gay consumer markets, respectively²⁴.

²⁴I acknowledge that my choice of these two particular covers of the respective publications may be subject to criticism, my reasoning is twofold. Firstly, that it is not the main objective to undertake an in-depth analysis of heterosexual or gay male publications, but to merely provide a practical application and illustration of the modern and postmodern contributions to the studies of the heterosexual/homosexual binary. Secondly, my choice of these two covers is based on the fact that a closer interrogation of earlier issues resulted in an identification of similar themes depicted in both – the importance of a muscular male body, exercise, nutrition, a healthy sex life and financial success. Pertaining to the respective publications, a sense of communality was continuously included in *The Gay Pages* and advice on fashion (ironically) was more evident for *Men’s Health*.

Figure 4: Cover pages from *Gay Pages* and *Men's Health*



The covers of both, ironically, address many of the same expectations and skills necessitated to be deemed a 'good sexualised citizen of late modernity', regardless of the fact that two seemingly polarised groups are depicted and targeted. In terms of **similarities**, we find that the hyper-masculine and muscled Adonis-like physique (cf. Pope et al., 2000) of the cover models are projected as symbols of masculine beauty. Both may, in all likelihood, attempt to attain this body for different reasons. The heterosexual man may do so to enjoy further positive sanctions in adhering to heteronormative and hegemonic ideals of masculinity, whereas gay men may do this in order to project a desired hegemonic image they are sourly lacking, because of their subordinate status as gay men (cf. Alvarez, 2009:99; Drummond, 2005:292; Halkitis et al., 2004; Reeser, 2010:101; Schnoebelen, 2001:31; Wood, 2004:153). Both, ironically then, seek to (over)compensate (Downs, 2006:76) in terms of physical appearance to weather gendered and sexual assessment (Butler, 1990; 1993; Ingraham, 2002; Jackson & Scott, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 2002) by their significant others, and in effect both become "reflexivity losers" (cf.

Lash, 1994:120), since neither is afforded the chance to fully master a sense of self-reflexivity (cf. Giddens, 1992; Jackson & Scott, 2010) which presumes freedom, flexibility and pluralism.

In terms of the **differences** associated with each individual publication, is the fact that the cover of *Gay Pages* addresses several issues of interest to the gay community, which one could interpret as reinforcing a homogeneous and essentialist representation. These include an affirmation of their perceived overly-sexualised nature (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000), courtesy of a book review of the pornographic film company *Bel Ami's* male actors and models in Bali, depicted in soft-core male nudes inside the magazine. These are complemented with an additional pictorial of photographer Mark Henderson's *Luminosity* which comprises pages filled with scantily clothed muscular men (Gay Pages, 2012), reminiscent of the so-called "gay clone"-image of the 1970s and 1980s in particularly America (Alvarez, 2009:99). The "clone" mostly, yet not always, represented muscular gay men either dressed in Levi's, leather boots or fitted muscle T-shirts and was typified as, amongst others, athletic (cf. Pope et al., 2000). The sexualised theme is elaborated on in several other issues (Gay Pages, 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011, 2013) of the magazine, which vary from articles on Mr Gay World 2012 and Mr Gay South Africa with pictures of the contestants in drag, swimming trunks and two-piece tailor suits (Gay Pages, 2011; 2013) to reports on national and international Gay Pride Parades, in which one would assume emphasis on gay solidarity as project of political rebellion, but much of these pieces, were comprised of pictures, again underscoring male beauty courtesy of near-naked, "[w]et and wild" (Gay Pages, 2008) men parading down the street (cf. Alvarez, 2009; Gay Pages, 2007; 2009; 2010; 2011). But it is the Special Holiday Edition (2011/2012) which elevates gay male sexual proclivity to new levels. Consider the headlines, 'Animal Allure of Athletes', 'Sizzling Men in Swimwear', 'Erotic Sports Photography' and the cover page photo of a shirtless muscular man.

Although it may serve as comment on the celebration of queerness, it feeds into the stereotypes held by heterosexual society, yet progressively underscores Butler's (1990; 1993) views on performativity. Other essentialist themes highlight an article on homophobia in school, success for 'gay business leaders' (cf. Castells, 1983) and an informative guide to gay-friendly tourist attractions in both Western and other developed and developing nations (cf. Altman, 1996:78; Coon, 2012; Levine, 1998; Warren, 1998). Altman (1996:78) asserts the manner in which this homogenised Western, presumably white gay male culture is advertised in the magazines and the annual *Spartacus*-guides, which posits the thought of the adoption of Western 'gay values'

through such subtle socialisation in various cultures. The *Men's Health* magazine also runs rampant with themes on the rationalisation of gender and sexuality. Healthy diets ('Should You Follow the No Cakes Diet?'), regular exercise ('The Body You Want', 'Your Best Body Ever!'), the importance of hegemonic muscularity ('How Tough Are You?', 'The Best Outdoor Gear') and of course, your sex life ('The Art of Seduction', 'The Sex Issue:...Sex Secrets of 578 Women'). All of these are grouped together by the July 2011-issue's headline, 'Be a (much) Better Man: 25 Best New Ideas, Products & Tactics That Will Change Your Life' (Men's Health, 2011). And if this is not enough, how should one interpret the woman's pose on this cover – as sexually liberated or merely "...a harp who yields her secrets of melody to the master who knows how to handle her"? (Van de Velde, 1928, quoted in Jackson & Scott, 2010:62). On request to submit an article on such gay essentialism (and possible critique) to the editor of *The Gay Pages* in 2010, the article was regarded as being 'too academic' for the readership of the publication, which one could interpret as an attempt to merely entertain rather than enlighten the broader South African gay community, who otherwise, would not have access to such debates.

In addition to this objective of proponents of queer theory, they also seek to explicate the reasons for the creation of the symbolic image of 'the closet', as well as its effect on both the heterosexual/homosexual binary and the individuals embedded within or outside of it.

(c) ***The symbolic dualism of 'the closet'***

Evident from the foregoing, is the fact that the heterosexual and gay worlds are in fact not as separable as one would assume based on Rubin's (1993:13) "charmed circle" which neatly delineates the "blessed" and subordinate sexualities. Poststructuralist Jacques Derrida's (1998) concept of "...supplementarity" comes into play here since it presupposes a dependence of the two binary opposites on one another. Derrida (1998:244) attributes the creation of social and sexual meaning to the interplay of the presence and/or absence of a social phenomenon. In applying his work to the oppositional categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality as well as the divergent subcategorisations within them, Namaste (1996:196) asserts that each of these categories' meanings are dependent on the other, as such "...a macho homophobic male can define himself as 'straight' only in opposition to that which he is not – an effeminate gay man". This thought is echoed by Connell (2005), Sanger (2010:26) and Segal (2007:56), amongst others, in their work on gender differentiation, who argue that 'true' or 'pure' masculinity can only be attained and subsequently asserted in relation to its direct opposite, the "yielding" femininity

of another. Such conflation of gender and sexual orientation, according to Sanger (2006:26), establishes a "...mirroring of an unhealthy gender binary (male/female) and [results in a] destructive heterosexual masculinity [which] sustains and reinforces damaging gender constructions, rather than disrupt patriarchal heteronormativity". This assumes that supplementarity becomes the *effect* of the interpretation both groups impress on the other, in order to understand its own meaning (Namaste, 1996:198). Adopting a deconstructionist approach, queer theorists acknowledge that we cannot simply negate the current categorisations of sexuality, but rather seek to critically explore, explicate and describe the creation, maintenance, contestation and enactment of boundaries between heterosexuality and homosexuality, thus asking *how* and *why* (Namaste, 1996:199). Much of these arguments figure in the work of Fuss (1991) in her *Inside/Out: Lesbian Theories, Gay Theories*-text.

Fuss (1991) interrogates several of the questions already posed, such as the sources for the creation of the categories, from what they differentiate themselves, as well as the constant dialectical (cf. Foucault, 1978) interplay between the insider and outsider (Namaste, 1996:199). She explains that the "...philosophical opposition between 'heterosexual' and 'homosexual,'...has always been constructed on the foundations of related opposition: the couple 'inside' and 'outside'" (Fuss, 1991:1). In elaborating on her work, Fuss (1991) echoes the contributions of Sedgwick (1993; 2008) on the symbolically laden homosexual 'closet'. In accordance with the work of Derrida and Fuss, Sedgwick (2008:1) supports the hypotheses of the creation of the heterosexual/homosexual binary as one of the central organising methods differentiating between the insider and outsider. She notes that one can only fully comprehend any societal issue by critically analysing this binary, because by not doing it, would "damage" any comprehensive understanding of sexual organisation (Sedgwick, 2008:1). Against this background, she relates much of her discussion of the binary to the 'closet' and the subsequent relationship between "public and private, or secrecy and disclosure" (Namaste, 1996:195). The 'closet', as defined by Brown (2000:7), who uses it as metaphor for spatial arrangement, emphasises the underlying power dynamics of the binary, because

...Its *location* and *distance* suggest proximity to some wider (more important, more immediate, more central) room, but it's a certain kind of proximity; one that limits *accessibility* and *interaction*. The ubiquity of gays and lesbians 'everywhere' means that on the one hand they are indeed close at hand, but enclosure of the closet means that they are separate, hived off, invisible and

unheard...by definition a closet has a certain kind of spatial interaction with its room. It is separate and distinct too. It segregates, it hides, it confines.

His quote actually brings a quite humorous title of a 'self-help' guide to coming out (Handel, 2000), to mind – *Now That You're Out of the Closet, What About the Rest of the House?* The question to be posed will most likely be – whose house? Or, how many houses and subsequent closets will there be? Within the domain of the heterosexual/homosexual binary, we are always presented with the one side which reflects a natural, normal, moral, charmed and "blessed" nature, whereas the other encompasses everything unnatural, abnormal, peripheral and cursed (cf. McIntosh, 1968; Rubin, 1993). This reasoning is refuted by Dr. Evelyn Hooker, an American psychiatrist who paved the way towards removing homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders in 1974, through her work on gay male adjustment since the 1950s. She recalled in a 1989 interview that what made her most proud of the work, was that gay men would come up to her and say, "I wanted to meet you because I wanted to tell you what you saved me from" (quoted in Eaklor, 2008:82). Sedgwick underlines the binary's implicit irony within a supposed more accepting and liberated late modern society, as it relates to the invisibility within the binaries of lesbian and gay identity, which in effect focus on both the critique directed towards the essentialist maintenance of the naturalised depiction of gay men and lesbians *in relation to* heterosexuals but also *within* their specific binary²⁵. Thus, although we find ourselves within a society in which discourse on sexuality has increased significantly (Foucault, 1978:63), in many respects such discourse may still seek to oppress and silence if it does not underscore the dominant sexual arrangements.

By reinforcing the binary, further secrecy is facilitated on the part of particularly gay men and lesbian women, who avoid a complete transcendence from the constrictive parameters of the 'closet' which serves as protection against possible overt or covert internalised or societal homophobia (Sedgwick 1993:46; Weeks, 1977:3). Embedded within what Namaste (1996:199) terms an "engendered paradox", the mere notion of gay men 'coming out of the closet', implies that they are entering into an already existent heterosexual society, of which its members need not disclose their seemingly dominant and taken-for-granted sexual orientation. Similarly, she argues that the process associated with 'coming out' into an existing proscriptive, over-

²⁵The writer acknowledges the importance proponents of queer theory attribute to the inclusion of other excluded sexual minorities (bisexuality, transgenderism, transsexuality, asexuality, intersexuality, pansexuality) as were evident in original Lesbian and Gay Studies' theorising. But, in keeping with the theme of the article, primary emphasis is afforded to diversity and critique within gay and lesbian subcultures in relation to heterosexuality.

heterosexist and rationalised late modern society, is repetitious, in so far as gay men and lesbians re-enter, re-emerge and constantly re-create new closets based on the contextual allowances or restrictions with which they are confronted (cf. Gray, 2009; Jackson & Scott 2010:70-71; Smuts, 2011; Sedgwick, 2008). Some gay men, for example, are not afforded the opportunity to access the necessary material or human resources which are important to master Cass' (1984) identity synthesis or Seidman's (2002a:75) "...post-closeted gay sensibility". This in turn, requires a greater deal of self-reflexivity on the part of these sexual minorities who need to manage the projections of their gendered and sexual nature, in an attempt to avoid possible prejudice, isolation or retaliation (cf. Goffman 1963; Jackson & Scott 2010:70-71). But in transcending the limits of 'the closet', Foucault (1978:62) believes that the gay male "...exonerates, redeems, and purifies...unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation".

(d) ***Anti-assimilation and homogenisation***

The fourth theme is closely related with the foregoing discussion, in so far as it underlines anti-assimilation and homogenisation of the homosexual identity and such a community. Queer theory wanted to provide a permanent rebellion against homogeneous views on homosexuality (Epstein, 1996:153; Seidman, 2008:242). Seidman (1993:133) underscores this prominent theme when he argues that "...[q]ueers are not united by any unitary identity but only to their opposition to disciplining, normalizing social forces" of a heteronormative society. Connell (2009:108) reiterates this point by citing the work of Hocquenghem (1978). His work underlined the inherent contradiction associated with a connection between the concept 'identity' and 'homosexuality'. The latter, according to him, displays the tendency of constant change, internal flux and contradiction, rather than a static and uniform entity (Connell, 2009:108). As such, for him and other queer theorists such as Deleuze, one is not able to *be* homosexual, thus assume a stable identity, but one is constantly in the process of *becoming* homosexual (Conley, 2009:28). Much of this is associated with Butler (1990; 1993) and Goffman's (1971) references to 'performing' gender and sexuality, since there "...are only homosexual productions of desire and assemblages...that produce utterances" (Conley, 2009:28). She continues, "...[o]ne has to go back through a deeper and broader history of homosexuality to give it back all the otherness it contains and of which it had been stripped. This [can only be found] through the progression of a sexual becoming that is always to come" (Conley, 2009:28) beyond limitations of homogeneous notions of what 'gay' and 'homosexual' entails. Savoy's (1994:145) work has

proven to be quite progressive in terms of the meanings associated with queer theory when he remarked, "...postmodern theory affects an ironic, indeed, an uncanny, return of homosexuality to something very like its *premodern* delineation – an inchoate and not-yet-emergent taxonomy of desires or acts that cannot *quite* be termed a 'subjectivity'". His words underscore ancient accounts of same-sex desire, in so far as it emphasises acts, desires and emotions separate from a need to categorise (and per implication) label or stigmatise those who display such an affinity (cf. Dlamini, 2006; Meem et al., 2010). It may, as such then serve to underline a probable 'full circle moment'-effect of sorts, particularly when one considers the similarities such 'ancient' and early accounts share with what many gender and sexual non-conformists would, today, term 'queer'.

Although many of the proponents of lesbian and gay studies emphasise the importance of creating a sense of community to facilitate, amongst others, a political mobility for equality, the artificiality of such categorisation, leads Altman (1972:227) to reflect that "...if man/womankind reaches the point where it is able to dispense with the categories of homo- and heterosexuality, the loss will be well worth the gain". Through such fracturing, emphasis is accordingly afforded to the fractured, fluid and heterogeneous homosexual category (Roseneil, 2002:29). Sedgwick (2008:24) asserts that one needs to acknowledge the inherent diversity which characterises individual experiences, regardless of whether they share the same racial, ethnic, class or sexual orientation category (cf. Halperin, 1993:417). She identifies several examples which denote such a 'pure difference'. These include differential experiences individuals ascribe to genital acts, the importance associated with one's sexuality as either all-encompassing or only one of several identity components, the frequency with which individuals engage in sex or choice for or against the use of sexual objects (Sedgwick, 2008:25). She continues by also distinguishing between the levels of emotional involvement individuals deem important during sexual intercourse, the choice of either a scripted sexual scene or spontaneous one and, finally, the adoption of a more fluid or static definition of sexual experience based on their sexual orientation (Sedgwick, 2008:25). Other possible studies on the sexual proclivities of gay and lesbian individuals are also highlighted in the recommendations of Nardi (2002:53). He emphasises initial sources for sexual practices, what is deemed sexual acts, the 'types' of attractions amongst gay men (hair colour, body hair, height), as well as the way in which sexual dissident groups of different nationalities, racial groups, classes and ages conceptualise sexual acts (Nardi, 2002:53). In addition, Roseneil (2002:29) also points to a myriad of configurations in the gay community which depends on the particular subcategorisation some men may wish to

ascribe to, whether these are “...muscle marys, opera queens”, “...a bit effeminate,...‘real men’,...[and] flamboyant queens” (Nilsson, quoted in Connell, 2009:107) or individuals who differ based on an intersection of varied identities comprised of race, class, ethnicity, age, disability or sex. Richardson and Monro (2012:40) for example argue that intersectionality, which originated from Black Feminist critique towards the presumed white middle-class bias which characterised much of modern Feminist work, does not merely denote an amalgam of several varied identity characteristics, but rather the intersection between two or more of them (cf. Connell, 2011:207). Connell (2011:207) contends that although non-generalisation on the bases of for example race, class or sexuality may immobilise social scientists in general, such generalisations should however not disregard the particular social contexts within which they operate. Studies have foregrounded gender, race and class, as primary identity characteristics to study within several contexts, with only a few social studies affording attention to the role of sexuality (Richardson & Monro, 2012:41; Savage & Miller, 2011; Tong, 2008).

Their argument manifests clearly in the insightful South African study of Smuts (2011). In adopting Cass’ (1984) model of identity formation, she argues in accordance with others (cf. Savin-Williams, 2005), that the intersection of several different identity characteristics provides for differential experiences faced by particularly black women in Johannesburg (Smuts, 2011:37-38). She argues that the intersection of a number of identities of black lesbian women, as it relates to their race, class and gender, determines to a large extent whether these women are afforded the opportunity to tap into the matrixes of power, influence and decision-making (Smuts, 2011:38). Similar studies critiqued the lack of sufficient focus on the intersection between race and homophobia in, amongst others the United Kingdom where sexual minorities face discrimination based on their race, class, gender and sexual orientation (Richardson & Monro, 2012:46). They also underscore the importance of focussing on the degree to which historic colonialism may have impacted on Southern and Western countries. The authors cite Anne McClintock’s work in which she explored how categories such as race, and subsequently sexual orientation, were developed through Western, industrial imperialism (Richardson & Monro, 2012:46). This could account for references to homosexuality as a Western secular import and “un-African”. Dlamini’s (2006) contributions on homosexuality on the African continent are again of value here. He provides an insightful overview of the existence of socially and culturally sanctioned same-sex relationships on the continent across the centuries. These relationships, according to him, were only ‘polluted’ through Western Christian missionary workers, who adopted and introduced the pathological medical depiction of “the homosexual”

(cf. Foucault, 1978) to Africans. As such, it was, and still is not homosexuality which is “un-African”, but rather the pathological model presented by homophobic Western influences (Dlamini, 2006:131).

Intersectional focus could also enjoy further elaboration through a ‘queerer sociology’, as advocated by Colebrook (2009), Hall (2005:114), Namaste (1996), Nardi (2002), Plummer (1998a; 2003), Stein and Plummer (1996) as well as Weeks (1996). In my own work (Rothmann, 2012) this reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship has been considered, which should enjoy elaboration in both theory and praxis – between lesbian and gay studies and queer theory. A queerer sociology may manifest a merger of dualisms which include the modern and postmodern/poststructuralist, the homogeneous and diverse, the community and individual as well as subjection with transcendence. Nardi (2002) and Plummer (1998a), in particular, provide a number of recommendations as to what themes should enjoy precedence in such an endeavour.

Plummer (1998a:607-608) outlines both the theoretical and empirical contributions made by sociological scholars. These include, amongst others, an etiological account of “the homosexual” as social construction, the societal reactions based on such a category, elaborated on metaphors such as ‘scripted’ performances courtesy of the constricted social actor and introduced debates on gay identity and politics (Plummer, 1998a:608). Empirically, it provided examples of the so-called gay lifestyle as evident in public and private spaces, accounts of their everyday experiences, demarcations of the varied (yet similar) models of ‘coming out’, comparisons between contemporary and historical gay experiences and a critique of the conflation of gender and sexual orientation (Connell, 2009:86; Plummer, 1998a:608). He argues that a more concise and in-depth sociological discourse on homosexuality could result in various research possibilities which reflects vividly in the recommendations of Nardi (2002:52-53) and others. These include, firstly, a critical contemplation of the contested relationship between the modernising and postmodernising of homosexuality, for “[...]modern homosexualities mesh with modernity; and as modernity shifts into late modernity or even postmodernity, what is happening to same-gender relations?” (Plummer, 1998a:611). He does, however, concede that an adherence to the respective qualities of both is a necessity to provide an informed socially scientific account of male homosexuality (Plummer, 2003:520). He argues that although sociology “...does not wish to lose its grip on the ‘obdurate empirical world’...[it still

acknowledges] that human sexualities [have] become destabilized, decentered and de-essentialized” (Plummer 2003:520).

Secondly, one should, in an outright manner, ‘queer’ sociology through a thorough interrogation of perceived heteronormative institutions such as the family and academia as well as a ‘rereading’ of texts to identify its possible queer undertones (Plummer, 1998a:612; Stein & Plummer, 1996:139). Both, as result, necessitate a critique of the centre in addition to the margins of Rubin’s (1993) bureaucratised, patriarchal and heteronormative “charmed circle” through an analysis of the “...production, organization, intensification, and destabilization of heterosexuality” (Plummer, 1998a:612; cf. Walby, 1990). Thirdly, one should consider, as proposed by Roseneil (2002) and Sedgwick (2008), the “messiness” of the homosexual experience, thus distinguishing between contrasting experiences within what has been considered by many sociologists (and others), as a homogeneous group (Plummer, 1998a:612; Savin-Williams, 2005), per implication then, providing an interrogation of the “...pluralization, individuation and multiplying choices [which make] social life very different from any previous era... [in which] [s]paces start to emerge for new kinds of sexualities...” (Plummer 2003:520). These could include the aforementioned “...muscle marys, opera queens” (Roseneil, 2002:29), the nature of friendships with heterosexual as well as homosexual individuals, the ‘fag-hag’-relationship, reasons as to why there is a conflation with gender as well as its theoretical and empirical effect, gay and lesbian romantic relationships and/or unions or the perceived fluidity of a gay or lesbian category (Plummer, 1998a:612). An implied focus here could also be to identify the probable stratification of homosexuals within their own subculture, thus a ‘gay erotic pyramid’ of sorts, which affords rights and privileges based on identity characteristics dependent on a gay man’s racial, ethnic, class, disability, age, spatial or academic category (Connell, 2009:107; Plummer, 1998a:612; Richardson & Monro, 2012:45).

Although undeniably insightful in its endeavour to emphasise the underlying motives of heterosexist societies, queer theory is, as evident in the work of its terminological originator De Lauretis (1994), subject to criticism.

2.6.3 Critiquing the ‘queer’

One of the first points of criticism one could direct towards queer theory is its **inherently contradictory and non-unified nature** (Jackson & Scott, 2010:19). Several proponents of the postmodern turn would welcome and possibly even embrace such a statement, since much of

the underlying ethos of queer theory is characterised by contradiction, pluralism, diversity and, in a word, queerness. It has been described as a possibly flawed theory (Warner, 1991:19), an identity "...without an essence" (Halperin, 1995:62), a project (Jagose, 1996:123), politics of provocation (Epstein, 1996:153), youth-based rebellion (Halperin, 1995:65), a lifestyle (Morton, 1993, cited in Jagose, 1996:123), inquisitive theoretical stance (Pointek, 2006:2) and an elitist, individualistic reference to one's own unique and diverse orientation in the 'first person', rather than collectivist and objective orientation that gay and lesbian imply (Sedgwick, 2013:9). Considering these divergent conceptualisations, it becomes all the more difficult for laymen and women to fully realise and integrate its arguably progressive insights into their daily lives. One is also left to ponder the probability of whether it has not already gained the status of identity and realised Butler's (2008:32) fear. Although Brontsema (2004) directed attention to the fact that people use it as identity category, ignorant of the ideals, meanings and prescriptions afforded to it by its proponents, such an appropriation to describe oneself should in fact have some power. If queer seeks to incorporate other sexualities which are in direct opposition to heterosexuality, whether it be bisexuality, transgenderism, pansexuality or asexuality, does this not afford it the status of identity, regardless of its status in the life of the individual? And, if the proponents of queer theory wish to retain its insightful emphasis on the inside/out logic (Fuss, 1991; Hooker, cited in Abraham, 2009; Namaste, 1996) and corresponding use of Derrida's (1998) "...supplementarity", they too have to contend that any individual, whether part of a community or not, defines him/herself in relation or in opposition to others and those others' identities.

Others underscore its **implicit arrogance**, since it implies that modern theories such as lesbian and gay studies have not done enough to redeem its sexual subjects. Weeks (2000) for example, deplores such subtle notions since he cites several theorists, whether sociologists or constructionists, who have provided groundbreaking contributions on the discrimination and prejudice sexual dissidents face based on a heterosexist society (cf. Altman, 1972; 1982; Becker, 1973; D'Emilio, 1983; Gagnon & Simon, 1973; Goffman, 1971; Lemert, 1967; McIntosh, 1968; Mead, 1962). Granted, however, that these theorists do not necessarily recommend a complete deconstruction of heteronormative 'regimes' of gendered and sexual power. What lesbian and gay studies did succeed in, which no one could deny, was organise a public awareness and communal mobilisation to place homosexuality on the public political agenda, not as mere medical pathology but socially constructed category. Where queer theory succeeds amicably, is in the awareness it affords to a more critical reflection on the taken-for-granted

normality, morality and idealised nature of heterosexuality, but to merely advocate for a disentanglement of it within a late modern society, is irresponsible. As Goffman (1971) and Mead (1962) would undoubtedly reiterate, is the fact that the individual is constituted by both his/her intra-psychic processes (whether rational or irrational) and his/her interaction with an accepting or hostile external society, whether a communal heterosexual or homosexual setting. What is so severe about a sense of belonging? Or the clichéd 'need to be needed'?

Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (1995) work is of interest here, since they underscore D'Emilio's (1983) thesis of the autonomous and 'individualised' nature of the man or woman in a capitalist society. They impress upon us to consider the parallel existence of such an individualised drive co-existing with a need for love, affection and belonging – something they term *The Normal Chaos of Love* (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). One can, as such, not necessarily have the one or the other. If heterosexuality were to be displaced as dominant gendered or sexual arrangement in Western civilization, what then? Would homosexuality take its place and establish new degrees of segregation, exclusion and discrimination? I know that my reflections may seem exaggerated since this is not the *only* principle heralded by queer theorists, but in many respects they are describing a Utopian society, where sexual dissidents such as subordinated women or sexual minority groups are respected and possibly even revered as exalted 'other'? (cf. Tong, 2008) One should rather, as proposed by Altman (1972:216) and Jagose (1996:125) look to the complementary roles both the modern and postmodern paradigms may present to the other. Queer theory may not necessarily seek to replace lesbian and gay studies, but rather further its efforts by highlighting the false values afforded to certain sexual categories (Jagose, 1996:125). The true value of diverse identities may only be realised if such plurality is recognised, accepted and celebrated within existent categories (cf. Roseneil, 2002; Weeks, 1996).

Related to the previous two points, is the **political inefficacy** supposed by the more individualised nature propagated by queer theory (Jagose, 1996:103). Since it is opposed to the essentialist and ethnic model, it makes it all the more difficult to initiate a communal call to further political and civil rights for gay men, amongst others (Epstein, 1996:153). 'Gay' encompasses both a legitimate term and constituency for those who align themselves with proponents of lesbian and gay studies, and by adopting 'queer' one may associate yourself as an 'outsider' – outside both a heterosexual and homosexual community (Jagose, 1996:114). Queer, in effect has, as noted by Jagose (1996:115) devalued the "...categories of lesbian and

gay by representing them as dated, elitist,...and consolidated by a middle-class emphasis on commodity and capital”, thus an overemphasis on self-presentation through consumption of capitalist clothing, makeup and other goods (cf. Downs, 2006:76). Yet ironically, Weeks (1998) in fact comments on the manner in which the concept queer supposes the precise same thing which it seeks to criticise. He directs attention to references of supposed sexual practices which may not necessarily be deemed moral or ethically acceptable within both heterosexual and homosexual communities, including sadomasochism and pornography. If queer theory prides itself on the inclusion of sexual identities and practices defined as deviant by mainstream society, where does one draw the line? Do these practices or adopted identities qualify as queer? (Jagose, 1996:113).

Critics who position themselves within the paradigm of lesbian and gay studies, argue that the allowance of such behaviour in certain circles, has led to a ‘hijacking’ of these supposed queer practices by a patriarchal and heteronormative capitalist economy, which posits it as a sexually diverse commodity to generate revenues. Weeks (1998:315) explains this point by citing Foucault’s differentiation between “freedom for sexual acts” and “freedom of choice”. The latter he supports, whereas he disagrees quite vocally with the former, since this may justify violent sexually related acts such as rape, whilst the freedom to choose affords the social actor the “liberty to manifest” (Foucault, quoted in Weeks, 1998:316) or not manifest his choice. In addition, it is worth noting that sadomasochism within the lesbian community has, for example, come under intense scrutiny and critique from lesbian and radical feminists alike (Rich, 1993), and Rubin (2011:289) even conceded that her “charmed circle” was a result of the refusal of feminists to include gay men within their critical circle, since the latter engaged in promiscuous sexual acts, something with which feminism could not associate itself. This may mistakenly assert the misconception that such perceived deviance is the precondition for the creation of an identity or ‘queer’ nature, rather than being the consequence of such deviance (Jagose, 1996:114). In so doing, it ‘pits’ the gay and lesbian community – as well as other sexual dissidents – against one another, rather than conjoining them for a shared effort at liberation.

2.7 CONCLUSION

As source for the theoretical contextualisation of this particular sociological study, the content of the chapter presented several principal themes which will inform the chapters to follow. Firstly, as noted in the introductory section of 2.1, the so-called ‘full-circle’-movement from initial

conceptualisations of same-sex attraction, based on socially sanctioned emotive and behavioural relationships, underscored the manner in which male eroticism in Ancient Grecian, Spartan and Roman contexts revered the linkage between male physical beauty and cognitive health. This was complemented by other 'ancient' and indigenous configurations in Africa, Asia and Europe. The introduction of medical explanations in the late eighteenth century, however, provided a pathological account of the previously revered sexual variant. In so doing, proliferation of academic debates on the categorised personage of "the homosexual" arose. This facilitated a sense of community, but went hand-in-hand with its public identification and probable medical, civil and legal persecution.

Academic debates mainly alternated between essentialist and homogeneous notions of gay male sexuality, to later social constructionist depictions which evolved into scripted and performed 'roles', which gay men would either do, use or be subjected to, by having it 'done to them' through continuous assessment on a larger social scale. In so doing, gay men would be subject to five particular themes in establishing a coherent and unified sense of 'gay self,' through a negotiation of the phases of sexual self-construction, the 'I' and 'me' (cf. Mead, 1962). These included a sensitised acknowledgement of difference, identity confusion and shame, identity tolerance through marginality, identity acceptance and assumption and finally identity synthesis. Sources here included communal identifications courtesy of the gay ghetto in primarily urban centres (Abraham, 2009; Altman, 1982; Castells, 1983; 2004; D'Emilio, 1983; Valentine, 2002), McIntosh's (1968) "homosexual role" and Epstein's (1998) incandescent contributions courtesy of his "ethnic model" discussion. But, as noted, such understandings exacerbated the earlier medical accounts of "the homosexual" as separate, exotic and pathological 'other', situated on the lower levels of Rubin's (1993) "erotic pyramid".

In an attempt to curtail such a homogenised depiction of the gay male, proponents of queer theory emerged with what has been termed a "politics of provocation", to interrogate the supposed superordinate, dominant and taken-for-granted "blessed" nature of heterosexuality. The contributions of several academics (Ault, 1996; Brontsema, 2004; Butler, 1990; 1993; Epstein, 1996; Fuss, 1991; Halberstam, 2005b; Ingraham, 2002; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Namaste, 1996; Plummer, 2003; Rich, 1993; Roseneil, 2002; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008; Stein & Plummer, 1996:135; Warner, 1991:26) emphasised reasons as to why an in-depth exploration of heteronormativity is necessary. Their work provided the foundation for distinguishing between the central themes associated with queer theory, ranging from the

contentious generational debates on the reclamation of the concept 'queer', the denaturalisation of heterosexuality through an interrogation of its rationalisation of sexuality, gender and sexual orientation, in addition to the discussion on the 'closet' as noun, verb and adjective which co-exists with heterosexualised depictions of masculinity (cf. Derrida, 1998; Fuss, 1991; Namaste, 1996; Sedgwick, 2008).

Evident from these queer analyses, was the manner in which heteronormativity prevails as dominant sexualised variation in late modern societies. Regardless of challenges to the perceived stable nature of heterosexual and hegemonic, masculine and muscular ideals through, amongst others, gay male pornography's 'gay-for-pay actors' who underscore fluid, plural and experimental sexual desires, late modern conceptualisations of gender and sexual orientation still come back to their original meanings, based on an emulation of binary logics of man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual, charmed/peripheral and top/bottom, amongst others. Although variation and negotiation are afforded to individuals courtesy of a reconfigured arrangement of sexual choice through, what Giddens (1992) terms "plastic sexuality" and "confluent relationships", it mainly occurs on a micro, not macro scale, echoing Ritzer's (2012) reference to the manner in which small scale interactions and subsequent attitudes and behaviour, influence large scale social structures.

In keeping with the **exploration of the experiences of gay male academics and students in tertiary education** as overarching research objective, the chapter to follow, investigates the perceived influence of these homogenised or diversified understandings of sexual orientation gay men apply to their everyday lives within the environment of higher education.

CHAPTER THREE

THE '(DE)PROFESSIONALISATION' OF THE GAY MALE IN ACADEMIA: A CASE OF ASSIMILATION OR TRANSGRESSION – A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Consider Honeychurch's (1996:354) assertive commitment to the role of the university as informative and emancipatory vehicle for its constituents when he argues the following:

...The university...as primary site of social inquiry, has an opportunity to contribute to the constitution of inclusionary knowledges and emancipatory projects rather than remaining removed from them. Through the recognition of the possibilities of queer positions in social research and discourse, the Academy can contribute not only to the affirmation of diverse identities and the relevant generation of knowledges, but also to the social empowerment of, and transformation for, *all*²⁶ of its subject(s).

South African academics have also emphasised the importance of academic research on the experiences of so-called sexual minorities in the African and South African gender and sexuality framework in order to "...elaborate and contribute towards the growing scholarship in African sexualities...[and] rethinking and re-imagining African men and women" (Bhana et al., 2007:137). Authors such as Bhana et al. (2007), Epprecht, (1998), Ndashe (2010), Posel (2004) and Reddy (1998; 2001; 2002; 2006; 2009; 2010) are included. Regardless, Nel et al. (2007:287) comment on the scarcity of studies on sexual orientation, particularly LGBTQ and Affirmative Therapy which posits homosexuality as one of several acceptable variants in terms of sexual orientation. Against this background, several studies have emphasised the fact that the mere existence of sexual minority academics, educators and students within the context of higher educational institutions, may prove to be difficult, because of fears of a supposedly ignorant hegemonic determined heterosexual society (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71; Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Butler et al., 2003; Cohen, 1999; Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000:118; D'Augelli, 1989; 1992; Evans, 2000:85; Fine, 2011; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 2000; Newman, 2007:247-248; Pharr, 1997; Rankin, 2005:17, 2006:113; Rankin et al., 2010;

²⁶Emphasis added.

Silverschanz et al., 2008; Waldo, 1998:767). Andre Grace (2006), a teacher educator in Canada who, in advocating “writing the queer self”, acknowledges the double-edged sword with which these individuals may be confronted in their day-to-day interaction with colleagues, peers and others, based on the fact that they do not conform to the heteronormative ideal (Warner, 1991:xix).

Only a few studies have been undertaken on the link between the experiences of homosexual academics and students within the parameters of South African academia. Those which have commented on this theme include empirical research on the challenges faced by gay and lesbian secondary school learners (Butler et al., 2003), attempt at advocating for ‘queering’ academic discourse to curtail heterosexist and homophobic curriculum content (Francis & Msibi, 2011; Rothmann, 2012), general accounts of sociocultural factors which impact on sexuality studies in educational sectors (Beyers, 2011) and an outright critique of the disjuncture between the provisions made in the South African Constitution and its practical realisation in civil society (Hames, 2007). As such, this particular chapter serves a dual purpose. The first of these is to provide a theoretically saturated account of predominantly Western research on homosexual (or LGBTQ) issues in educational spheres as well as those in South Africa, as noted in the objectives stated in Chapter One. The second purpose exemplifies the importance of the continuation and subsequent integration of the modern and postmodern theoretical insights provided by the proponents of lesbian and gay studies and queer theory, respectively (see Chapter Two). This is done to emphasise the practicality of what may sometimes appear as ‘abstract’ theorising to the ‘lived’ experiences of particularly gay male academics and students in higher educational institutions. In doing this, the imperative contributions of Goffman (1971) and Mead (1962) on the social and sexual self’s **reflexivity** through **intra-psychic** and **interpersonal scripting** within this **larger cultural scenario** of academia (Simon, 1996:40-44) and its influence on the **rationalisation of gender** and **sexual orientation** through “**doing**” and “**using gender**” and/or “**gay**” (Dowsett et al., 2008; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Johnson, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2002) as evident in **performative rituals** (Butler, 1990; 1993; Ingraham, 2002), are considered. As such, the continuing theme of the **(de)construction of the heterosexual/homosexual binary** (Fuss, 1991; Roseneil, 2002) is provided for. This is mirrored in the contributions of, amongst others, Chang’s (2005:173) focus on a “**critical pedagogy**”, Grace’s (2006) “**writing the queer self**”, Grace and Benson’s (2000) and Miller’s (1998a) reference to “**autobiographical queer life narratives**”, Maxey’s (1999:199) “**critical**

reflexivity", Petrovic's (2002:151) "**radicalization of liberalism**" and Warren's (1974:168) reference to "**reflective subjectivity**" within educational and research environments.

In not only reflecting on the preceding chapters but also those to follow, the overarching theme that will encompass the discussion to follow, primarily centres on, or manifests, what I argue to be the contested interplay between the **professionalisation** or **deprofessionalisation of the gay male academic identity**. The professionalisation of the gay male identity implies the construction, maintenance and reinforcement of an assimilationist and essentialist orientation (cf. Epstein, 1998; Jagose, 1996), whereby heteronormativity is afforded the master and "...blessed" (cf. Rubin, 1993) status in contemporary academia, whilst homosexuality is deemed subordinate. Such a process requires heightened levels of self-awareness and reflexivity for the gay male academic and student, since he is implicitly and explicitly, whether through individual choice or external influence, forced to conform to heterosexist prescriptions and not afforded the opportunity to either disclose or perform his gay sexual orientation within the context of academia, but only in his private spheres. The deprofessionalisation of the gay male sexual orientation implies more of a queer view, in so far as the individual is given the chance to (re)perform a sexually diverse orientation within a presumed heteronormative context, but with a transgressive quality. This implies that the gay male academic and student either confront homophobia, heterosexism or heteronormativity face on, or that the necessary social context is constructed through a critical interrogation of taken-for-granted truths or realities, in which sexual diversity and plurality are stressed as an expected given and celebrated 'other' (cf. Tong, 2008), rather than merely subordinate within a heterosexual context of privilege. By providing this model of sorts, I will be given the opportunity to use the invaluable theoretical contributions of both paradigms in the eventual analysis of my findings on South African academics and students' adoption of reflexivity and rationalisation in (de)constructing their identity.

To master these objectives then, this chapter firstly introduces the reader to the central themes which influence the day-to-day existence of homosexual academics and students, including heteronormativity, heterosexism and homophobia. Directly following this, an overview of research on the experiences of gay and lesbian students is provided in terms of the challenges which may marginalise them. This is complemented by an in-depth account of the factors associated with constructing the gay male academic caricature in contemporary higher education. Here consideration is afforded to the role of censorship, collegial and student-relationships, as well as the manner in which they could 'queer' current educational curricula in

order to manifest a gendered and sexually transformative academic environment. Finally, and in keeping with the specific objectives, the concept or initiative of safe spaces is defined, demarcated and critiqued, as means to the noted transformative end.

3.2 **HETERONORMATIVITY = HETEROSEXISM + HOMOPHOBIA: AN EXPLICITLY DESTRUCTIVE FORMULA FOR GAY MALE EXPERIENCE IN ACADEMIA**

Assimilation and the **centrality of heterosexuality** and in turn **heterosexism** and **homophobia** characterise much of the experiences of gay male academics and students alike (Blackburn & McCready, 2009:222; Chang, 2005; Fox, 2007; Fox & Ore, 2010; Grace, 2006; Jagose, 1996; Petrovic, 2002; Sears, 2002; 2009; Slagle, 2007). Rather than positioning heterosexuality as dependable sexual variant in relation to homosexuality (cf. De Lauretis, 1991; Sedgwick, 2008:1; Stein & Plummer, 1996), studies on this particular subject matter have indicated that homosexuality, as was evident in Chapter Two, is typified in a pathological and assimilationist manner, thus the minority adapting to the supposed “blessed” and “charmed” inner realm of heterosexuality (cf. Rubin, 1993:13). The political economy of gender and sexual orientation is therefore left unhindered and unchallenged by positing a supposed tolerance (masked as acceptance and support) within and on university campuses. As such, Alexander and Banks (2004:285) exemplify the importance of destabilising the heterosexual centre, for “...to leave [it] out of our equations as anything other than normal and oppressive means we miss a vital part of our analysis and continue to privilege the normative as normative” (see also Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71; Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Chang, 2005; Grace, 2006; Sears, 2009; Silverschanz et al., 2008; Slagle, 2007; Wallace, 2002:53). Athanases and Larrabee (2003:238) thus contend that the ideological undercurrents of such an anti-homosexual inclination may further reinforce access to structural privileges such as legal rights, social provisions and the mere safety of a sexually dissident individual within academia (cf. Silverschanz et al., 2008:180).

This reinforces the societal blueprint of heterosexuality, occupying the blessed centre of sexual and gender relations in contemporary society, with homosexuality verging on “...respectability” (Rubin, 1993) on the periphery. Kopelson (2002:20) notes in this regard, “...personalizing and pathologizing the fear of homosexuality, rather than uncovering homophobia’s implication in – its wholesale dependence upon – pervasive systematic heterosexism and heteronormativity” thus leaves the status quo unhindered. The question then remains to be asked as to whether one could expect supposed sexual minority groups such as gays and lesbians to transgress a

subordinate position in relation to heterosexuality when they, and subsequently their voices and rights, are continuously silenced? (Petrovic, 2002:149) The fear is thus justified within the centrality of the normative and moral heterosexual realm, which interestingly enough contradicts Plummer's (1998b) work on homophobia. He contended that a pre-eminent focus on homophobia in fact redirects the pathological inclination towards heterosexuality, for it is those who reside within this sexual arrangement who suffer from the phobia, rather than those to whom it is directed (cf. Reddy, 2002). Regardless of the interpretation, Derrida's (1998:244) concept of "supplementarity" and Mead's (1962) "reflexiveness", figure prominently in both configurations, since one always necessitates the other in order to define, manifest and maintain itself in opposition to what it should differ from, dominate or be subordinate to. In attempting to explain and understand the experiences of homosexual academics and students on university campuses, it is of utmost importance to acknowledge the central themes which dominate much of their environment, namely **heteronormativity** and the probability of **homophobia**.

Resulting from a heteronormative arrangement, **heterosexism** attempts to enforce the "...strict adherence to gender role stereotypes...[and] gender oppression" (Kitzinger, 2001:277). Heterosexism, basically denotes an ideologically structured arrangement which pre-empts the creation of a misappropriation of equal human rights and protection based on the supposed subordinate sexual orientation of, for example, gay men (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:238), in relation to their heterosexual counterparts, because according to Pharr (1997:16), this indoctrinates individuals into believing that the "...world is and must be heterosexual" (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Francis & Msibi, 2011:159; Jayakumar, 2009:675; Macgillivray, 2000:304; Namaste, 1996; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008; Stein & Plummer, 1996; Warner, 1991). Those who either identify as gay or who are perceived to be as such, experience a plethora of challenges which may manifest either on a social, emotional and cognitive level (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:240). Silverschanz et al. (2008:180) underscore a misappropriation of resources, since heterosexism's ideological basis "...denies, denigrates, and stigmatizes any nonheterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship or community". Heterosexism may either result in cultural or psychological formations (Silverschanz et al., 2008:180). The former involves the further reinforcement of a so-called 'institutionalized favouritism' to retain heterosexuality as unquestioned gendered and sexual norm, whereas the latter encompasses an amalgam of varied overt behaviours directed towards sexual minorities, which may include verbal assaults,

property damage or sexual threats (Chang, 2005:172; Grace, 2006:827; Grace & Benson, 2000:90; Savage & Harley, 2009:4; Silverschanz et al. 2008:180; Slagle, 2007:313).

Homophobia, originally defined as “...the dread of being in close quarters with homosexuals” (Weinberg, 1972:4), manifests different configurations. Current definitions posit it as a “...gender-specific type of bullying that is based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity” (UNESCO, 2012:11) or a “...fear, hatred, or intolerance of, or discomfort with, people who are homosexual” (Sanlo, 1999:xix). Examples of homophobia may range from physical, sexual or verbally abusive behaviour, including the use of derogatory nicknames to physical or sexual violence, psychological manipulation and social exclusion, exerted on an individual or collective level in an overt (visible physical or verbal assaults) or covert (negative attitudes, beliefs or subtle exclusions) manner (Burn et al., 2002; UNESCO, 2012:13). Cohen and Savin-Williams’ (1996:124) work underlines the negative influence of homophobia when they state, “...[a]t a time when most youths are gradually building self-esteem and establishing an identity, some sexual minority adolescents are learning from peers and adults that they are amongst the most hated in society”. Sanlo (1999:xix) differentiates between two types of homophobia, of which each forms a definite part of this particular study, as delineated in the general and specific objectives, since it impacts on the reflexivity and eventual rationalisation of the gender identification and sexual orientation of academics and students alike. The first, **internalised homophobia** denotes an internal and self-hatred of one’s own homosexuality based on external labels and the fear of its exposure (Elia, 1993:179; Halperin, 2012:430). Such fear “...paralyzes” the student and academic, since the latter is unable to assist the student in times of need. It may also manifest a so-called process of “...in-group-hostility”, which results in feelings of dislike, contempt or even stigmatisation of other more visible gay men (Halperin, 2012:430).

This is embedded within **institutional homophobia** whereby specific formal laws, policies and procedures of an institution (Elia, 1993:178; Sanlo, 1999:xix) or a lack of clearly demarcated guidelines to protect sexual minorities (Atkinson, 2002:123-125; Chang, 2005:171; Cooper, 2008:425; Eldridge & Barnett, 1991:155; Waldo, 1998:767), legitimises discrimination against such individuals. The prevalence of homophobia may even be masked by the use of words which, on the surface, display a pro-gay attitude, including ‘acceptance’ and ‘tolerance’. The former could (and from a queer theoretical stance, *should*) be regarded as homophobic in so far as it leaves one with the implication that there are certain aspects of homosexual behaviour that

warrant acceptance (San Diego State University, 2009:19). This is exemplified in phrases such as “...you’re not gay to me, you’re a person” or “...[t]hat’s fine as long as you don’t flaunt it”. Tolerance, on the other hand, posits gay men as petulant children progressing through a sequential and temporary phase of experimentation and socio-sexual development and necessitates degrees of protectiveness, indulgence and politeness, since they have not reached the same level of maturity as their heterosexual counterparts (San Diego State University, 2009:19).

Based on these definitions, the subsection to follow provides an account of the experiences of the gay male student and academic in tertiary education.

3.3 EXPERIENCES OF THE GAY MALE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

The previous chapter provided several examples of the manner in which increased visibility of homosexuality in general, and the gay male in particular, through representations in the media, support from familial and other organisational groups as well as political upheaval in favour of gay or queer liberation, have arguably led to more acceptance, inclusion or tolerance in mainstream society. Researchers such as Alvarez and Schneider (2008:71) and Athanases and Larrabee (2003:239), argue that this does not necessarily translate into undeniable acceptance and non-discrimination for sexual minorities in academia. Evans (2000:85) attributes this to academics and students experiencing both explicit and/or implicit marginalisation in the educational context. In terms of the former, unchallenged homophobic remarks may be exerted by teachers and fellow students towards the students or historical lesbian, gay and bisexual figures in literature, film and music. Implicit forms manifest indirect or covert attempts at prejudice through no public acknowledgment of the individual or issues associated with his/her sexual orientation, which could (or should warrant) educational focus (Evans, 2000:85-86). This engenders fear on the part of the student to raise such issues during classes, since it may exacerbate further marginalisation through isolation or verbal and physical assaults (Evans, 2000:86; Rankin et al., 2010), something which will become abundantly clear in the subsection on gay male students.

3.3.1 Marginalisation through homophobia: Gay students at risk

Examples of findings on attitudes relating to sexual minority students, including gay men, have been documented in several studies over the last few decades. The earliest of these, according to Newman (2007:249), was that of Morin (1977) on the attitudes of heterosexual college students towards their homosexual counterparts, followed by Watters' (1986, cited in Newman, 2007:249) adoption of Morin's taxonomy in a similar inquiry. Morin's (1977, cited in Newman, 2007:249) justification for an increase in such studies, centred on the American Psychiatric Association's removal of homosexual from its list of deviant behaviours in *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* in 1973. Watters' (1986) study indicated that there was indeed an increase in studies from seven to 19 per cent between 1979 and 1983 (Newman, 2007:249). Original measurements reflected very negative attitudes among heterosexuals pertaining to homosexuality (cf. D'Augelli, 1989:320), based on their primary socialisation according to their parents' own beliefs (Newman, 2007:261) and college males' inclination to be less tolerant of homosexuality in relation to their female counterparts (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990:490; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002:79; Newman, 2007:262; Oberle et al., 2011:447; Rhoads, 1995:319; Waldo, 1998:767)²⁷. In addition, fundamentalist academic beliefs (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:73; Hames, 2007:56), conservatism based on religious beliefs (Jayakumar, 2009:678; Newman et al., 2002:280; Waldo, 1998), younger students being less tolerant than older students (Kurdek, 1988) and even a conflation (or confusion) of gender and sexual orientation (Savage & Miller, 2011), highlighted several studies on the potential obstacles faced by sexual minorities. In terms of the latter, it is interesting that this may also exacerbate feelings of confusion on the part of the individual himself or those who seek to label or stigmatise him. Savage and Miller's (2011) account of Billy Lucas, a fifteen-year-old (15) boy from Greensburg Indiana, who hung himself in September 2010 on his grandmother's farm, after his peers bullied him and recommended he kill himself, based on his perceived homosexuality, or in their words, of being "...a fag". This underlines Plummer's (1996:71) reference to the fact that a frail, fragile, cultured and urbane inclination, might confuse a gendered effeminacy with sexual orientated homosexuality, with the noted dire consequences (cf. Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:240), since it does not conform to the heterosexist framework imbedded in the cisgender model (cf. Meem et al., 2010).

²⁷Other studies have however refuted the role of gender in terms of views on homosexuality, including Cotton-Huston and Waite (2000), Kozloski (2010) and Newman (2007).

Recent research provides a plethora of views on the subject matter, from a **more positive inclination** towards gay men and lesbian women (Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002; Newman, 2007:261; Newman et al., 2002:280) to **negative views** from individuals who **seek to inhibit** any efforts to accept, to include or tolerate homosexuality as part of campus life (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71; Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Butler et al., 2003; Cohen, 1999; Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000:118; D'Augelli, 1989; 1992; Evans, 2000:85; Fine, 2011; Hershberger & D'Augelli, 2000; Newman, 2007:247-248; Pharr, 1997; Rankin, 2005:17, 2006:113; Rankin et al., 2010; Waldo, 1998:767). The latter ranges from reports on problems associated with exclusion and isolation suffered by gay youth through homophobic bullying (cf. UNESCO, 2012), whether it is social, cognitive or emotional (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:238). Others have cited reports of lesbian and gay students experiencing verbal insults, physical attacks as well as sexual assaults, which consequently lead to a decline in physical and mental health, an overall decline in well-being, heightened levels of anxiety and fear, depression, lower life and occupational satisfaction, self-hatred, a tendency to inflict harm to themselves, as well as being more prone to suffer from substance abuse (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:238; Cox et al., 2011; Goldfried, 2001:982; Kosciw et al., 2008:xii; Pachankis & Goldfried, 2006:1005-1013; Petrovic, 2002:145; Silverschanz et al., 2008:180-181; Tierney, 1992:43; UNESCO, 2012; Waldo, 1998). D'Augelli (1989:320) reported that it was the feeling of fear, in particular that characterised much of their existence, since full disclosure, discovery by someone else, or mere presumptions of one's sexual orientation could result in physical and verbal harassment, harm or maltreatment (cf. Hershberger & D'Augelli, 2000).

(a) ***The troublesome state of contemporary homophobia in secondary and tertiary education: The GLSEN and UNESCO-reports***

The 2011 Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN hereafter) report on the experiences of LGBTQ youth in American schools, denotes a very troublesome picture of the prevalence of homophobia²⁸. Concerning the biased remarks at school, 84.9 per cent of the students revealed that they had overheard the word 'gay' used in a negative way, whilst 91.4 per cent experienced distress upon hearing such language (GLSEN, 2011:5). In addition, negative language interpreted as homophobic (such as 'dyke' or 'fag') was reported by 71.3 per

²⁸ I wish to acknowledge at the outset, that I am fully aware of the fact that several examples of studies included centre on the experiences of gay learners in secondary schools, but these are regarded as necessary to further underscore the importance of including LGBT topics in tertiary education, based on the absence of such themes in South African primary and secondary schools as well as the eventual 'ripple'-effect of this on later studies on a tertiary level.

cent, and negativity directed towards students who failed to conform to heteronormative gender expression (masculine or feminine) was reported by 61.4 per cent (GLSEN, 2011:5). What is especially worrisome about these statistics is the fact that 56.9 per cent of derogatory remarks related to both gender and sexual orientation, came courtesy of teachers (cf. McNaron, 1991:21; Sears, 1991:39). Victimisation based on supposed inadequacy pertaining to gender identification and sexual orientation, manifested verbal (name-calling or threats), physical and electronic harassment. In terms of the first, 81.9 per cent reported harassment based on their sexual orientation and 63.9 per cent because of their gender, whilst physical harassment in the form of pushing or shoving, resulted in a 38.3 and 27.1 per cent rate associated with their sexual orientation and gender, respectively (GLSEN, 2011:5). Physical assaults (punched or kicked), heralded an 18.3 per cent prevalence based on sexual orientation and 12.4 because of gender (GLSEN, 2011:5). Students again highlighted the fact that 60.4 per cent refrained from reporting harassment to faculty staff, since they felt that nothing would be done to curtail such behaviour, proven in part by 36.7 per cent of students who did report their experiences to no avail (GLSEN, 2011:5).

The most recent international statistics support the noted GLSEN-report and provide troubling results, including the UNESCO report (2012) on homophobic bullying. Based on these findings courtesy of the first United Nations international consultation conference on homophobic bullying in educational institutions held in Brazil during December 2011, participants proclaimed homophobia to be a globally-centred problem in academia (cf. Sanlo, 1999; Sears, 2002). Comprised of members of NGOs, academic institutions and education ministries from twenty five countries, a joint statement was released in which governments from around the world were implored to provide equal access to education without fear of homophobic bullying, on the grounds of a student's sexual orientation (UNESCO, 2012:12). UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, reinforced this statement on 8 December 2011 when he critiqued homophobia as being a "...moral outrage, a grave violation of human rights...[and governments should]...take the necessary measures to protect people – all people – from violence and discrimination, including on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity" (quoted in UNESCO, 2012:12). Its annual report included statistics of such bullying in educational institutions worldwide, where behaviour varied from the noted teasing, name-calling, intimidation to physical or sexual assaults, death threats and even cyber bullying, which encompasses intimidation or bullying through the use of electronic media such as e-mails and text messages on cell phones (Cohen, 1999:27; GLSEN, 2011:5; UNESCO, 2012:13-16).

Bullying did not only result through interactions with fellow students, but also with their educators (McNaron, 1991:21; Sears, 1991:39). One student in Lebanon recalled, for example, an incident during which his teacher told him “I cannot have you in my class”, which led to further isolation from fellow learners. This corresponded with statistics in several other countries which underscored the influence of educators on students. Ten per cent of reported cases of bullying in Canada, 34 per cent of cases in Ireland, 50 per cent in Bangladesh and 57 per cent in the United States, were all associated with the behaviour of educators (Biegel, 2010:112; UNESCO, 2012:18-19, Waldo, 1998:768-769). The words of a Swedish student emphasise this clearly, “...I was kicked, punched, and physically abused by several people at a time...The teachers and the school nurse all knew about it but they never did anything to stop it” (quoted in UNESCO, 2012:17). In addition to physical abuse, verbal examples were cited as the most prevalent in several educational institutions internationally. A French student noted the constant “...sniggering when we pass by, insults written on our tables, things said behind or backs”, whereas a student from Hungary recalled that he was the victim of “...[m]ostly verbal abuse, being excluded from activities, being ignored...they threw things at me, spat on me” whilst another report from a Slovakian-based gay male related that physical abuse “...happened only once – but verbal violence every day” (quoted in UNESCO, 2012:17). These quotes supported the troubling statistics of homophobic bullying – 68 per cent from Chile, 61 per cent from Mexico, 66 per cent in Peru, 58 per cent from Ireland, 90 per cent in secondary schools in the United Kingdom, 69 per cent of varied forms of abuse in Australian educational institutions (with a further 61 per cent citing verbal and 18 per cent physical abuse) in addition to an 80 per cent likelihood of victimisation in New Zealand (UNESCO, 2012:18-19).

In a comprehensive study undertaken by Rankin (2005:18) in 2003 and subsequent reports on the state of LGBTQ issues in higher education (Rankin et al., 2010), in which she sought to examine the experiences of LGBTQ individuals in addition to their perceptions of the overall campus climate and institutional responses related to LGBTQ issues, fourteen university campuses in the United States participated with an estimated 1 669 self-identified LGBTQ individuals as participants. Her results were just as distressing as the findings of the GLSEN (2011) and UNESCO (2012) reports. She found that one-third (36 per cent) of the undergraduate students had experienced harassment, whether through derogatory remarks (89 per cent), threats (48 per cent), written comments (33 per cent), physical assaults (eleven students) as well as demands to conceal their non-heterosexual gender and sexual identities, of

whom 51 per cent did in fact do so (Rankin, 2005:18). Seventy-nine per cent cited their fellow students as sources of the harassment, whereas 20 per cent reported that they feared for their personal and physical safety on their respective campuses (Rankin, 2005:19). In addition, 73 per cent of faculty members, 74 per cent of students, 81 per cent of administrators and 73 per cent of other staff members, perceived their campus climates to be homophobic towards LGBTQ people, whereas 90 per cent thought it to be welcoming to non-LGBTQ individuals (Rankin, 2005:19).

Based on this bleak picture for sexual minority students, several consequences underlie their day-to-day lives on campus.

(b) ***Principal consequences of homophobia for the gay male student***

Associated with Goffman's (1963) "with-relationship", several of these individuals who identify as homosexual, are all the more likely to become the victims of witnessing or experiencing such hate crimes and thus avoid establishing alliances with others like them, based on the fear of being overtly identifiable (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:240; Savage & Harley, 2009:4). As a result, their **isolation** from those in similar predicaments or services which may provide a much needed intervention, may lead to suicidal tendencies. The research of Russell and Joyner (2001), has indicated that those who face an immense struggle in terms of understanding or accepting (or being accepted for) their sexual orientation, are twice as likely in relation to their heterosexual peers, to contemplate or attempt suicide (cf. Goldfried, 2001:982). One respondent in a study of Petrovic (2000:56) noted in this regard, "...[I]et the [gay people] be mentioned [positively] once in a while. The loneliness can eat a person up". Through this so-called "tyranny of silence" (Atkinson, 2002:123-125), the construction of homosexuality as 'the other' remains intact and unquestioned, whereas the compulsory and dominant heterosexual discourses are left desirable, dominant, legitimated and unmasked (Chang, 2005:171; Cooper, 2008:425; Eldridge & Barnett, 1991:155). Chang (2005:172) reiterates this tyranny by questioning the continuing isolation of homosexually identified individuals in educational contexts through, amongst others stigmatisation, censorship and the noted violence. Much of this isolation reaffirms the centrality of heterosexism (cf. Derrida, 1998; Fuss, 1991; Namaste, 1996) and the fact that the closet is retained on the part of homophobic structures in educational spheres as a means to possibly intimidate and silence those who contradict heterosexual ideals

(Chang, 2005:172; Waldo, 1998:767) as well as the victims themselves, in an attempt to minimise the effects of homophobia (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990:490; Fine, 2011:538).

Fine's (2011) study sought to determine how lesbian, gay and bisexual students of two universities, one located in the Rust Belt and the other a Midwestern institution in America, made sense of heterosexism and homophobia in their daily lives as well as the manner in which they influence their conceptualisation of their campus climates. What was of interest here was that, regardless of the fact that participants acknowledged the negative influence heterosexism and homophobia may have in their lives, they still sought to downplay and minimise their role. They did this through consciously "...excusing, ignoring, or avoiding – its existence in their lives [since] 'those kinds of things' happen 'every day'" (Fine, 2011:538). In so doing, proponents of lesbian and gay liberation as well as queer theory may believe that the crippling effects and pervasive centrality of heteronormativity are further institutionalised in academic settings, which retains a status quo in which the marginalisation of these 'others' are justified, since they remain assimilationist, invisible and unresponsive to these threats (Fine, 2011:539).

In terms of the influence of such behaviour on the **academic achievement** of sexual minority students, studies have commented on a plethora of experiences (Blackburn & McCready, 2009:225; Kosciw et al., 2008). Based on the annual GLSEN-report on LGBT issues in American schools (GLSEN, 2011), students reported higher academic achievement and integration in supportive environments. Others, however, experienced a gradual decline in academic excellence because of either homophobia from other social actors or their own internalised homophobia (Blackburn & McCready, 2009:225; Butler et al., 2003:12). In terms of the latter, a lesbian university student recalled her depression and eventual withdrawal from interaction with friends and fellow students, which resulted in a decline in excellent high school credentials to "barely" graduating (quoted in Blackburn & McCready, 2009:225). Homophobic retaliation from educators and fellow students has also been evident in studies, including the noted UNESCO-report. Examples include reports of students denied access to educational programmes based on their sexual orientation in countries such as Bangladesh, India, Nepal as well as countries in Latin America, which subsequently results in early school dropouts, reduced attendance and a decline in academic achievement (UNESCO, 2012:20). Statistics support these findings, with a 28 per cent dropout rate in the United States (Telljohann & Price, 1993, cited in UNESCO, 2012:20), whereas 20 per cent missed school and an additional 50 per cent, reported a decline in their overall academic achievement in the United Kingdom (Stonewall,

2007, cited in UNESCO, 2012:20). Other studies also indicated that lesbian, gay and bisexual participants reported a decline in grades based on uncertainty about their sexual orientation as well as verbal, physical and sexual assaults (Oswalt & Wyatt, 2011:1275; Rankin, 2005; Rankin et al., 2010).

Researching what one could term, the more **‘saliently silent’ heterosexist harassment** directed towards 3128 heterosexual students in several north-western American universities, Silverschanz et al. (2008) emphasised the manner in which heterosexist ideals targeted both homosexual and homosexually-‘friendly’ heterosexual students in terms of their academic and psychological well-being. Their research focused primarily on behaviours of individuals which attempted to discriminate against homosexually-identified men in the context of tertiary education, whether *personal*, thus acts which targeted its intended victims directly whether verbal or non-verbal, and *ambient*, thus statements made within the academic milieu, but not directed towards a specific target, by for example telling anti-homosexual jokes (Silverschanz et al., 2008:180). Pertaining to *ambient* behaviour which influenced heterosexually-identified college students, female students mostly experienced so-called ‘bystander’-stress, based on their inclination to be more empathetic towards sexual minorities, whereas the similar stress experienced by male heterosexual students, was attributed to threats or questions of their own sexual orientation and masculine gender category (Silverschanz et al., 2008:188).

As such, very little statistical significance was evident in Silverschanz et al.’s (2008:187) study concerning the impact on the well-being of gay-friendly male heterosexual individuals based on the use of heterosexist language by other heterosexuals. This was attributed to the fact that such language did not necessarily impact negatively on their overall well-being, because of, amongst others, the particular context within which it was used (cf. McCormack, 2011a; 2011b). Although regarded as more “commonplace” and less extreme in terms of hostility and violence, such ambient heterosexism still conveys elements of derogation and insult towards those who do not identify as heterosexual (Silverschanz et al., 2008:187). The lack of negative impact may be attributed to the fact that discourse, which may be interpreted as homophobic, is in fact used as means to establish ‘male bonding’-experiences in sports teams or all-male fraternities, rather than to illicit direct verbal or physical harm. This finding corresponds with a 10.5 per cent reportage of heterosexual and homosexual students at Rhode Island’s Brown University’s Faculty Committee on the Status of Sexual Minorities in 1989 (Renn, 2000:130), which according to Atkinson (2002:122), could be attributed to the hegemonically masculine,

misogynistic and homophobic discourse which characterises interaction and curricula content of educational institutions in the United States. This was similar to the research of McCormack (2011a, 2011b) on the use of **gay-themed language** in, what one would traditionally assume to be a very heterosexual space, a British rugby team. This context was afforded a 'safe(r)' zone label through the constant interaction and reconfiguration of meanings attached to fag and gay discourse amongst its heterosexual male team members.

Francis and Msibi (2011:163-164), Mora (2013) and Renn's (2000:129) work refute McCormack's more *laissez-faire* interpretation of discourse between, or verbal assaults directed, towards sexual minorities. Several students reported on the humiliating and demeaning atmosphere on their university campus, citing "...derogatory jokes, minimized or denied...contributions of LGB people" or explicit mocking of the relevance of contributions made by LGB artists, academics and historical figures alike (Renn, 2000:129-130), which in turn, may result in what Burn et al. (2002:25) liken to psychosocial stress for some individuals or even suicide for others (Savage & Miller, 2011). In Francis and Msibi's (2011) South African study, participants noted that they were aware of the stereotypes words such as "fag" or "moffie" could elicit, but likened its use to something "frivolous" and non-threatening. This, according to the researchers (and instructors in this case), was extremely problematic since such a view will only further "entrench heterosexism and pathologize homosexuality", based on the accompanying isolation and resulting silence it engenders for the marginalised groups (Francis & Msibi, 2011:164). Because of this, Renn (2000:131) recalls Patricia Hill Collins' (1991) "...outsider within"-model, which described the experiences of excluded racial minorities within a larger white male dominated society. The work of Derrida (1998), Fuss (1991), Mead (1962) and Namaste (1996) on the inside/out logic and "supplementarity", all come into play here, since as "...people who are kept at the margins of the academy, lesbian and gay students have a unique perspective from which to view their environs. They are in it, but not wholly of it," thus whether they choose to hide or "pass" as heterosexual, or are open about their sexual orientation, these individuals are also 'outsiders within' through "...isolation and insight" (Renn, 2000:131).

In contrast to McCormack's (2011b) work, Mora's (2013:14) research showed how the use of "fag discourse" serves to centralise heteronormativity through a regulatory objective, since he found that a group of low-income USA-born Dominican and Puerto Rican boys repudiated homosexuality through the reinforcement of heterosexually orientated, masculine behaviour. They did this to distance themselves from those who were either homosexually identified or

were presumed to be, since they saw such interaction as a threat to their safety (a fear of being groped or raped for example), physical male dominance and construction of their sexuality (Mora, 2013:14). Their performative (cf. Butler, 1990) use of gender served to construct and reinforce a "...collective masculine narrative" through so-called 'transvestic performances' and expressive verbal mockeries which denoted their outright disgust of gay men (Mora, 2013:14).

South African studies have been quite scarce in addressing issues faced by homosexually identified men and women in academic contexts. Those which have done so, include amongst others, Beyers' (2011) work on the contentious issues surrounding social and culturally acceptable content related to sexuality education amongst thirteen African educators enrolled at the University of the Free State, Butler et al.'s (2003) empirical research on the experiences of eighteen (18) gay and lesbian youth in post-apartheid South African secondary schools between 1997 and 2000 as well as Francis and Msibi's (2011) advocacy for teaching about heterosexism on a postgraduate level at the University of KwaZulu Natal and Hames' (2007) research which focuses on the creation of safe spaces at the University of the Western Cape.

(c) ***The state of affairs in South Africa: From legislation to the civil society***

In South Africa, homophobic violence took a number of configurations in reports from students. These included 68 per cent of gay men reporting hate speech, ten per cent of sexual assault and eleven gay male learners in a Johannesburg private school, citing regular verbal and physical abuse at the hands of their fellow students (UNESCO, 2012:18). Such statistics supported earlier research of Butler et al. (2003) and Francis and Msibi (2011) on the definite existence of homophobia in South African secondary and higher education. Butler et al. (2003:10) noted that the atmosphere in secondary schools was rife with homophobic behaviour, whether verbal or physical, from both students and teachers. Reasons for this were associated with conservative religious beliefs and doctrines which typified homosexuality as "...taboo", "...forbidden" and "...un-African", and made it easier for gay and lesbian students to not disclose their sexual orientation and consequently "...fit in the best you could" (quoted in Butler et al., 2003:12). Such a decision, on the part of the students, rendered them and homosexuality invisible and non-existent. Peer harassment manifested in the use of derogatory epithets including "...faggot" and "...moffie" which caused pain, humiliation, fear and negativity for its intended victim (Butler et al., 2003:11). Participants in Francis and Msibi's (2011:13) study, in accordance with the findings from the UNESCO-report, also reflected on instances of overt

homophobia from their teachers during classes which, according to one gay student, “...would hit me hard. It would like hit a vein in me”. A South African gay secondary school learner recalled that two of his friends committed suicide, based on the principal of the school’s homophobia:

...It was so sad. The whole thing why they did it was because the headmaster told them that they would not have people like this in their school. And, ‘I will expel you if it ever happens again’. And threats like that (quoted in Francis & Msibi, 2011:14).

To curtail these particular incidents, The South African Department of Education’s Social Cohesion and Equity Unit was tasked to ensure that the provisions for safeguarding the rights of individuals regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, as included in the Constitution and the Equality Act of 2000. Examples of their commitment include the publications *Building a culture of responsibility and humanity in our schools* in collaboration with the National Religious Leaders Forum in 2005 and a training manual entitled *Values in Action*. Both of these publications seek to inform and educate learners and educators about the rights and responsibilities of individuals based on their sexual orientation (UNESCO, 2012:31). Yet, in studying both these publications, sexual orientation again takes the ‘back seat’ as background variable to other social variables which have come to signify equality, democracy and human rights in South Africa – gender and race (cf. Rothmann, 2012). In terms of the first publication, it was of particular interest to notice the absence of ‘sexual orientation’ from the section on ‘equality’, as it reads:

...The right to equality places on me the responsibility to:

- treat every person equally and fairly, and
- not discriminate unfairly against anyone on the basis of race, gender, religion, national-, ethnic- or social origin, disability, culture, language, status or appearance. South Africa is a diverse nation, and equality does not mean uniformity, or that we are all the same. Our country’s motto: !KE E: /XARRA //KE, meaning ‘Diverse people unite’, calls on all of us to build a common sense of belonging and national pride, celebrating the very diversity which makes us who we are. It also calls on us to extend our friendship and warmth to all nations and all the peoples of the world in our

endeavour to build a better world (Department of Basic Education, 2011:8).

Later sections on 'human dignity', 'freedom of expression', 'citizenship' and 'safe environments', also exclude a clear reference to sexual orientation. This is none more evident than in a later focus of the specific objectives of the various subjects taught on primary and secondary school level, where an emphasis on **social sciences**, yet again either ignores the importance of sexual orientation or conflates it with sexism, by comfortably including it under "...other forms of discrimination" and even regards "...gossip" (Department of Basic Education, 2011:35) as worth noting in its place:

...Social Science creates an empathetic understanding of the past to enable young people to:

- build a better future, and
- stand up against racism, sexism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination (Department of Basic Education, 2011:32)

Only in later sections, and without the breadth provided for discussions on strategies to curtail racism, xenophobia or HIV/AIDS, the words 'homophobia', 'sexual orientation' and 'lesbian' are used (cf. Department of Basic Education, 2011). Reference to 'lesbian' is positioned in the section dealing with diversity in families, yet, when a demarcation and short explanation of 'family types' are provided, same-sex families are excluded – "Diversity is present in every individual and in every family. Children and adults need to understand and learn to respect and tolerate this diversity. Many children are cared for by aunts, uncles, siblings, adoptive parents or even foster parents". In terms of the *Values in Action*-campaign (Department of Education, 2001:13), reference is made to the specific section in the Constitution which groups sexual orientation together with other social variables, which is protected by the law. Both of these underscore Hames' (2007) reference to the 1997 Whitepaper (Education Whitepaper 3, 1997) on education, section 3.42 which clearly states:

...The Ministry proposes that all institutions of higher education should develop mechanisms which will:

Create a safe and secure campus environment that discourages harassment or any other hostile behaviour towards persons or groups on any grounds whatsoever, but particularly on grounds of age, colour, creed, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, race, language, or sexual orientation.

Regardless of this, what Hames (2007:57) believes to be a "...token inclusion", much of the focus pertaining to transformation initiatives and objectives in higher education, were and are, arguably still, mostly focused on gender and racial profiles, and not sexual orientation. Other South African studies support this argument, based on the fact that their research indicated that there was an evident emphasis (or overemphasis) on issues related to gender and racial equality, and also the negativity associated with sexism and racism, with a limited focus on sexual orientation (Butler et al., 2003:20; Francis & Msibi, 2011:163). This affords homophobia the so-called "...Cinderella of abusive behaviour" (Butler et al., 2003:20) spot in South African education, since secondary and per implication tertiary educational institutions do not necessarily know how to adequately theoretically conceptualise or practically deal with it within a context which further polarises constitutional provisions and grassroots acceptance. Although universities have included explicit reference to 'sexual orientation' in their respective codes of conduct, much of it reads as far too general and repetitive, in so far as it merely quotes the provisions made by the Constitution (North-West University, 2012; University of Johannesburg, 2012; University of Pretoria, 2011). The Higher Education Act of 1997, last amended in 2010, is a 54 page document applicable to all South African higher educational institutions. References made to the main functions of the institutional forum (section 31) of a public higher education institution, read as follows:

- (1) The institutional forum of a public higher education institution must-
 - (a) advise the council on issues affecting the institution, including-
 - (i) the implementation of this Act and the national policy on higher education;
 - (ii) race and gender equity policies;...
 - (v) the fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning... (Council for Higher Education, 2010).

No mention is made of sexual orientation as primary factor to be considered by the institutional management of tertiary institutions, whereas race is cited twice, gender once and disability once. References to discrimination only cite 'students' and 'employees', without a clear demarcation in terms of particular social variables (Council for Higher Education, 2010). This document is included as a link on the 'Policy'-webpage of the University of Pretoria, adapted as part of its residency code of conduct, in which reference is made to the core value of respecting the "...uniqueness and individuality" of individuals "...regardless of race, gender, culture, ethnicity, language and sexual orientation" (University of Pretoria, 2011) in line with the Constitution. Its Faculty of Law, however, also has a Centre for Human Rights which serves as both an academic department and non-governmental organisation, committed to the provision of education on basic human rights in Africa and the improvement of such rights for marginalised groups including women, people living with HIV and sexual minorities, courtesy of amongst others, one-week advanced courses on the subject matter (Centre for Human Rights, 2012). The University of Johannesburg (2012) and The University of the Witwatersrand (2011) follow suit with a similar commitment to the protection of human rights. The University of Johannesburg (2012:5) includes sexual orientation in section 5.1.4 of its 'Principles'-section on Student Recruitment in addition to its Students Representational Council (University of Johannesburg, 2011).

Representatives of the Transformation Offices at the North-West University (Potchefstroom campus) and University of the Witwatersrand have also provided hopeful and progressive contributions in the form of advocacy for diversity in the form of workshops, counselling and colloquia. In terms of the North-West University, Dr. Ingrid Tufvesson, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof. Robert Balfour and myself, presented a workshop as part of the NWU DO IT!-transformation initiative entitled 'Sexuality in/and Academia' during 2012. The main objective of this workshop (and workshops on gender and disability) according to Tufvesson (2012), was "...to encourage discussion, raise awareness, and inform our transformation and diversity agenda for broad and inclusive planning and implementation at NWU". Such an initiative seemed (and still seems) imperative, considering the NWU Human Rights Policy (The North-West University, 2012) adopted in September 2012 (misspelled as Septemver 2012). This policy, which also notes its commitment to the Constitution, is only up for revision in 2014. As part of its 'Point of Departure'-section (section 2), it states:

- 2.1 The North-West University recognises the fundamental rights and values contained in the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996 (hereafter Constitution);
- 2.2 The North-West University recognises that these fundamental values and rights must be respected and upheld in the University community; and
- 2.3 The North-West University recognises that these fundamental rights and values should not be viewed in isolation but must be applied as an integral part of all University practices and policies (The North-West University, 2012).

Regardless of this commitment, it still seems very worrisome that in section 6 the following is noted:

...The members of the North-West University Human Rights Committee will be representative of the University community and be sensitive of race, gender and disability (The North-West University, 2012).

Sexual orientation is clearly omitted, and points not only to the noted incongruence between the Constitution and civil society, but rather (and also) the disjuncture between the Human Rights Committee's commitment to legislation and its apathetic attitude towards sexual minorities. What is also of utmost importance and worth citing is the South African Employment Equity Act (EEA) (South Africa, 1998:14), which states clearly under section 6.1:

...No person may unfairly discriminate, directly or indirectly, against any employee, in any employment policy or practice, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.

The mere fact that sexual orientation is undoubtedly included here, makes it all the more problematic that institutional management or representatives of the university do not take it seriously enough to include it in its Human Rights Policy. This omission recalls several South African studies which have commented on the troublesome African and South African situation (Butler et al., 2003; Cock, 2003; Croucher, 2002; De Vos, 2008; Epprecht, 2010; Francis &

Msibi, 2011; Ndashe, 2010; Reddy, 2001; 2002; 2006; 2009; 2010). In accordance with the work of Chang (2005), Grace (2006), Slagle (2007) and the GLSEN (2011) and UNESCO (2012) reports, Hames (2007:56-57) underlines the supposed importance of universities as sites of producing inquisitive and critical intellectual interrogation of social and political structures in contemporary society, but this has in many ways been stifled by the fact that "...far from being major change agents in society, [universities] are in fact sites of insidious conservatism around sexual orientation".

This thought was mirrored in the words of the then national convener of the Kaleidoscope Student Organisation and member of the University of the Witwatersrand Transformation Office, Anzio Jacobs (2011:9), who attributed much of the existent homophobia at tertiary educational institutions to ignorance on the part of particularly conservatively inclined individuals. This in turn, results in an absence of not only formally organised LGBTIA student organisations on all campuses, but also complete silence on the importance of implementing transformation departments and offices at each university, with an adequate staff complement. The Kaleidoscope Student Organisation serves as the first so-called 'umbrella' network for homosexually identified students in South Africa which provides the necessary safer environments for students, and seeks to assert their basic human rights, particularly pertaining to their gender identification and sexual orientation. It convenes seventeen sexual minority organisations of the respective South African universities such as 'Out and Proud' (North-West University, Mafikeng Campus), 'POUT' (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus), 'Flamboyant' (TUT), 'UP&OUT' (University of Pretoria), 'ACTIVATE' (Wits), 'Liberati ACK' (University of Johannesburg, Auckland Park Campus), 'Liberati DFC' (University of Johannesburg, Doornfontein Campus), 'Out@Kovsies' (University of the Free State), 'MOVE' (University of KwaZulu Natal), 'Shadows in the Rainbow' (DUT), 'OUTRhodes' (Rhodes University), 'UFH LGBT' (University of Fort Hare), 'Eloquor Knights' (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) and 'GAYLA' (University of the Western Cape), amongst others (Kaleidoscope, 2011a). Implemented in 2007 through initiatives taken by members of 'Activate' at the University of the Witwatersrand, the organisation meets regularly throughout the year in the form of formally organised 'lekgotlas', to discuss specific issues, policies and procedures relating to the well-being of the sexual minority university student population of South Africa. Their Youth Charter (Kaleidoscope, 2011b:1) also underlines the commitment of its members to the stipulations of the Constitution and they advocate a "zero tolerance policy" against violations

of the basic human rights of the South African LGBTIA student communities (cf. Butler et al., 2003:22).

Following its 2012 meeting, Jacobs (quoted in Kaleidoscope, 2012) noted, “The delegates were indeed a true representation of the future of the LGBTIA sector. Older activists can finally relax, knowing that all their hard work has not been in vain, and that this generation will take activism in this sector to new heights”. He did, however, acknowledge that although “[m]ember organizations have worked extremely hard to ensure that they are taken more seriously within the context of their respective universities...there’s still a long road ahead for these young activists”. The efforts of these students on national and international level serve as continuance of what D’Emilio (1992:130) associated with the initial political protests in the late 1960s in the United States which provided the basis for the formation of several such organisations on university campuses. Although the organisers of such organisations could use the weakened resolve of faculty administrators, based on years of attempting to curtail several student demonstrations and strikes to their benefit, the formation and subsequent execution of objectives were not necessarily easy (D’Emilio, 1992:130). Refusal to recognise gay rights on campus, harassment and violence towards gay students and retaining conservative and religious foundations, were just a few of the challenges these groups had to contend with (D’Emilio, 1992:131). Thus, notwithstanding the strides made by these organisations, one cannot help but recall D’Emilio’s (1992:131) belief that “[p]rogress in all of these areas remains rare and exceptional”.

This recalls Downs’ (2006:76) argument that gay men are more inclined to (over)compensate in their daily interactions, activities and achievements, to attain what Renn (2000:131) believes to be an “...exceptionality”. This may manifest in higher levels of involvement in class discussions, extra-curricular activities related to membership of lesbian and gay student organisations, sensitisation initiatives or courses, and enhanced motivation to reassert their self-confidence and self-worth in classrooms where lecturers may use the taken-for-granted normative nature of heterosexuality as premise for learning in their various courses and programmes (Renn, 2000:132).

In addition to the experiences of sexual minorities in general, and gay male students in particular, the subsection to follow will provide a concise demarcation of the central themes associated with the experiences of gay male academics in contemporary tertiary education.

3.3.2 The 'invisibility' of the gay male in academia: From interaction to curricula content

Based on this 'outsider within' and 'inside/out'-logics, it may in fact become all the more difficult for gay male academics to refrain from either disclosing or foreclosing their sexual orientation if their work is to be taken seriously.

(a) ***Professionalising the gay male academic: Censorship, collegiality and mentoring***

Regardless of the fact that faculty members may exhibit a positive and arguably 'gay-friendly' inclination towards their homosexual counterparts, violence and harassment may still be persistent which heralds an inclination to **censor** oneself as homosexual academic.

(i) *Censoring the disclosure of a gay identity at work*

Censorship, according to Renn (2000:130), could be attributed to the fact that discouraging behaviour comes courtesy of non-supportive peers and colleagues, with the supportive contingent only passively and covertly expressing their pro-gay attitudes. Findings from the previously mentioned University of Minnesota Select Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns (Renn, 2000:130) underlined the negative ripple effect such passivity may manifest. Consider the following response of a teacher's assistant and graduate student:

...As a teacher, I have received no support or training for dealing with homophobia in the classroom...I have been discouraged from discussing any concerns about this, again through the discomfort and ignorance of my colleagues and faculty. Homophobia should be an issue in training all TAs (cf. Sears, 2002:14).

Feedback from Athanases and Larrabee's (2003:253) participants suggested the importance of including self-identified and 'out' gay male academics as imperative, when courses on gender and sexuality are presented. Of interest here was the fact that students are presented with a first-hand, 'insider's' perspective on the meaning of and experiences associated with being gay through a relation of the lecturer's own personal experiences, adversities and views on youth struggling with the process of 'coming out'. This, in turn could be facilitated through a relaxed

atmosphere during which the lecturer could joke about his 'real world' experiences, yet retain a sense of self-assertiveness and pride, rather than a stereotypically victimised demeanour (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:253), which according to participants was "...significant in making [a gay academic] a credible and persuasive source" (cf. Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000:130; Francis & Msibi, 2011:167; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002:78; Lambert et al., 2006:20; Slagle, 2007:320; Waldo, 1997:92; Waldo, 1998:770; Worthen, 2011:369). Grace's (2006:826) **"...writing the queer self"** seems appropriate here. Defining 'queer' in accordance with the noted contested configurations in Chapter Two, as an all-encompassing community of sexually dissident individuals, Grace conceptualises his process of "writing the queer self" as link between his personal and professional self, as it relates to his sexual orientation, since educators' actions and relationships with their students in the academic context are inadvertently influenced by their personal histories. Such histories encompass their personal beliefs, attitudes and value systems which subsequently, and intersectionally, influence the creation, change and/or maintenance of their professional identities and such relationships in their workplace (Grace, 2006:827; Grace & Benson, 2000:89; Wallace, 2002:54). For this reason, he advocates an understanding of their lives on the part of the educators, since, as he notes

...I write the queer self ultimately to explore how I can be a better teacher educator. It is not an exercise in egocentrism, but an investigation of the self,...a self I often hated, a self whom others...taught me to hate....[It] is a quest to see whether I have reached a point where my own expanding knowledge, understanding and experience enable me to be a self-accepting, inclusive educator who has transgressed his history of internalised and overt homophobia. It is an opportunity to grow as a teacher educator no longer bounded by the toxic politics and pedagogy of heterosexism and homophobia (Grace, 2006:827).

In uncovering the implicit heterosexual hegemony that underlies mainstream educational content and practices, the struggle faced by sexual minority academics and students become all the more apparent, which necessitates the relation of personal narratives of those whose "...identities, differences, desires, needs..." (Grace, 2006:827), which contradict heterosexuality, need to be told (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:90; Grace et al., 2004:303; Miller, 1998b:367; Slagle, 2007:310-311). This process recalls Mead's (1962) "...self-reflexiveness" since it requires the

interrogation and exploration of one's past (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010) in order for you to constructively "...engage the present" (Grace, 2006:827). To underscore this imperative link with Mead's (1962) reference to the constant interplay between the social and sexual self's 'I' and 'me', again consider Grace's (2006:829) argument at length:

...Personally, I have spent too much time and energy over the years watching, waiting, avoiding and hiding. Yet to live freely and happily ever after, to be safe and secure in everyone's world and to be out and visible in diverse social and cultural spaces are ultimately all ways that I want to be able to write my queer self as an educator and citizen...so that I can help build knowledge about queerness. I use this knowledge to inform deliberations about queering curriculum and instruction, to promote inclusion across differences for teachers, students and other educational interest groups, and to build inclusionary and transformative educational practices in the face of the delimiting structures and strictures that bind education...[Through this] as a springboard to help [others] interrogate anti-queer stances and actions as they consider the parameters and possibilities of an ethical and just educational practice for queer persons.

As such, the gay educator engages in so-called "...resist-stances" which serve as intersection between his personal, political and pedagogical identities, and which result in specific actions used to counter heteronormative biases which negate and misappropriate the place for homosexually identified academics and students in educational contexts (Grace & Benson, 2000:89-90; Waldo, 1997:81). This implies, according to Wallace (2002:54), to move beyond a mere focus and eradication of the heterosexual/homosexual binary and homophobia, towards a transformation of dominant and oppressive strategies and ideologies in favour of a queer interpretation of diverse and 'queer' experiences in a given context. This could be done on both a micro and macro level. Pertaining to the latter, homosexually identified academics, educators and researchers alike, who seek to link their professional integrity to their personal advocacy on behalf of the sexually disenfranchised, should use their personal narratives as a way to translate existent (or non-existent) institutional policies into practical procedures through curricular or extracurricular initiatives to underline the covert and subtle effects of heteronormative ideals (Grace, 2006:828). Based on his specific occupation as teacher educator, Grace (2006:828) recommends that he and others who wish to 'queer' education and academia, should tell their

own stories to teachers and other educators during training sessions, in order to make the lived experiences of sexual minorities all the more tangible for teachers who, regardless of their sexual orientation, will eventually return to their classrooms and be confronted with gender and sexual diversity which may elicit homophobic behaviour (cf. D'Augelli, 1992:393-394).

On the other hand however, Slagle (2007:311) emphasises the difficulty associated with Grace's (2006) seemingly unproblematic queer embracement, based on his struggle to divorce his own gay experience from the objective "canon" of academia in writing his article on the 'ferment' in lesbian and gay studies and queer theory (cf. Halperin, 2003:339). Grace and Benson (2000:106-107) do contend that although an "autobiographical queer life narrative" approach in "writing the queer self" may serve as "...compass...[it] is a risky business", whether it be emotional inner turmoil, social exclusion, ridicule or threat. Athanases and Larrabee's (2003:253) participants understood that contextual factors sometimes warrant secrecy and foreclosure on the part of a gay lecturer, with one even hoping for a more "open-minded world. Until that happens, it looks like our gay teachers will have to continue hiding" (cf. Dolan, 1998:45; Goldfried, 2001:980). As was evident in subsection 1.1 in Chapter One, Warren (2008) referenced the contributions of Henslin (1972) and Sagarin (1973) on the effects stigmatisation may have on the gay-identified academic and researcher. Henslin (1972:55, quoted in Warren, 2008:136) commented that 'straights' may in fact believe such academics to have "...'peculiar' interests" and that there has to be "...something deviant about himself" in doing "...that kind' of research". He believes that regardless of whether they publically proclaim their gay identity or retain it as secret, such research will be "...the road to their own undoing", since it will be interpreted as a means to justify or subjectively proclaim the acceptability of homosexuality (Sagarin, 1973:11-12). This, in effect, will render their work non-quotable based on the notable lack of objectivity. Wallace (2002:59) also recalls his internal fear after 'outing' himself in an email to students on how to deal with issues they associated with homophobia on the campus of Iowa State University²⁹. He recalled this as an attempt at engaging in pedagogical praxis:

...As I read over my message, I realized that I was trying to put a human face (mine) on the argument. I also realized that as the first tenured faculty

²⁹ His response to students on the manner in which they should deal with homophobia, was based on the exclusion of prospective homosexual men to join the local Boy Scouts organisation on the Iowa State University Campus. Representatives of the Boy Scouts even felt it necessary to realise their objective by taking the case to the Supreme Court. Funding and support of the Boy Scouts were still provided by institutional management and several students thought this to be homophobic and in need of immediate attention. In his e-mail response, Wallace (2002:59-60) reflected on his own way of dealing with the particular issue, by proclaiming his sexual orientation to these students and other members of his Engchat mailing list.

member to participate in the conversation, I was also attempting to wield some power, to force those who were making arguments about what did or did not constitute homophobia to make them to me...by Monday I would be out to everyone in my department...I was fairly sure I wouldn't face any direct homophobia,...but I wouldn't know exactly what they would think of me...I had raised the stakes: I was forcing people in my department (some of whom had negative feelings about homosexuality) to address me as someone whose identities included being an out gay man. I didn't know what effect my action would have on the discussion or on my working relationships with my colleagues, and I felt at risk in a new way (Wallace, 2002:60).

This, in many respects, reiterates Jackson and Scott's (2010) argument that marginalised individuals, such as gay men, may be prone to more self-reflexivity concerning the disclosure or foreclosure of their sexual orientation within a probable hostile hegemonic environment (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:34-35; Dolan, 1998:45; Munt, 1997:88) which may necessitate maintaining what Fassinger (1993:130) terms as a "dual identity". Slagle (2007:311) notes that he just wants to "...let the words flow,' without carefully choosing my every word with the realization that this is an 'academic' essay". Several considerations and questions thus arise for the sexual minority academic, educator and researcher, which for his/her heterosexual colleague, appears 'natural' or as a mere given (Dolan, 1998:45). Examples of such questions which, according to Dolan (1998:45), provide the context for an internal negotiation of sorts, include, "Should we come out to our students?", "Should we tell our lesbian and gay students to reveal their identities?", "Should I volunteer to help at the gay, lesbian, and bisexual students services center?", "Should I (can I?) work with the local activist group?" and "Should I befriend my students who are lesbian or gay, if I'm the only faculty role model or support system they have?" In continuing this reflection, Slagle however reinforces Grace's (2006) usage of 'queer' when he acknowledges the risk of "...over-personalizing and over-internalizing my story. But, I realize that queer theory demands new ways of looking at the world, creative ways of presenting information, and the recognition that our ways of knowing about the world in which we live come from many points of our history and experience" (Slagle, 2007:311). Grace and Benson (2000:91) support this, in so far as they believe that this "autobiographical queer life-narrative" approach and "...revelation of self" on the part of the educator "...provides text, context and subtext for readers to think about the individual and social construction of queerness in relation to history, politics and culture".

But, in order for a homosexually identified academic or researcher to fully embrace the recommendations of Grace and Slagle alike, Chang (2005:179) deems a synergy between a theoretical contemplation of sexual orientation and an empirical inquiry into the lived experiences of such individuals within specific institutional academic structures as imperative and unavoidable (cf. Plummer, 1996; 2003). He attributes this to the "...emancipatory agenda [which provides the tools to] research social sites, social processes, and cultural commodities in order to reveal social inequalities and, ultimately, to solve deep problems evident in critical pedagogic discourses" (Chang, 2005:180), an approach which directly contravenes the minimisation-approach exhibited by the student participants in Fine's (2011) study. The continuance of the overarching theme of self-reflexivity as part of a homosexually identified academic's research on issues which are directly associated with his gender and sexual orientation, have been undervalued in ethnographic and sociological research, especially pertaining to its role in education (Chang, 2005:194), and is, as such, deemed a "...risky business" (Slagle, 2007:311). Reasons for this relate to the fact that it may not necessarily be regarded as academic in nature based on personal stylistic choices such as Slagle's use of first person narrative, references to actual occurrences within the academic context, that such research may be defined as egocentric (Aguinaldo, 2012:771; Munt, 1997:88; Warren, 2008:137) on the part of the writer involved and finally, that too much self-disclosure may also herald possible risks (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:39; Dews & Leste Law, 1998:9; Slagle, 2007:312).

Such risks within the realm of academia, particularly for junior and/or non-permanent post-graduate students or academics, could prove to be an unwelcome scourge for development and promotions and even retaining their jobs (D'Emilio, 1992:132; Evans, 2002:533; Francis & Msibi, 2011:169). In recalling his recommendation to promote diversity training in the discipline of communication studies, at its annual National Communication Association's (NCA) convention, Slagle (2007:319) notes that he cautioned colleagues to encourage prospective PhD-students to take on such themes, since he knew that a non-conformist and activist attitude, could possibly be interpreted as too hostile and non-academic. He justified his position by listing the steps he had taken (or he thought he had to take) to obtain a permanent academic appointment, including article and book publications, conference presentations and community engagement as part of the Caucus on Gay and Lesbian Concerns. What was very troubling to him, was the fact that one scholar responded in the following way, "Well, Tony, no communication program is

interested in hiring someone who only specializes in gay and lesbian studies” (Slagle, 2007:319). Slagle (2007:319) further elaborates on his unease, an experience I myself can wholeheartedly identify with:

...It seems to me that most scholars are broadly trained, and yet they choose a clearly defined line of research to pursue. Interestingly, although this particular comment was painful to hear, it supported the argument that I had made in the first place. From a pragmatic standpoint, at least in my field, perhaps only the permanently employed or even the tenured and fully promoted can afford the risk of pushing the envelope when it comes to sensitive issues...the criticism was coming from a scholar with a strong commitment to issues of diversity as evidenced not only by his activism...but also by his active (and, I might add, ‘specialized’) research agenda...I can’t be sure if he was critical of my approach personally, or if he was making an observation about our discipline that has not had a strong record when it comes to bringing issues of sexuality into the fold.

The latter notion was of particular interest to me, since my initial recommendation in July 2010 to include a working group entitled ‘Lesbian, Gay and Queer Studies’ as part of the South African Sociological Association’s (SASA) contingent, was initially met with some hesitation and trepidation, as many felt it was part of the Gender Studies working group (cf. Seidman, 1996:1; Warren, 2008:134). This would, however, have exacerbated debates on the conflation of gender and sexuality studies (cf. Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 2008). In addition, attempts at introducing an honours-degree module and short course on LGBTQ Studies was met with the same response, since the proposed title ‘Gender Identity’, was thought to be a more appropriate flagship for such a course, which would possibly not alienate students from the university’s programmes and subjects. As such, I was, like Slagle (2007:320), thought to be too “...in your face” and not “...‘private’ enough about issues that challenge the system and, per implication, *m/y*³⁰research, obviously, makes some people very uncomfortable”. Yet, a more inclusive course or module name which could encompass sexual diversity or gender diversity, such as ‘Sexuality Studies’ or ‘Women’s Studies’ respectively, could prove invaluable, since both could provide an in-depth focus on its primary theme, yet in addition to incorporating a myriad of subthemes and identity

³⁰Emphasis added to my – *m/y*, to correlate with Grace’s (2006) reference to *w/e*, as all-encompassing term which denotes the unified objective of sexual diverse, not homogeneous, individuals to establish sexual diversity as mainstream objective in academia.

configurations associated with it (cf. Rothblum, 2012:140). In my own work, I also commented on the lack of focus even general sociology textbooks (including Andersen & Taylor, 2009; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Kendall, 2010) afford to issues related specifically to sexual orientation, whether it be lesbian and gay studies or queer theory, or a critical reflection on both (Rothmann, 2012:54-55).

Additional issues or risks which require intense self-reflexivity on the part of the gay male academic are associated with public disclosure of one's sexual orientation within the academic context (Dolan, 1998:45). This manifested several configurations of coping strategies in Barnfield and Humberstone's (2008:35) study on the experiences of gay and lesbian practitioners in outdoor education in the United Kingdom. Through explicit impression and identity management and reflexivity (cf. Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962), participants sought to remain completely closeted, pass as heterosexual, using so-called 'covering strategies' or being either implicitly or explicitly 'out' in order to avoid challenging heterosexism (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:35-38). Those who opted to remain closeted, underlined Slagle's (2007) fear of limited career prospects in the near future, for as one participant noted, "...be it for career advancement or acceptance into an organisation following the crowd can be a good first move...I think there are circumstances in which every gay man will grin and bear it". This echoed the previously referenced late 1980s study of D'Augelli (1989:320) on the experiences of sexual minority students. He too, commented on the varying degrees of comfort these individuals displayed in publically proclaiming their sexual identity, based on their inherent fear and worry, which almost twenty years later, still seems to be a determining factor, although to a lesser extent (cf. Newman, 2007:261³¹). Two lesbian educators indicated that they attempted to 'pass' as heterosexual, by inventing false narratives for their personal lives, "...I told everybody that he [a colleague] had made it [that she was lesbian] up and that it wasn't true and that I had been going out with my boyfriend for five years...people went 'Yeah, OK' and took my word for it and that was it" (quoted in Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:36).

Covering strategies entailed avoiding certain situations in which the gay academic would have to disclose information which could have others associate homosexuality with him, with Jack for example stating, "I would go out of my way to avoid talking about relationships", whereas James questioned the rationale for publically identifying being gay since "...people don't go around

³¹ Newman's (2007) work was based on a longitudinal attitude assessment from 1985 to 2001 at Pittsburgh University in the United States of America on the attitudes of students about lesbian individuals.

shouting that 'I'm Fred and I'm straight'. Being implicitly 'out', signals the potential to acknowledge your sexual orientation, if asked. One participant noted that "I was vaguely open about my sexuality in an 'if you ask I will tell' kind of way, so if someone asked 'do you have a girlfriend?', I would respond 'no but I do have a boyfriend'" (quoted in Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:37). These strategies exemplified what Cox et al. (2011:122) refer to as internalised homonegativity, which denotes the "...internalization by LGBs of cultural stereotypes about same-sex sexuality". Since homosexual individuals, in accordance with their heterosexual counterparts, are socialised into adhering to specific heteronormative biases, they may in fact take on prejudiced attitudes about homosexuality through homophobia as well as internalised homophobia, whether more of a mild (a tendency toward self-doubt) or severe (self-hatred and self-destructive behaviour) negativity (Cox et al., 2011:122). As such, internalised homophobia is reinforced which facilitates an uncritical isolation, minimisation and subsequent assimilation into heterosexist academic institutions (Grace & Benson, 2000:92; Sanlo, 1999:107).

This disjuncture between the noted liberation-like experiences of academic and educators on the one hand, and the probability of (self-)censorship on the other, is worth further consideration, particularly in terms of their relationships (or lack thereof) with colleagues and students. In keeping with the general and specific objectives of the study on the construction or deconstruction of binaries alongside sexualised and gendered lines, primary consideration will now be afforded to collegiality as it relates to how gay men may attempt to garner the necessary support from either their male or female colleagues in organisational contexts in general, and particularly in academia.

(ii) *Collegiality as gendered*

General accounts of collegiality between homosexual academic, educators and researchers, and their heterosexual counterparts, have reinforced the noted statements of discrimination, fear, hopelessness, isolation, secrecy and censorship (Sanlo, 1999:93-94). Rumens' (2008; 2011)³² work has provided indelible insights into the complexities associated with gay men and their friendship networks within organisational settings. He notes that regardless of the attention that has been afforded to sexuality and gender in organisations, scant focus has been placed on

³²Rumens' (2008) study is based on a qualitative study undertaken in the United Kingdom, based on in-depth interviews with 28 gay men employed in several sectors including academia, nursing and social work. His main focus was on the nature of these men's relationships with their female colleagues in their respective occupations, in particular regarding their possible friendships. Likewise, his 2011 publication *Queer Company*, is also based on an extensive in-depth qualitative research project on the workplace friendships of 33 gay men in urban and rural contexts in the United Kingdom.

the nature and influence of friendships which may result from collegial relationships based on, aspects like shared experiences of marginality (Rumens, 2008:91; 2011). This relates especially to one of these most commonly held stereotypes of gay men and their affinity to form a strong bond with **women**.

Based on his research findings, Rumens (2008:88) concluded that in those organisational settings in which women usually outnumber their male colleagues, including academia, nursing and social work, his participants reported a greater sense of ease associated with being 'openly gay'. This was attributed to the fact that these contexts were generally more 'pro-gay' or 'gay friendly,' as noted by Roger, a training coordinator in a female-centred nursing milieu as well as Rupert who occupies a senior academic and managerial position within a school for acting. Related to the first, Roger recalled a female nurse wanting a so-called BGF (Best Gay Friend), because "...you can go out with them and have fun...they can prop you up, they can talk to you and do the counselling thing'" (quoted in Rumens, 2008:88). Regardless of her affinity for such a relationship, Rumens (2008:88) provided an insightful comment on the fact that only a few of his gay male participants used the term 'fag hag' to refer to these women in their life, since they regarded it as derogatory, redundant and demeaning (cf. Maitland, 2003:19; Moon, 1995:488), in so far as it predestined them to only be secretly attracted to and attractive to gay men (Castro-Convers et al., 2005:49; Quimby, 2005:715; Robertson, 1996:8).

Such a gendered conceptualisation of 'roles' which gay men and heterosexual women should occupy within work contexts was articulated in the feedback from Rupert. He also recalled a strong bond with one of his female appointees in the noted school of acting. This particular woman, Blanca, was very aware of the homophobic environment and resentful attacks Rupert had to endure from his junior male colleagues, and sought out a friendship with him, based on their shared marginality in a perceived hostile hegemonically male and patriarchal organisational culture. She thought him to be "...absolutely fantastic because you are just so determined to be who you are, despite from the reactions you get from the men here..." (quoted in Rumens, 2008:89). As such, their fragility and marginality underscores their shared sense of needing to work even harder and even (over)compensate to succeed in a heterosexually male dominant world, which establishes a clear intersectional link between her experiences of sexism as his victimisation at the hands of those who ascribed to institutional homophobia (Downs, 2006:76; Rumens, 2008:89; Sanlo, 1999:xix). Based on their shared experiences, Rumens (2008:91) contends that such strong collegial and friendship bonds are based on reciprocally

heightened levels of reflexivity on the part of both the gay man and heterosexual woman, since both should carefully consider the experiences of the other in relation to one another, thus how the perceived “...male privilege” of the gay male may impact on his female friend, and *vice versa* (Halperin, 2012:379).

In addition to collegial relationships and friendships with women, Rumens’ (2011) progressive work on the experiences of gay men pertaining to their workplace friendships, interesting patterns emerged in terms of such **bonds between gay men and their gay male and heterosexual male colleagues**. His novel contributions on friendships within organisational contexts, cite the contributions of Nardi (1999) and Weeks et al. (2001), who emphasise the stereotypical belief that gay men will in all likelihood be more prone to associate with other gay men, rather than their heterosexual counterparts (Rumens, 2011:89). Yet, in Rumens’ (2011:89-90) study, it was of particular interest that very few of the participants in fact experienced these types of friendships in their places of work, which could be attributed to the noted marginalisation gay men may experience within a heterosexist environment. Based on the few who did cite the importance of these relationships, a dualistic account arose. On the one hand, participants highlighted the shared experience of marginalisation as objective to forge stronger bonds with other gay men as either affectionate or political, whereas on the other hand, others were prone to reflect on the possible rivalry which could arise if two or more gay men were positioned within a similar department or organisation.

In terms of the first, one of the participants, Hugo, an academic at a university explained that one of the main reasons he and a colleague were friends, was based on the fact that both were gay, “...[w]e had this shared understanding of what it was like to be a minority, to be gay in the workplace...gay men who were out often got bullied. Mind you, I think it’s like that for some gay men today” (quoted in Rumens, 2011:90). Another academic, Rupert, who in terms of his shared age bracket (both in their fifties) with Hugo, also cited the common history of discrimination, overt homophobia and prejudice faced by gay men, especially during the 1970s and 1980s. Such a conceptualisation and justification of workplace friendship, echoes Epstein (1996) and Gamson’s (1995) reference to the similar experiences of older gay men in contrast to their younger counterparts, who may in fact not affiliate with other gay men merely based on a shared ‘otherness’ (Rumens, 2011:91). If such a close-knit emotional and affectionate relationship between two gay men is embraced on a more overt level in organisations, Hugo also thought that it could undermine the supposed “...normative construction of [a]

depersonalised professional workplace”, based on his friendship with another academic, Fraser. He argues that their “...warmth and affection for each other spills over into our work life...quite spontaneously” (quoted in Rumens, 2011:91). Rather than experiencing homophobic gestures from especially male colleagues, he recalls an accounts from heterosexual men who welcomed such displays of affection, since they thought it to be “...refreshing”, “...personal” and rupturing the supposed static and emotionally distant relationships men are expected to engage in, within an organisational milieu. As such, being open about their sexual orientation, resulted in embracing a link between one’s (expected private) sexual orientation and (public) work and professional orientation – two strands of the social and sexual self which are thus clearly not as separate and alien as one may have come to expect (Rumens, 2011:92). In terms of the embedded political objective in such friendships, Stafford recalled working in a department mostly comprised of gay men, from the senior managers to those on the lower levels. This, according to him, positioned the organisational setting not only as being “...gay friendly,...[but as one that ‘promoted gay sexuality as a force to be reckoned with’” (quoted in Rumens, 2011:92). Talking about gay issues gradually became easier within this context, as more gay men were appointed as part of the workforce, facilitating an environment in which they could be “out and proud” (Rumens, 2011:92), which contradictorily (and ironically) however, again reinforces the heterosexual/homosexual binary and the exclusiveness of only being able to fully capture and celebrate their sexual orientation as majority, rather than as part of a larger diverse institutional framework. In a way then, assimilation and essentialism are reinforced without fully capturing a queer quality of sexual plurality (cf. Jagose, 1996:3).

Those who deem gay colleagues as advisories, painted a contrasting picture which, based on closer inspection, reinforces a gendered understanding (and conflation) of sexual orientation. Since gay men may be more prone to (over)compensate in terms of their professional achievements and acceptance as part of their creative endeavours, they may come to view each other as competitors and rivals in attaining success both in terms of their work and friendships (Rumens, 2011:94). Those departments in which gay men may position themselves as ‘experts’ within a given field which is used by an organisation to gain the favour of prospective clients, since gay men are stereotypically seen as the most creative employees, and in turn, may be promoted at the cost of others who are just as deserving. This could manifest hostility and distrust from heterosexual and other gay male colleagues. In addition to being career rivals, collegial relationships also potentially harbour friendship rivalries.

The third probable collegial relationship to be established by the **gay male academic is with his male heterosexual counterparts**. Stereotypically seen as improbable, based on the presumed subordination of gay men in relation to heterosexual men who conform to hegemonic masculinity (cf. Connell, 1987; 2005; Segal, 2007) and are expected to act in an anti-gay and homophobic fashion (Rumens, 2011:100). Bech (1997:73), Goffman (1963) and Nardi (1992) have all commented on the inherent fear heterosexual men may experience based on possible stigmatisation or negative labels which might be ascribed to them, if they were to associate themselves with their gay male colleagues, akin to Goffman's (1963) "with relationship". Bech (1997:73) for example argues that heterosexual men, in the face of such adversity, "...continually repudiate homosexuality...to protect oneself against it. The result is that friendship gradually becomes impossible". In addition, within the African and South African context, much of this presumed tension between heterosexual and homosexual male colleagues may in fact be attributed to the conceptualisation of concepts such as 'manliness' and 'masculinity', which have been clearly framed within the dominant hegemonic ideology of both African and Western cultures. Several such references were provided in Chapter Two, where I cited the contributions of researchers including Cock (2003), Croucher (2002), Dlamini (2006), Moodie (1994:128); Nel et al. (2007:288), Niehaus (2009:95) and Reddy (1998; 2001; 2002; 2009; 2010), all of who commented on the perceived "un-African" nature of homosexuality.

Regardless of such negative perceptions, other studies have in fact provided evidence of heterosexual men who display more neutral or positive perceptions about homosexuality. Rumens (2011:101) provided one such example of a gay male academic, Michael, who entered into a very meaningful friendship with a heterosexual male colleague. Although initially regarding this potential bond as suspect based on the foregoing stereotypes, negotiation of the friendship on both of the men's parts, was deemed unavoidable within their academic context. This is attributed to the fact that the university should provide an intellectual environment in which academics are afforded the right to "...scrutinise and analyse" (Chang, 2005:173; Jayakumar, 2009:676; Rumens, 2011:102) these kinds of (perceived) contentious relationships through rigorous debate. This provided Michael with the opportunity to eradicate his previous stereotypical link between Ian's working class background and homophobic masculine traits. He discovered Ian's interest in the finer, cultured and more urbane qualities in life such as fine dining and shopping, as well as their shared values and beliefs about teaching (Rumens, 2011:102). Both are in fact given the opportunity to perform (Butler, 1990) their identities outside the stereotypically constructed pigeonholes associated with gay and heterosexual masculinity,

yet paradoxically, reinforce the trait of effeminacy with Ian's interests being similar to those of Michael.

The different variations such collegial relationships presuppose, as well as the perspectives of homosexual academics, are supported by other studies. Castro-Convers et al. (2005:67), Kozloski (2010:1381) and Newman's (2007:262) work reported that there was no statistically significant correlation between the gender of the participants and their views on homosexuality. This may be attributed to a more liberal inclination on university campuses based on the importance ascribed to civil and social rights for gay men and lesbian women in general, a greater exposure to balanced accounts of homosexual life in both written and visual media, and more interaction with these so-called sexual minorities in their everyday lives on university campuses.

The inclusion of this subsection on the 'gendered' nature of collegiality was deemed appropriate, based on the continuous implicit and explicit references to themes imbedded in the general and specific objectives of the study, including the constant reflexive project on the part of the gay male and the rationalisation associated with doing and using his gender and sexual orientation through either conforming or negotiating his collegial relationships. But how does this translate into the gay male academic's interaction with and towards his students?

(iii) *Mentoring the heterosexual and gay identified student*

Mentorship may manifest in gay male academics' **relationship with (or towards) their students**, whether heterosexual or gay. Oberle et al.'s (2011:447) research on the potential biases of students towards their gay or lesbian educators serves as evident example of implicit stereotypical understandings of hegemonic masculinity (cf. Connell, 1987; 2005). Their participants, ninety three (93) women and fifty nine (59) men, enrolled for undergraduate psychology courses at Texas State University, completed a pre-lecture survey, watched a twenty minute lecture on extrasensory perception and completed a post-lecture survey and lecture retention test. Four (4) instructors were used to present the noted lecture – a heterosexual male and female, and a gay and lesbian instructor. During a particular part of the lecture (slides 1, 10 and 17 to be exact), the instructors personalised their presentations by referring to their partners Jennifer (the straight male and lesbian instructors) and Jonathon (the gay male and heterosexual female instructor). Directly following the taped presentation, using a

five-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*, one question was posed to measure how much the students had learned from the presentation in the post-lecture survey complemented with an additional seven questions as part of the lecture-retention survey, to rate the instructors' competence, likeability, respectability and knowledge, amongst others (Oberle et al., 2011:451-452). Of interest here, was the fact that the male students displayed higher levels of prejudicial bias against the gay male instructors than their heterosexually male and female and lesbian instructors. If these male students were prejudiced towards gay men in general, these findings corresponded with the earlier work of D'Augelli (1989:320) which underlined their tendency to posit gay male instructors as lacking in credibility and then psychologically distancing themselves from them (Oberle et al., 2011:457). Although the researchers acknowledge the limited time that these students were exposed to the respective unfamiliar instructors as well as the lack of incorporating an intersectional approach typified by social variables such as the general background, the class position or race of participants to adequately measure their perceptions, these findings still partially emphasise the unease heterosexual men experience in relation to gay male academics (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008) which makes the latter group especially vulnerable to experience anti-gay discrimination in their profession and in society at large (D'Augelli & Rose, 1990:490; Schneider & Dimito, 2010:1366). These findings contradicted an earlier study by Ewing et al. (2003:577) which indicated that students were not necessarily prone to provide a negative evaluation of gay and lesbian lecturers based on the latter's sexual orientation, but rather based on the lacklustre quality of the lecture itself. Only if a specific class environment necessitates a discussion of homosexuality as stereotypically taboo topic in that particular social context, by a gay or lesbian lecturer, one may expect prejudiced judgements based on sexual orientation, since the lecturer may then be seen as attempting to justify or promote homosexuality (Ewing et al., 2003:577; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:181-182; Monson & Rhodes, 2004:89).

Munt (1997:94) also reflects on the risks associated with establishing a relationship with or towards your students, particularly if you are a lesbian (and per implication gay) educator or researcher. She attributes her view to the fact that this lecturer may become an objectified caricature to scrutinise, "...a spectacle, a freak, a stranger, and a loner". Based on the precariousness with which mainstream academics may view LGBT or queer courses, this could exacerbate the rigidity of boundaries between the lesbian, gay or queer lecturer and their students, which sometimes enrages the latter, since they wish to establish strong and meaningful bonds with their role models (Munt, 1997:94). Since this educator is caught between

the institutional bias or homophobia and the prospective alliances or intimacy sought by students, alienation ensues from both based on the fear of, amongst others, sexual harassment on the part of the student, or based on the identification of the lecturer as the 'other' on campus (Dews & Leste Law, 1998:12). This may, according to Sanlo (1999:95), exacerbate the use of a filter of what is said to students about one's personal life, since they are "...the ones who can be mean, nasty, and do the damage". As such, both argue that they have found it necessary to 'shy' away from debates on sexuality in their classes (Dews & Leste Law, 1998:12). In so doing, they reaffirm the inherent fear that others who are anti-gay, may in fact argue that they use their course content as means to reaffirm and reinforce their personal sexual preferences onto their 'captive' student audience (Dolan, 1998:44). Echoing earlier references to a fear of losing one's job (D'Emilio, 1992; Evans, 2002) based on disclosing one's identity within the educational context, Sanlo (1999:98-99) commented on how interaction with gay or lesbian students, also serves as imperative consideration on the part of the gay and lesbian lecturer's reflexivity. Some may lament the need to serve as positive role models and allies for these students, but do so in a "quietly" hopeful way, based on the noted fears. Their reflexivity manifests reports of educators who emphasise the painful reality of this disjuncture between, for example, a gay male academic and gay male student, because that is

...what's so painful, I mean, so painful to not be able to come out at school knowing that kids are suffering and I could prevent that suffering...They do need to see that despite the fact that they're confused and we are very discriminated against, you can still achieve greatness in this world, be somebody, make a difference...in hundreds of thousands of...lives (quoted in Sanlo, 1999:100).

Munt (1997:98) does however state that she experiences a sense of pride and achievement in those rare instances where she passes a gay or lesbian student in the corridors or reciprocally identify with them through eye contact during classes, which in turn exemplifies the importance of their sense of community. Waldo (1997:92) supports her view, since he comments on the imperative role such disclosure and frequent interaction between the gay educator and his students plays in establishing him not only as lecturer, but also as "...teacher, role model, and a scholar", which in effect may normalise homosexuality, a request forwarded by Sagarin (1973:10) already in the early 1970s. Waldo does, however contend that it should not merely be the responsibility of the gay academic, educator or instructor to demystify stereotypes

associated with homosexuality, but rather an organised effort on the part of the institutional management's provision and support of homosexually identified individuals through tangible programmes, policies and procedures (Waldo, 1997:93). Reference to the feminist mantra of the "personal as political", provides a link to the subsection to follow, since it primarily serves as amalgam between the noted mentoring relationship between lecturer and student on the one hand, but also as compass for all heterosexually-identified or sexual minority academics, educators, researchers and students, to develop a critically orientated inclination towards campus climate, institutional policies and procedures as well as curriculum content (Munt, 1997:85).

(b) ***(De)professionalising the gay male academic through an interrogation of the 'normative' in academia: "Critical pedagogy" through queer life narratives, balanced nuance, exclusivity and inclusivity***

Lack of teaching about sexual diversity, and homosexuality in particular, may impede any attempt at reaching what Cass (1984) would term an 'identity synthesis' of sorts, for both heterosexual and homosexual individuals. Such absence and silence 'speaks louder than words,' for as Atkinson (2002:125) argues, "...we do not teach about diversity in a multisexual society: diversity of preference, practice, orientation and choice, including the presence of homosexual relationships within or interspersed with otherwise heterosexual lifestyles. Thus, the construction of homosexuality as 'other' remains intact", with heteronormativity prescribing strict guidelines pertaining to course content and presentation in primary, secondary and tertiary education (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:38; Hames, 2007:69; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008:846; Savage & Harley, 2009:4). This thought is exemplified in the words of Taylor (1994:25) who attributes the configuration of social, and per implication, sexual identities, to its "...recognition or its absence, [or] often by the misrecognition of others". In not recognising the more accurate nature of a supposed misunderstood sexual minority, such ignorance could only result in a further misrecognition and misappropriation of acceptance, allocation of resources and civil or legal protection (Taylor, 1994:25). In some instances, LGBTQ topics may be omitted either intentionally or unintentionally from prescribed curricula in primary, secondary and per implication, tertiary education based on either conservatism, religious objections or mere ignorance (Evans, 2000:86; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:171; Rothmann, 2012:55). This may exacerbate such ignorance and implicitly serve as consent for homophobic bullying through physical and verbal abuse (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:38).

When included however, course and textbook content, based on content analyses of eight educational textbooks undertaken by Macgillivray and Jennings (2008:171) in the United States, centres on the provision of undertheorised and pathological accounts of homosexuality. Their work identified eight themes which were evident from several foundational texts. These included, amongst others, foci on discriminatory behaviour directed towards LGBTQ individuals, emphasis on their identity construction and experiences, their parents and/or familial arrangements and LGBTQ history, all of which presented pathological accounts of sexual minorities as “...outcasts, frightened, and high risk” or experiencing harassment based on their “immoral behavior” (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:180). Findings related to two additional themes are also worth noting. In terms of their analysis of textbook sections which dealt with the provision of possible strategies, resources and curricula to attain LGBTQ safety, the six texts which included this, mainly argued that schools should attempt at addressing discrimination, but failed to provide any palpable recommendations to do so (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:180). Furthermore, they also found that six texts referenced sections on personal beliefs opposed to LGBTQ equality in education. Reasons included ranged from a conflation of LGBTQ safety with general promotion of homosexuality for students on the one hand, to censorship on the other, based on the opposition of parents (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:180), since such an inclusion may seem to validate homosexuality as acceptable variant to heterosexuality, which may be met with opposition (cf. Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008:849). Evident from their conclusion, was the fact that regardless of the inclusion of LGBTQ topics, the majority of the texts underscored negative stereotypes (cf. Sears, 2009:195), “the victim narrative” (cf. Savin-Williams, 2005) and an essentialist account of homosexual experience without any intersectional account of the influence of multiple social variables such as ethnicity or race, all of which were embedded within a pathological paradigm (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:181-182).

Several theorists have provided **recommendations** to promote the position of the previously disenfranchised homosexuals through tertiary education. **Nine** of these receive attention in the following discussion. Considerations deemed imperative to fully include constructive, democratic and a so-called “**radicalization of liberalism**” (Petrovic, 2002:151) in academia and for sexual minority academics and students alike, include the following.

Pertaining to the **first**, Petrovic’s recommendation is exemplified in Chang’s (2005:173) recommended focus on a “**critical pedagogy**”, Grace and Benson’s (2000) “**autobiographical queer life narratives**”, Maxey’s (1999:199) “**critical reflexivity**” and Warren’s (1974:168)

reference to “**reflective subjectivity**” (cf. Goffman, 1971; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Mead, 1962) within educational and research contexts. In ascribing to such an approach, a deliberate attempt at reflexivity is facilitated through a critical examination of both a historical educational context on studies that dealt with gender and sexuality in addition to a focus and linkage with the contemporary “...social and political fabric that characterizes the dominant society”. This notion is underlined by Jayakumar’s (2009:676) belief that higher education institutions have the capacity to transform negative attitudes and hostility directed towards sexual minorities through constructive interventions. Such views thus embrace a non-homogeneous academic body of work which is positioned within a postmodern, poststructuralist and postcolonial discourse which underscores the role of the researcher in uncovering particular underlying differences and interests pertaining to gender and sexual orientation which may either be reinforced, denied or ignored (Chang, 2005:173). This interrogation of the dominant heterosexual discourses in education (cf. Francis & Msibi, 2011:168-169; Macgillivray, 2004:113; Sears, 2009:194), as advocated by proponents of queer theory in general, is of utmost importance in academic institutions and studies about and within these contexts, in particular (cf. Cooper, 2004:24; Grace & Benson, 2000:103; Jones & Calafell, 2012:959; Kopelson, 2002:19; Luhmann, 1998:141; Maxey, 1999:199; Monson & Rhodes, 2004:89; Plummer, 1996; 2003; Stein & Plummer, 1996; Wallace, 2002:65-66; Warner, 1991:xix). Consider Chang’s (2005:173) justification:

...The standpoint of critical pedagogy is important in challenging traditional pedagogies, which domesticate, pacify, and deracinate agency, harmonize a world of disjuncture and incongruity; and smooth the unruly features of daily existence. [It] unsettles the coercive traditional position and, in doing so, redefines the relationship between schooling [which could include tertiary education as well] and social context...[it sets] out to imperil the familiar, to contest the legitimating norms of mainstream social life, to render problematic the comportment on which social interactions are premised, and to attempt to construct a new vision of educational issues.

Through a critical reflexive engagement, Maxey (1999:200) imagines a merger of sorts between feminist, postcolonial, poststructuralist and queer paradigms facilitated by the “...discursive nature of activism”. In order for individuals to take a collective stance against oppressive, brutish and exclusionary patriarchal and heteronormative principles, he implores an emphasis on using

reflexivity in uncovering the underlying performances of rituals that we ourselves adhere to and reinforce, sometimes unknowingly (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Ingraham, 2002). Since this process requires intense scrutiny through intra-psychic scripting (Simon, 1996:40-44), which precedes action, we are granted the opportunity to conceptualise novel and constructive challenges to taken-for-granted grand narratives on gender and sexual orientation (Maxey, 1999:201). He does however contend that complete or “transparent reflexivity” is near to impossible, since we all form part of this larger context of gendered and sexualised performances, which assumes the difficulty in distinguishing or clearly establishing a wedge between your academic and social self, academic and activist self, your researcher self and those you involve as part of your research and thus, per implication, your academic and ‘queer’ self (Maxey, 1999:204; Warren, 1974:168). Through “critical reflexivity”, the researcher is given the opportunity to consciously reflect on the discursive power relations between him and those who are researched – in other words, who has the most to gain from the research? What does the research mean to the different individuals or groups involved? Whether one undertakes the research as to provide a sufficient platform for queer interrogation of heterosexist or patriarchal oppression and manifest the potential for wider societal and structural transformation through academia, one should also consider how these attempts at activism are foreign to participants who merely participate to gain a greater understanding of their daily lives, and per implication, personal transformation (or *vice versa*) (Maxey, 1999:201-204). Regardless, constructing and ultimately maintaining boundaries between the academic and activist self through a queer-informed “critical pedagogy” (cf. Chang, 2005) become nearly impossible (cf. Grace, 2006; Munt, 1997:98; Pillay, 1996:100; Slagle, 2007; Warren, 1974:168).

Based on the chosen objective, the academic, educator and/or researcher may be left to choose to either disclose or foreclose their gay, lesbian or queer identity as part of the pedagogical approach. This choice has heralded contrasting responses based on narratives of several educators in the United States. Those who decide not to disclose their sexual orientation, identified a number of subsequent consequences which influenced not only their personal, professional and political lives. One lesbian educator felt less authentic, since the “privatization of her lesbian identity” reinforced her performance as professional teacher and role model, and in effect, stifled any positive “resist-stance” (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:89), since her secrecy fuelled ignorance, prejudice and homophobia amongst heterosexual and homosexual students (Grace & Benson, 2000:92). A history teacher again underlined the necessity to publically disclose one’s sexual orientation to colleagues and students, in an attempt at realising freedom

from his own internalised homophobia. He notes, "...I simply could not participate in my own oppression one more time", for others need to be aware of the "...histories, relationships, and connectedness to the world" (quoted in Grace & Benson, 2000:92). Munt (1997:98) exemplifies this argument by denoting the unavoidable confluence and linkage between her academic specialisation within feminism and lesbian studies with her social and sexual self, her personal beliefs and ethics, as well as her practical initiatives within the larger structural environment of academia.

However, others akin to participants in Barnfield and Humberstone's (2008) study, questioned the necessity for such a step. Reasons include that such proclamations by Grace (2006) and Grace and Benson's (2000) recommended a declarative life-narrative approach as something which may be interpreted as act of oppression towards students who are held "captive" in classes during such presentations. This is attributed to the fact that a critically "queer pedagogy", elicited through "writing the queer self", may result in a static pedagogical relationship between educators and students, since these pedagogies "...often elide both the complicity of the teacher and the students' *resistance to resistance* in order to reduce the...classroom to a site of teacher-liberator/student-empowered"-relationship (Monson & Rhodes, 2004:87), rather than a reciprocally discursive and transformative experience. In addition, there is no clear way of knowing precisely how this narrative will be received and interpreted by students, since the latter may still conflate modern and postmodern conceptualisation of gender-identification and sexual orientation and, as result, reinstate the 'us' versus 'them' or the 'otherness'-stereotype associated with sexual minorities (Grace & Benson, 2000:93). It may also, finally, eradicate any efforts at safeguarding academics, educators or instructors in terms of their personal safety and professional integrity or occupational mobility (Grace & Benson, 2000:93), as evidenced in Munt (1997), Slagle (2007) and Warren's (2008) research. Kopelson (2002:29) has cited the words of one academic who noted, "I am not the text in my class", who inadvertently through her declaration, commented on the anti-queer inclination implied by an autobiographical approach. This is attributed to the fact that disclosure of one's homosexual (or queer) identity, in fact reinforces the static ideas which reside within Epstein's (1998) "ethnic model" or Castells' (1983) "ghettoization" of gay men and lesbian women, since upon 'outing' oneself, you in fact become "quite literally, a focal point in that...classroom;...to be gazed upon, interpreted, anticipated, predicted, and 'sized up':...to be speculated and gossiped about" (Kopelson, 2002:29), as alluded to by Munt (1997).

In adopting such an approach, several initiatives could (and should) be spearheaded by the critically orientated heterosexual and homosexual academic and student. A **second recommendation** relates to the provision of a more **balanced, nuanced and positive portrayal of LGBTQ-identified individuals in the various curricula, courses and modules dealing with the particular subject matter** (Petrovic, 2002:151). These could include comprehensive discussions and coverage of historical developments of same-sex desire, the work and contributions of historical figures such as activists, poets, politicians, singers and writers, amongst others (cf. Aldrich, 2010; Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:248; Grace, 2006:830; Meem et al., 2010:xiii). Atkinson (2002:126) contends that regardless of the fact that mainstream society may recognise the existence and identities of gays, lesbians, bisexuals or transgendered individuals, more has to be done to move beyond the heterosexualised privilege which still determines much of the approaches used in secondary and tertiary education and the content in its “hidden curricula” (Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:170-171). Here initiatives, including Grace’s (2006:832) “writing the queer self” (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:93-94) on the part of academics and researchers alike, should assist debates on queerness to transcend a mere focus on acceptance and tolerance, “...to a place of affirmation and respect in education and the larger culture”. In doing this, one should and could progress towards the elimination of classroom bias courtesy of not only students, but educators as well, who based on their ignorance, may use derogatory remarks and perpetuate stereotypical views of sexually diverse individuals (Case et al., 2009:120; Sears, 1991:61), to further infuse the silent and subtle heterosexist undercurrent in academic curricula, for as Sears (1991:61) clearly argues, “...it is to educators...and their beliefs we look for a reduction of heterosexual hegemony”.

In addition, Chang (2005:174) echoes the recommendations of Stein and Plummer (1996) on re-reading texts in a more critical manner, to decode the underlying heterosexist assumptions which reinforce hegemonic ideologies, which may influence the manner in which knowledge is constructed. In adopting Stuart Hall’s (1984) model of encoding and decoding so-called “...personal or enigmatic meanings”, Chang (2005:174) argues that critical and queer pedagogies should as such “exploit” the intended and interpreted meanings in institutionalised programmes, curricula, modules and academic texts on gender and sexuality which inform a specific implicit or explicitly constructed reality for the reader. Current courses on queer issues primarily deal with a focus on the lived experiences of those who are presumed non-normative, the juxtaposed principles which guide the lives of heterosexuals versus homosexuals, and a rationalisation of such a distinction. In order to provide a comprehensive transcendence of a

mere theoretical relation of information, proponents of critical and queer pedagogies should ascribe to a so-called oppositional pedagogy, which may inform students and academics alike on the particular discursive and analytical skills to deconstruct dominant societal conceptualisations of sexuality and political economy of gender (Chang, 2005:178; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:184) which could result in a more informed and positive orientation towards sexual diversity (Lambert et al., 2006:17).

Thirdly, consideration may also be given to **courses which deal exclusively with issues related to gender, sexual orientation and sexuality**, as means of sensitising students on issues related to homosexuality (McNaron, 1991:20; Renn, 2000:133; Waldo, 1998:770). Feedback from ninety seven (97) students in Athanases and Larrabee's (2003:254) qualitative study on the manner in which classroom processes could be improved to be more inclusive for sexual minority students, emphasised the importance of such an initiative. They argued that the structure of the instruction during such sessions should lend itself to the presenter relating information based on his own personal experiences, background and research (cf. Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000). Some of the earliest examples of such a curriculum reform were evident in the United States in the late 1980s and early 1990s, through programmes at universities such as Yale, Rutgers, City University of New York and Berkeley (McNaron, 1991:20). Although such a presentation may in fact still take on a monolithic caricature of sorts, since a white, middle-class gay male, may not necessarily represent all or even the majority of gay-male identified individuals, it does serve to sensitise and educate students on the plight of sexual minorities, as evident in the statement of one student after such a presentation, "I have never heard a homosexual speak publically about their sexual orientation" (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:247; cf. Hussey & Bisconti, 2010:570). It also introduces the students to the specific terminology associated with social, legal and psychological issues faced by gay men and lesbian women, for example, which should be clearly identified, defined and demarcated (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:248; Rothblum, 2012:140; San Diego State University, 2009). Grace (2006:627) recommends that as non-homogeneous collective, homosexually identified educators (w/e) should engage in using personal, autobiographical narratives, if and where appropriate based on course content, in order to sensitise colleagues and students to the experiences of those who may be silenced by the dominant political economy of gender and sexual orientation. Such courses may, however, as noted by Munt (1997:97), result in criticism from queer academics and students, of assimilating through university management's inclusion, facilitation and financing of such courses.

Fourthly, in addition to or as substitute for the noted exclusive courses (based on the noted criticism), educators should **incorporate material which underscores diversity and multiplicity associated with gender-identification and sexuality** (Evans, 2000:86; Grace et al., 2004:314; Petrovic, 2002:151), through **mainstreaming in relevant courses** (Rankin, 2005:20; Renn, 2000:133). Themes could include the different configurations of social institutions such as family, marriage, religion and political structures, the meaning, principles and effects of homophobia in contemporary society, through an inclusion in, amongst others, education (Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Newman et al., 2002), psychology (Case et al., 2009:117; Goldfried, 2001:981; Rothblum, 2012:142), social work (Newman et al., 2002) and sociology courses, or alternatively, have students write about their own experiences as they relate to their sexual orientation through personal narratives in writing or language courses (Cooper, 2004; Grace & Benson, 2000:103; Renn, 2000:134). Lambert et al. (2006:20) regard the inclusion of such themes in higher education as appropriate and potentially beneficial, since “...higher education has liberalizing effects and leads to more open-minded, empathic, and tolerant individuals” (cf. Rumens, 2011). In so doing, in relation to psychology-courses, Goldfried (2001:984) asserts that such mainstream courses could benefit from an inclusion of comprehensive content of gay, lesbian and bisexual experiences, since silence and ignorance on the matter, will most likely result in biased research and conclusions on the part of his psychology peers, if they seek to understand human behaviour based on small non-representative case studies or samples (cf. Francis & Msibi, 2011:169).

Grace and Benson (2000:103) also refer to the manner in which Capel Swartz’s use of autobiographical life narratives in her composition classes as means to “...explore self-awareness, self-location, history, connection and relationship in education for equity”. Her approach implores students to critically theorise their own personal narratives as a means to uncover the underlying relationships of power, the power of language usage and intersected heterosexist and sexist paradigms to which they may ascribe, in order to uncover the particular contextual variables which keep all of this intact (Grace & Benson, 2000:103). Cooper (2004:31) reflected on the manner in which her students adopted a “homonormative world view” in their writing, as to critical manipulate and contest static meanings and replace it with notions of sexual fluidity presupposed and reconfigured through performance. Such writing exercises, according to Monson and Rhodes (2004:89), should be conceptualised as “...queerly im/perfect praxis”, since the writings engage and “...enact” students in deliberately queer (or deviant)

reflections of themselves, others and society at large, but do not necessarily “endorse” their behaviour within the probable ‘heterosexist’ institutional parameters. Another example is the use of the “...resist-stance” (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000) model by Eichstedt in her sociology courses. Here she requests students to consider the role of, for example, queer individuals in their lives – how many they know, in which contexts they mostly interact with them, as well as their personal interpretations of messages these queer individuals relate to them. Based on this, she frames her lectures around specific themes on queerness, including stereotypes of queer people, the power structures which retain heterosexuality as ‘taken-for-granted’ dominant sexual variant, meanings associated with ‘difference’ and the inherent struggles these individuals face as supposed marginalised ‘other’ (Grace & Benson, 2000:103). The importance of mainstreaming is further exemplified by Hussey and Bisconti (2010:570) who note that, regardless of the novel and imperative contributions of courses which exclusively focus on gender and sexuality, students who decide to register for such courses, may be more tolerant about homosexuality in general, and as such not necessarily sensitise those who are more ignorant and homophobic. This was supported in Newman et al.’s (2002) research on the attitudes of social work students on homosexuality. They noted that there was only a slight difference in the perceptions based on gender roles between male and female students at their perceptions, a finding they attribute to the male students’ choice of career as indicative of a more accepting and liberal attitude (Newman et al., 2002:281).

Pertaining to both kinds of presentations, whether exclusively themed around gender and sexuality or incorporated into mainstream curricula, attention should also be given to the **methods of instruction or delivery**, as **fifth** recommendation to be considered. As already noted, invitations to openly identified sexual minority speakers to lecture classes, could enhance higher degrees of understanding and empathy for sexual minorities (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:248; Grace, 2006; Hussey & Bisconti, 2010:581). Before directing such an invitation one should, however, be cognisant of the overarching theme and overall objective of the presentation. For those students who are completely ignorant of issues related to homosexuality, the invitation of only lesbian speakers, may lead to an exacerbation of the homogenisation of views on homosexuality. Students may in fact be inclined to conflate sexually dissident group experiences, to the unique and individualised account of the presenter, a

thought which corresponds with a finding from a study of Hussey and Bisconti³³ (2010:581), where students' affective change concerning higher levels of empathy, were by far greater for lesbians than other sexual minorities, following a presentation by a self-proclaimed lesbian. In addition, consideration should also be given to the inclusion of multiple elements or forms of delivery to enhance the effectiveness for presentations on sexual orientation. This could range from formal theoretical presentations, the noted invitation to guest speakers, panel discussions as well as the use of audio-visual materials, a thought echoed in the praxis of Butler et al. (2003:20), based on the lead author's own class presentations. He, for example, integrated small group discussions based on two movies screened to both heterosexual and homosexual students – *The Matthew Shepard Story* and *Beautiful Thing*. In addition, the use of music and 'open' gay and lesbian speakers could 'queer' the curriculum (Butler et al., 2003:20). As such, a combination of various elements could also prove to be of value, since Hussey and Bisconti (2010:581) argue that no single and exclusive method was more effective than the other during their sessions, based on commonalities in and between each. In each of them there was some degree of interaction, relation of personal experiences (especially negative ones) as well as similar themes. Of value then, is deciding on the particular theme or topic to be discussed, and framing the methods of instruction in such a way as to facilitate the most effective means to realise a clearly demarcated objective.

A study undertaken in Australia by Robinson and Ferfolja (2008) on the attitudes and perceptions of teacher educators on including LGBTQ topics as part of their training heralded contrasting results. Although their participants acknowledged the importance of the inclusion of topics on anti-homophobia and anti-heterosexism, they were not necessarily inclined to do so in their training. This was attributed to several reasons. These included their careful consideration of the possible advantages and disadvantages associated with such a move, whether it be based on personal or professional risks (cf. Grace, 2006; Slagle, 2007) or by unsettling "...many individuals by troubling their location within dominant, 'common sense' understandings of the world" (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008:849), which once again underscores the centrality of heterosexuality. Participants also felt that if individual students were to have questions about homosexuality, discussions on a one-to-one basis would be more appropriate, for as one teacher educator argued, "...I think the best way to deal with it would be as individual students come to these issues rather than a blanket thing through the curriculum. It should be based

³³This study was undertaken in the United States amongst 82 participants from two sororities of the University of New Hampshire. Two different methods of instruction on the topic of sexual minority stigma were used, namely a panel discussion and video for one, and a discussion for the other sorority.

more on a teachable moment” (quoted in Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008:849). Based on such views, Sears (2009:195) recommends and, per implication reaffirms Chang’s (2005) commitment to a change in pedagogical approaches in education³⁴, when he argues that “...[t]eaching queerly...requires a concomitant pedagogy...We should be prepared for controversy” (Sears, 2009:195). He continues

...This requires having established media connections and proactively...informing them of the event and project. We need to collaborate with allied groups, including those within the political arena, who will publically support our position. And, we must be willing to immediately confront – in a calm and calculated manner – when the event or project is attacked. If we are not able to...forcefully challenge assumptions, and argue for its benefits to children [and tertiary academics and students alike]...we should not try to queer...education (Sears, 2009:195).

As such, ‘queering’ education, for Sears (2009:199), involves a so-called “...policing of cultural categories” by interrogating one’s own inherent views on gender and sexuality as well as the subtle motives of educational institutions in terms of its sensitisation or desensitisation of future generations in their private and public lives (cf. Chang, 2005). In so doing, academics and management of tertiary institutions reflect an imperative tendency to reconfigure and create so-called “...powerful learning environments” (Arndt & De Bruin, 2011:517) for their students and staff, in which all forms of diversity, including gender identification and sexual orientation, serve to equip heterosexually and homosexually identified individuals to function more effectively within society at large. Such a society implies the **sixth** recommendation, acknowledging the importance of **intersectionality** (Fox & Ore, 2010:634; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:171; Mora, 2013:15; Savage & Miller, 2011; Smuts, 2011:38). It has been recommended that educators, through personal narratives and self-reflexivity, should include an intersectional approach to debates on gender and sexual orientation, rather than an approach which favours a reductive focus on the heterosexual/homosexual binary. Here queer theorists in particular, may engage students in considering the forms and degrees of oppressions faced by homosexually identified individuals outside the nexus of the noted binary, based on their economic class position, racial categorisation or ethnic orientation (Beyers, 2011:195; Jones & Calafell,

³⁴Sears’ (2009) study specifically focused on ‘queering’ elementary school education. Regardless, his recommendations and commitment to a critical interrogation of ‘taken-for-granted’ and unquestioned heterosexist curricula, underscores much of the work forwarded by Chang (2005), Grace (2006) and Slagle (2007), amongst others.

2012:973; Wallace, 2002:54). Such an approach has been implored in several studies, since the noted focus on only a singular form of oppression (Butler et al., 2003:20; Fox & Ore, 2010:633), based merely on sexual orientation, reflects a misrepresented queer critique of exclusion, isolation and the misappropriation of human and material resources. Examples include, amongst others, foci on sexual minorities whose race and ethnic origins may exacerbate homophobia through discrimination, harassment and prejudice (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:238; Cooper, 2004:36; Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000:118; Grace, 2006:831; Jayakumar, 2009:693; Kopelson, 2002:25; Newman et al., 2002:281; Posel, 2004:62; Reddy, 2001; 2006; 2010; Waldo, 1998:769), the role of religion and spirituality as well as other social variables including age (Beyers, 2011; Jones & Calafell, 2012:973; Posel, 2004:62), class (Dews & Leste Law, 1998), gender (Rothblum, 2012:140), health (Reddy, 2001:87) and curricula content (Rothblum, 2012:142).

In addition, as **seventh** recommendation, the contributions of Grace (2006) and Grace and Benson (2000), amongst others, emphasise the creation of an environment in which homosexually identified educators (lecturers and their teaching assistants alike), are afforded the opportunity to **disclose their sexual orientation** to their students, if the particular context warrants it (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:253; Kopelson, 2002; Wallace, 2002). Hussey and Bisconti's (2010:568) study underlined the effectiveness of **personal contact and interaction between supposed sexual minorities and heterosexual individuals**, and could result in a more constructive and positive relationship between the seemingly polar sexual opposites (cf. Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000:130; Francis & Msibi, 2011:167; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002:78; Lambert et al., 2006:20; Waldo, 1997:92; Waldo, 1998:770; Worthen, 2011:369). Newman's (2007:261) work however contradicted this finding. In her opinion, an increase in positive attitudes towards particularly lesbian students in her study was based on the creation of meaningful relationships between heterosexual and homosexual students, rather than more frequent contact. This, according to her, could be attributed to the fact that the majority of participants from the 2001 sample knew one or more lesbians, attitudes were more liberal and there was greater ease and sense of security experienced by homosexuals to disclose their sexual orientation publically (Newman, 2007:256-261), a thought echoed in the work of Castro-Convers et al. (2005:67).

In so doing, educators, whether lecturers or facilitators and tutors, should critically **interrogate their own autobiographies in order to identify the inherent sources of their personal**

homophobic or internalised homophobic tendencies, which may impact negatively on the experiences of their students (Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Grace et al., 2004:317; Petrovic, 2002:152; Rofes, 2000:411; Sears, 2009:199). By using this so-called life-narrative pedagogical approach, homosexually identified educators (“w/e”) engage in both private and public education initiatives. The former assists the individual in educating himself about the manner in which he sees himself or how others see (or fail to see) him pertaining to his sexual orientation (Grace & Benson, 2000:93). Public education serves to elicit dialogue during which “w/e” talks to others about their sexual orientation in an attempt to “...advocate enhanced visibility and presence for queer persons in education, culture and society” (Grace & Benson, 2000:94). In doing this, the educator may consider becoming a so-called ‘ally’ or academic activist to assist sexual minorities and attempt to address heterosexism, homophobia and harassment, whether personal or ambient (Maxey, 1999:206; Renn, 2000:133; Silverschanz et al., 2008), thoughts communicated expressively in the work of Grace (2006). Through constructive participation and support from faculty members, sexual minority students may experience a more positive and redemptive university context. Such initiatives may include specifically compiled programmes, curricula or courses which address issues related to homosexuality (Evans, 2000:86; Renn, 2000:131). These initiatives may ensure that, heterosexual and homosexual academics and students alike, are granted the opportunity to ‘unlearn’ so-called “...incorrect assumptions and prejudices” (Renn, 2000:133) associated with sexual orientations which diverge from the supposed centrality of heterosexuality (cf. Rubin, 1993). Through such a deconstructed and arguably reconstructed understanding of gender and sexuality, students may experience a healthy, constructive and productive critical perspective on their own internalised and external social actors’ ignorant and prejudicial views on homosexuality (Petrovic, 2002:146; Renn, 2000:133). This could be attained through a critical interrogation of issues related to the meaning, nature and consequences of homophobia, an intersectional focus on the relationship between sexual orientation and issues of class, gender, race and other varied non-heterosexually identified categorisations such as asexuality, bisexuality, transgenderism and transexuality, amongst others (Renn, 2000:134).

The **eradication of negative indoctrination** from faculty members, lecturers, counsellors or fellow students, which may incite homophobia, which in effect, celebrates a democratic educational approach which provides students with the necessary critical insight into the diverse and varied experiences associated with gender, sexual orientation and sexual desire, should also be used (Petrovic, 2002:151). This, as **eighth** recommendation to improve the experiences

of sexual minorities, would entail the creation of a classroom climate in which, through critical discourse, reciprocal respect between heterosexuals and homosexuals alike, is facilitated (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:247; Atkinson, 2002:126; Renn, 2000:133). This could allow educators the opportunity to identify, understand and confront the pervasiveness of homophobic acts on the lives of, for example, gay students in a 'thoughtful' way (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:256) through implicit centralisation of diverse sexual orientations (Evans, 2000:86). This entails an awareness of the fact that such students are present in their classes and that they, as educators, should confront the manner in which "...heterosexism gets infused throughout work and social settings" (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:241). This thought is exemplified in the words of a student who participated in Renn's (2000:130) research, who notes, "...it would also be a good idea to sensitize teachers in all disciplines to the fact that many of their students are not heterosexual. In examples they give in class, or in their assumptions about their students, they should be aware of this". Counsellors on campus should, according to Cooper (2008:434), adhere to the model of "gay affirmative therapy", which posits homophobia and *not* homosexuality, as the problem faced by sexual minority students during their developmental process of identity construction, and equips the counsellor with a much needed holistic view of sexual orientation in order to support and validate the student (cf. Sanlo et al., 2002:97). In adopting this affirmative stance of homosexuality as one of several sexual variants, counsellors and researchers may be able to gain a more in-depth understanding of the unique experiences faced by these individuals during these phases of 'coming out' as influenced by an intersection of several variables including age, class, ethnicity, gender identification and race, which questions the supposed linear and universal progression of modern identity developmental models (cf. Coleman 1982:39; Cooper, 2008:434; Plummer, 1998b; Savin-Williams, 2005:76; Smuts, 2011; Troiden, 1998).

In short then, the interrogation of heteronormativity, and per implication, supposed LGBT or queer pedagogies (Chang, 2005:178; Fox, 2007:504; Fox & Ore, 2010:640-641), is deemed imperative to empower and emancipate heterosexual and homosexual educators and researchers to confront homophobia on campus and subsequently facilitate an environment in which material and human resources will be available for academics and students alike (Grace, 2006:828). Such an initiative would thus imply an examination of the policies and practices of the tertiary educational system in terms of legislative protection in general, and the practical procedures set in place by the particular universities in which sexual minorities find themselves (Chang, 2005:178; Grace, 2006:830). Practical recommendations, as noted by Cooper

(2008:436), include establishing partnerships between educators, counsellors and external sources of support such as parents of sexual minorities, participation in curriculum planning as well as policy and procedural development to curtail homophobia, and providing the necessary formal student support services on campus which may in turn provide these students with a voice and sense of validation (cf. Nel et al., 2007). Sears (2002:32) advocates that these recommendations be initiated at grassroots-level and “...waged classroom by classroom, professor by professor, department by department”, in order for it to successfully filter through the necessary channels required for what he believes to be a “...genuine transformation” of university campus climates.

Finally, tangible procedures and practices should thus be put into place, since less negative or more neutral or positive attitudes towards homosexual individuals, may not necessarily translate into behaviour which is either pro-gay or anti-homophobic (cf. Butler et al., 2003:22; Lambert et al., 2006:22). In creating these formally and informally organised resources for educators and students, a celebration of sexual diversity, provides a more inclusive educational context and serves to constantly reinforce what Atkinson (2002:128) refers to as “counter-discourses”. Such resources could include practical initiatives such as LGBTQ inclusive and non-discriminatory policies and swift procedures to counter homophobia and other challenges faced (Jacobs, 2011:9; Rankin, 2005:20). In addition, safe space programmes, whether more formal or informal, could serve a constructive purpose, since the provision of the necessary knowledge and skills which are invaluable to advocate on behalf of the gay male academic and student, may in fact be embedded here (Athanasios & Larrabee, 2003:241; Evans, 2000, 2002; Rankin, 2005:20). This implies the creation of concrete strategies and procedures to advocate on behalf of the sexually orientated disenfranchised, which are all based on the discussed educational empowerment, faculty support, retaliation against homophobic attitudes and behaviour, monitoring one’s own as well as your peers’ and educators’ assumptions and discourse on issues related to homosexuality. This underscores the principles associated with **safe spaces or zones**.

3.3.3 The university campus as safe(r) space for the sexual minority student: Fact or fiction?

This particular subsection will introduce the reader to the ideas on creating so-called safe spaces or zones on university campuses, as a means to safeguard those who do not

necessarily conform to heteronormative ideals pertaining to gender identification and/or sexual orientation.

(a) ***Principles associated with a 'safe space' or 'safe zone'***

Based on several factors which impede an intersection between reciprocal heterosexual and homosexual support and acceptance, including violence, increasing numbers in suicide amongst sexual minority youth, high levels of substance abuse and alienation from mainstream heteronormative culture, the need for safe spaces or zones in establishing a "...positive sense of self, building community, [or] coping with bias" (Biegel, 2010:126), cannot and should not be underplayed (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:72; Butler et al., 2003:20; Evans, 2000; 2002; Fox & Ore, 2010:630; Goldfried, 2001:982-983; San Diego State University, 2009:18; Savage & Miller, 2011; Waldo, 1997:92-93). These spaces or zones mainly serve as safe environment in which homosexually identified individuals are afforded the chance to interact with others akin to them or talk to trained professionals about issues related to their sexual orientation (Biegel, 2010:126; Evans, 2002:522).

Over the last ten to fifteen years, safe zones have taken on several **configurations** since its inception, at amongst others Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania as 'Project Safe Zone' (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008), the 'Safe Zone Project' at Iowa State University (Evans, 2002:522), a sex-and-gender differences and schooling focus group in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta in Canada, called 'AGALE' (Grace & Wells, 2004:294), the San Diego State University safe zone-model (San Diego State University, 2009) and the adoption of the latter model by the University of the Witwatersrand (WITS) in Johannesburg, South Africa (The University of the Witwatersrand, 2011). In addition, safe spaces or zones, as will become clear from the discussion to follow, may also manifest in the form of particular individuals, including faculty staff, students, parents and siblings, counsellors, psychologists and psychiatrists (Evans, 2000:81; Nel et al., 2007). Newman (2007:261) recommends that parents who display higher levels of tolerance towards homosexuals, should be given the opportunity to engage in initiatives and strategies on institutional level within universities which are more prone towards non-acceptance and homophobia. The discussed courses which may either take on an exclusive or inclusive and mainstream character, as was evident from subsection 3.3.2 (b), also provide a milieu akin to that of a safe space or zone. This is attributed to the fact that a safe space basically attempts to facilitate an increase in visibility of sexual minorities and provide an

educational platform for heterosexual and homosexual individuals alike, who are either in need of information or support concerning problematic issues faced by sexually dissident groups because of homophobia and heterosexism (Butler et al., 2003:21; Evans, 2002:522; Fox, 2007:497; Fox & Ore, 2010:630; Grace & Wells, 2005:240; Silverschanz et al., 2008:180). Safe spaces or zones are formed as a unified attempt to establish alliances between individuals who wish to protect the rights of the victimised minorities (Fox, 2007:498) and to break down stereotypical beliefs held by a heterosexually dominant society (D'Emilio, 1992:131). As such, these projects, as noted, engage staff members and students of respective universities as well as their families and friends who want to participate in intensive training sessions in order to become so-called 'safe zone allies' for sexual minority students (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71; Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:240; Evans, 2002: 522; Grace & Wells, 2004:292; San Diego State University, 2009:2; Waldo, 1998:770).

In order to '**become**' a **safe zone** for these minorities, representatives from both the Bridgewater State College and the San Diego State University in the United States provided an in-depth demarcation of specific features, principles and guidelines, adopted by the South African based University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. These included; prerequisites in becoming a safe zone as well as safe zone ally, the goals of this project and a comprehensive training manual in which important terminology and services associated with actual or expected experiences of sexually dissident groups on university campuses, are provided (University of the Witwatersrand, 2011). As a safe zone, one needs to participate in an Ally Training Session offered by the respective universities, acknowledge your own responsibility as 'human' safe zone and not regard safe zones or spaces as dependent on physical localities such as departments or offices (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71). In addition, one should retain the confidentiality of these individuals and at all times seek to counteract homophobia, through amongst others, the use of inclusive language and confrontation of overt and covert behaviour deemed as homophobic (University of the Witwatersrand, 2011:5). In doing this, the ally needs to be aware of and sensitive to the existence of these sexual minorities on campus, the fact that they may in fact face hostility and adversity based on their perceived incongruent sexual orientation within the realm of heterosexuality and acquaint themselves with the necessary resources, including the noted comprehensive terminological guide and symbols used within such a community (University of the Witwatersrand, 2011:5). Several of these terms and phrases have been discussed in the preceding chapters and include, amongst others, androgyny, asexuality, 'closeted/in the closet', gay, gender,

heterosexism, heterosexuality, homophobia, LGBTQ, queer, sexuality and sexual orientation (San Diego State University, 2009; University of the Witwatersrand, 2011).

Prospective allies are also introduced to certain symbols which could be used to identify themselves as safe zones, including the pink triangle, which may be placed on an office door to denote its occupant's alliance with safe zones. This symbol, as with the concept queer, is in fact 'reclaimed' from its former pejorative usage to denote homosexual Jewish men in Nazi concentration camps (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71; Biegel, 2010:126-127; Meem et al., 2010:71; San Diego State University, 2009:15; Tamagne, 2010:192). Of utmost importance during such training sessions, is the emphasis placed on practical strategies and guidelines in assisting these students in 'coming out', problems different ethnic or racial minorities may face in addition to their sexual orientation as well as possible questions-and-answer-sets, which in fact prepare an ally for the questions a gay male student, for example, may ask (San Diego State University, 2009). Such in-depth training is necessary, since many of these prospective allies are sometimes ignorant of the marginalised positions gay individuals face in their everyday life, based on the former's taken-for-granted heterosexual existence (Athanasios & Larrabee, 2003:240).

(b) ***The effects of a safe space or zone on campus climate, faculty and students***

Based on an ethnographic methodological study on the **effects of safe spaces** at Iowa State University, Evans (2002:525) assembled a research team comprised of a lesbian graduate student and two undergraduates, a first-year gay male and transgender individual to conduct in-depth interviews, participant observation and subsequent data analysis. Several of the effects of the Safe Zone project on the overall campus climate mirrored its proposed principles which ranged from an increased visibility and support of LGBTQ students to changing the conservative and assumed homophobic image as well as the attitudes of its constituents, faculty members and students alike (Evans, 2002:529-531). Pertaining to the first of the four effects, the Government of the Study Body (GSB) opted to also serve as safe zone for LGBTQ students, since it felt that it needed to address issues faced by all students – this in turn "...got a lot [of] people thinking" about this supposed controversial issue, according to the GSB president. The second effect clearly overlaps with the first, since an increase in support supposes a clear identified individual or place to go to when needed (D'Emilio, 1992:131).

In this regard, one of the allies recalled taking prospective first year students and their parents on a tour of the campus. Evident from this tour, was the fact that regardless of the parents' ignorance of the pink stickers on the doors of allies, it was the children who noticed it, "...but all the kids – you can tell who's LGBT because their heads just swing around and check out the pink triangle" (quoted in Evans, 2002:530; cf. Sanlo et al., 2002:95). Two insider perspectives from heterosexual individuals on the effect of the Safe Zones project represented the third effect – the changed image of the campus. The one noted that "...I think the campus seems a lot more proactive and positive...a little path for people to make inroads that maybe you wouldn't have known you even could have made before" was facilitated. The second saw it as "...a sign that the campus is not as conservative as people think" (quoted in Evans, 2002:530). Finally, originally hostile heterosexual students and faculty staff, displayed a significant change in attitude through an increased awareness of LGBTQ issues on their campus, which provided much needed educational opportunities for everyone involved (Evans, 2002:530-531). In taking the experiences, needs and voices of LGBTQ individuals into account, one lesbian faculty member praised the institutional leadership, particularly the associate dean of students and coordinator of the project, for having "...given us all a lot more strength and reserve. And I think their leadership clearly is central to the success of the project" (quoted in Evans, 2002:531). This thought underlines the importance Rankin (2005:22) ascribes to the role of institutional management of universities in addressing the discrimination and prejudice which result in fear, isolation and marginalisation of those labelled as sexually dissident, for "...[t]ransformative change demands committed leadership in articulating both institutional goals and policies".

The reference of the lesbian faculty member to the increase in strength complemented the overall experiences of other LGBTQ students as well (Evans, 2002:531). Feedback denoted a generally positive perception from these students, since the project provided them with a sense of affirmation ("I feel like I belong here"), strength ("I can relax...just knowing I have support"), support ("I understand there's awareness, but knowing that someone supports me means more than awareness") and validation ("I might be an evil person like my mom says, but I've done a lot to help other people. And the Safe Zone project is a tool for that") (quoted in Evans, 2002:531-532). An increase in deep, open and honest **communication** opportunities have also been cited in other studies akin to Evans' (2002:533-534), including those of Grace and Wells (2004), McEntarfer (2011), Sanlo et al. (2002:95), Szalacha (2004), Worthen (2011) and Yost and Gilmore (2011:1352). Discourse not only *about* but also *within* these safe(r) spaces is thus imperative. Fox and Ore (2010:644) quote Anzaldua's (2002) work on discourse as measure to

improve the experiences of those who identify as sexually dissident on university campuses. According to her, "...in this in-between space [of the safe zone, defined as] an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries", new bridges will continuously be built through dialogue and coalition efforts. Through such conversation, one should be able to conceptualise safety in divergent ways, since you will be forced to explore who stands to gain and who stands to lose through the creation of safe spaces or zones, and correspondingly, whether such gains or losses are in fact equated with a conflation of safety *with* comfort – rather than rebellion and transgression of the heterosexual/homosexual binary (Fox, 2007:501; Fox & Ore, 2010:645).

Grace and Wells (2004:295) provide examples of the varied nature communicative encounters can take within a safe space. These include a reciprocation of personal and "autobiographical queer-life narratives" (cf. Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Slagle, 2007) between heterosexual and homosexual participants whether these be students and/or educators (Szalacha, 2004:76), "critical reflexivity" (Maxey, 1999) on LGBTQ popular culture – which could include an interrogation of representations in film, music and television, and a debate on how these forms of media could be used to assist the safe zone project (Grace & Wells, 2004:295). In addition, discussions on workplace dilemmas (securing a job, interaction with colleagues), plays and dramatisations to *literally* perform issues faced in academia based on specific pedagogical or religious approaches (McEntarfer, 2011), critical analyses of the policies, procedures and practices of universities and safe space/zone associations in order to determine the current state of events for sexually dissident individuals and provide informed recommendations for novel, existing or problematic initiatives (Chang, 2005; Grace & Wells, 2004:295). Members of safe spaces may also consider inviting central figures associated with LGBTQ issues in contemporary society, including academics, activists, researchers and representatives from community groups such as the American based 'GLSEN' and 'PFLAG' (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) (Grace & Wells, 2004:295; Swank & Fahs, 2012:83-84; Szalacha, 2004:75), internationally based programmes such as the 'Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgendered Educational Equity Project' (GLEE) (Szalacha, 2004:75) and 'It Gets Better'-You Tube Internet campaign (Beemyn & Rankin, 2011:1160; Savage & Miller, 2011), which advocates acceptance of their sexual orientation for homosexual youth, based on the contributions of LGBTQ adults as well as international leaders. Within the South African context, 'OUT' (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Wellbeing) and Kaleidoscope Youth Network and its various constituencies, serve as notable safe spaces.

Nel et al. (2007:289) trace the origin of 'OUT' to 2000. As non-profit organisation based in Pretoria, 'OUT' focuses on challenges faced by LGBTQ individuals and provides much needed psychological and psychiatric services, as provided by professional individuals and volunteers. The organisation's main vision centres on the empowerment of members of the LGBTQ community in South Africa and internationally, through an organised effort to ensure the realisation of their human rights and mental and physical well-being (OUT, 2012a:2). Statistics from its annual report supports its members' commitment to this vision, based on the provision of comprehensive HIV-care, psychiatric support, face-to-face as well as online and telephonic counselling and information resources (OUT, 2012a:2-5). In addition, representatives of the organisation also took on issues relating to hate crimes directed at the LGBTQ community, including the murders of eight gay men in Johannesburg from 2010 through to 2012, which went largely uninvestigated by the South African Police Service. Here they sought to support the families of the victims and continuously fought for the swift investigation and arrests of the perpetrators (OUT, 2012a). As part of OUT, a therapy group for gay and lesbian individuals, focussing on issues related to identity and coming out, preceded the formation of 'OUT', and existed from 1995 to March 2003. It was comprised of forty five (45) group members who met every week in Pretoria for 90 minutes during which members could raise their issues (Nel et al., 2007:291). The importance of creating such a safe space was evidenced through an evaluation of the influence of the therapy on these men. Findings suggested positive effects on the group members, ranging from accounts of the provision of a safe space in which they could "...release emotions, deal with stress, and confront feelings of helplessness" (Nel et al., 2007:297) and normalise their sexual identity as evident in the words of one participant who found it a "...tremendous relief at realising how normal" he was. Group membership as part of the therapy sessions also enhanced a sense of self-affirmation and belonging, self-acceptance, confidence and an increase in deciding to disclose their sexual orientation to significant others (Evans, 2000; 2002; Nel et al., 2007:298-302) and integrate with other gay individuals within more exclusive and mainstream groups.

Effects on LGBTQ faculty members and staff, echoed those of the students, since they thought the Safe Zone project affirmed their self-worth and their worth for others on the campus, with another noting, "This year, one of the amazing changes was just a sense of community that has developed around this programme and around our activism on campus...These are people I feel like I trust" (quoted in Evans, 2002:533). Heterosexual participants also provided insightful

feedback on the constructive differences such initiatives heralded in their own lives. Some reported that they were “enlightened” by the initial ally training programme and interaction with LGBTQ individuals (Worthen, 2011:369), the desire to learn more and the chance to “make a statement”, because “...I just feel like it’s the right thing to do...I personally think it’s just a great extension of who I want to be” (quoted in Evans, 2002:534).

(c) ***The relativity concerning the ‘safe zone’: A critical reflection on the perceived (non)democratisation of sexual orientation***

Although progressive and laudable in its objectives and efforts, such initiatives, movements and safe spaces or zones have been subject to critique. As with the critical interrogation supposed in the explication of the central themes and principles associated with queer theory in Chapter Two, much of this criticism of safe zones centre on the “...radical interrogation” (Fox, 2007:502) of the performed rituals and rules (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Ingraham, 2002) which retain heterosexuality as norm in contemporary academic settings (cf. Stein & Plummer, 1996), akin to the work of essentialism and assimilation of, amongst others, Abraham (2009:335), Jagose (1996:26), Namaste (1996:196) and Stein and Plummer (1996:130).

Fox (2007:502) argues that much of the creation of these spaces still underscores the prominence, dominance and unquestionable nature of heteronormativity, and especially white middle-class male bias (cf. Alexander & Banks, 2004:285). She attributes her view to the questionable and fallible formulation of the idea of a ‘safe’ space. Such a formulation basically posits the sexual minority student as victim of unwarranted homophobic violence which necessitates the adoption of the **ethnic model** (cf. Epstein, 1998) which homogenises gay experience, in need of intervention, support or remedy. In a way, from a queer stance, one could assume that it reconstructs the symbolic barriers associated with ‘the closet’, in so far as the sexual minority student has to ‘come out *into*’ an existent heteronormative milieu (cf. Namaste, 1996). This entails a degree of self-reflexivity (cf. Mead, 1962), yet without a sense of freedom as evident in Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s (1995) and Giddens’ (1992) work, but rather highlights a heightened sense of self-evaluation, critique and impression management (cf. Goffman, 1971) to ‘do’ their sexuality in accordance with the expectations of the heterosexual ‘assessor’ (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010; West & Zimmerman, 2002). They thus acknowledge their perceived immoral and deviant transgression from the gendered heterosexual status quo. Alvarez and Schneider (2008:71) comment on this in their discussion on the initial attempts at forming *Project Safe Zone* at Shippensburg University. Although responses from both faculty

and students were positive, so-called “...paternalistic politics” marred its inception, since discrimination directed towards this supposed ‘other’ on campus, was not regarded as a “real” problem (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71). The faculty administration thought such instances to be “...‘isolated and unfortunate’...caused by ‘children’ misbehaving and also that bullies were a part of life” (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71). But, through proactive contributions of its advocates, ‘Project Safe Zone’ was approved, unfortunately not based on a commitment to the protection of basic human rights, but an appeal to capitalist ideals. Advocates reminded university management that their lack of support could negatively impact on the university’s image and commitment as supportive of diversity and inclusivity, which could filter through to a probable decrease in enrolments. As result, the empowerment of sexual minorities was turned into a “...marketing opportunity designed to demonstrate the power of inclusion” (Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:72). This, according to Jones and Calafell (2012:959), could be attributed to the university’s adoption of a neo-liberalistic inclination, which favours commerce over “critical pedagogy” (Chang, 2005) and posits students as consumers, rather than critical learners.

Implicit in such accounts, are the principles of assimilation, inclusion and essentialism (cf. Jagose, 1996:3), with varying degrees of tolerance and possible acceptance, rather than a critical reconfiguration and deconstruction of the “heterosexual matrix” (cf. Butler, 1990:47) within academic contexts. But, in a way, Slagle (2007:321-322), in discussing his membership of the National Communication Association’s (NCA) Caucus of Gay and Lesbian Concerns and the Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual/Transgender Communication Studies Division of his university, problematises the exclusive nature which these names of the organisations imply, but reaffirms the importance of political mobilisation for those who identify with mainstream gay and lesbian activism and political mobilisation, which may be inhibited with the inclusion of ‘queer’ (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:37). The allies, on the other hand, are positioned within their normative places as ‘heroes’ (Fox, 2007:502) who attend to the needs of sexual minorities without challenging heterosexist and homophobic structures. Much of this, according to Fox (2007:502), is evidenced in the use of the noted safe space or zone stickers which, through placement on an office door, simply implies that a safe zone has been created without any degree of dialogue or education, whatever which way. Those who did not display these stickers on their door ran the risk of being labelled (or stickered) as homophobic, since the inherent assumption would be that they did not wish to serve as a safe zone ally (Fox, 2007:502). The stickers, in fact, facilitated a sense of guilt-free pleasure on the part of heterosexual colleagues, since they were willing to display these images. What materialises then, is the

...iconic display of a [supposed] desire to construct a collective identity...that ultimately protects the social safety (or comfort) of allies, thereby occluding genuine reflection, dialogue, and struggle about what might constitute safety for marginalized peoples (Fox, 2007:503; cf. Sagarin, 1973:11-12).

The innocence of the allies is reinforced within their comfortable spaces, in which they deem fit to 'include' minorities who did not necessarily insist on or demand such inclusion. Fox (2007:503) in turn heralds the question as to how the relations of power would in fact have differed, had the latter in fact demanded a space in which they could exist without fear of prejudicial or victimised behaviour. The heterosexual/homosexual binary is further reinforced, since we organise and construct these spaces within, rather than outside this binary, framed in accordance with a white, middle-class bias of sorts. Plummer's (1998a; 2003) emphasis on the importance of interrogating the "messiness" of queer experience seems all but lost within such contexts. Safe spaces or zones necessitate a degree of homogeneity, since the distinctive, exclusive, primary and singular social (or sexual) variable which will allow entrance to the space is the "core sexual identity" (Fox & Ore, 2010:632) of the individual. The homosexual male as member of an ethnic or racial minority is again reinforced, recalling the previous chapter's references to the work of Levine (1998) and Warren (1998), since very little leeway is afforded for sexual transgression or fluidity, if one were to consider entering the space (D'Emilio, 1992). What emerges is a so-called "...freezing of difference", since a universal identity composition, experience and identification is implied and expected from its constituents (Fox & Ore, 2010:634). Take for example Lance McCready's (cited in Fox & Ore, 2010:634) study on the experiences of black queer students, who sought to de-emphasise their sexual orientation, since safe spaces rarely sought to establish an intersection between their experiences based on their gender, race and/or sexual orientation (cf. Savage & Miller, 2011). Smuts' (2011) critique of the supposed linear 'coming out' progression of lesbian individuals, also underscores Fox and Ore's (2010:635) reference to the fact that sexual minority students of colour are more prone to experience their 'coming out' communally, rather than individualistically, as which is more so the case among white gay men.

Implicit in these accounts is the negation of probabilities of **danger**. By proclaiming the expected 'safety' such a space or zone implies, one runs the risk of divorcing the internal haven provided by the space from the external public sphere which may be hostile towards marginal groups.

This ideology again “...recenters white heteronormativity” (Fox, 2007:507; Petrovic, 2002:149), since it speaks volumes of the privileged safety which negates the necessity of such a space for heterosexuals. In doing so, the gay male academic and/or student identifies and embraces his sexual orientation as overarching thematic and master status in his life, to which all other identity components, including race, class, ethnicity and gender merely conform (Fox, 2007:505-507). It is recommended that a drastic reconceptualisation of safe spaces occur, to that of a ‘safer’ space – which articulates the possibility and unavoidability of fluidity, change, critique and possible danger that accompanies its creation (Fox, 2007:506; Fox & Ore, 2010:631-632). By adding the ‘r’, one is reminded that there is simply no existent space in which one would be completely safeguarded against harm. Vaserfirer (2012:624) supports this argument through his discussion of the contested balancing act between visibility and invisibility of a student support organisation, ‘Gay Student Services’ (GSS) on a hostile Texas A&M University (TAMU) in the United States. On the one hand, a certain degree of visibility was necessitated to inform its prospective members of its existence, whilst on the other, its current management had to carefully negotiate and maintain a degree of invisibility and secrecy, in order to protect its constituency and avoid any possible mistake which would render its effectiveness ‘ineffective’, based on the intense scrutiny to which it was subjected on a more subtle level by the institutional administrators (Vaserfirer, 2012:624).

An example of negative responses to same-sex behaviour came to the fore in the wake of approval of a gay student organisation on the Potchefstroom-campus of the North-West University in South Africa. The council of the organisation ‘POUT’ (Potch OUT), placed an article in a weekly university newspaper, *WaPad*, to inform students of its existence. The article highlighted the need for the establishment of such an organisation to provide an inclusive haven for LGBTQ-students on the Potchefstroom-campus, and to eradicate negative perceptions of these sexual minorities (Siebehagen, 2010:1). In a response to this article, the then head of ‘POUT’, Celia Engelbrecht noted that she received several threats and demeaning messages, regardless of the fact that the article lead to an increase in their membership. In addition, a ‘war of words’ erupted between the council of ‘POUT’ and lecturers from the School of Theology, which thought it incomprehensible that the NWU would approve an organisation which promotes promiscuity. This, contrastingly, according to Engelbrecht in a later personal account, lead to a decrease in their membership numbers, based on the students’ fear of being targeted based on the more ‘visible’ nature of ‘POUT’, a thought which again underscores heterosexuality’s centrality in this particular university’s overarching belief system (cf. Fuss, 1991; Namaste,

1996). By ascribing to this **safe(r)-logic**, a transformative component to the creation of these spaces is implied, rather than the implied transactional product of the stickers, rooms or allies. Fox (2007:506) best explains this logic when she argues:

...we must *engage safety as a process* through which we establish dialogues that create and recreate the conditions in which queer folks are more free from the physical and psychic violence of those normalizing processes through which we all move and operate...Placing the 'r' in parentheses calls attention to the tensions inherent in any discussion and action aimed to counteract terror and violence.

This is what Fox (2007:507) refers to as the “...ineffable” nature of these particular spaces. She cites the contributions of Butler (2004:35) in particular, who notes that it is necessary to scrutinise the underlying and inherent assumptions and fears of heteronormativity (cf. Butler, 1991:23), since it may force the latter to “...reconsider the presuppositions of its world...the unknowingness of the Other in the face of the Other”. One needs to establish a dialogue and interrogation of problems faced by this ‘other’, *with* this ‘other’ through dialogue and physical interventions, since the heterosexual individual cannot merely assume to know, understand or even identify with the possible physical and psychological trauma sexual minorities may have had to deal with at the hands of heterosexual and heterosexist prescriptions (Fox, 2007:507-508; Fox & Ore, 2010:645). This may establish a milieu in which the regulatory mechanisms of heterosexuality should be questioned (Fox & Ore, 2010:631). Regardless, it will remain inevitable that the sexual minority academic or student may still wish to identify with such spaces in order to resolve feelings of fear and isolation, which in effect, again emphasises his exclusivity as it relates to sexual identification (Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:256; Swank & Fahs, 2012:83).

3.4 CONCLUSION

Chapter Three provided an overview of empirical and theoretical research on the experiences of predominantly gay and lesbian academics and students in educational environments. Focus was placed on the challenges associated with heterosexism and homophobia faced by students, which could result in physical, sexual or verbal assaults from peers and academics alike, which subsequently exacerbate the marginalisation and isolation of those who do not

conform to traditional gender and sexuality prescriptions. Pertaining to the academics, the role of the censorship, “critical pedagogy”, “critical reflexivity” and “autobiographical queer life narratives” through “writing the queer self”, was discussed at length, to consider its role in fully transforming the intra- and interpersonal sexual self of the gay male (Chang, 2005; Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Maxey, 1999; Petrovic, 2002; Slagle, 2007). Recommendations in doing this, ranging from disclosure of one’s sexual orientation, mainstreaming of courses on gender and sexual diversity, interpersonal contact with homosexual educators and the provision of safe spaces or zones, exemplified the overarching theme stated at the outset – the professionalisation and/or deprofessionalisation of the gay male academic or student in academia.

What was of particular interest in this regard was the fact that the integration of modern and theoretical perspectives courtesy of the underlying principles associated with lesbian and gay studies and queer theory, respectively, again emphasised the importance of sociological mediation as bridge between supposed abstract theory and unattainable queer praxis. The progressive contributions of Plummer (1998a; 2003) and Weeks (1985), amongst others, relate to my own work (Rothmann, 2012), in which I contemplated sociology’s intermediary role in advocating an interrogation of taken-for-granted epistemologies concerning gender and sexuality within existing categorisations or models (cf. Epstein, 1998) of ‘gay’, ‘homosexual’ and ‘lesbian’. This reiterated an acknowledgement of the nearly impossible realisation of a truly ‘queer’ social context in general and academic environment, in particular. Through “writing the queer self” (cf. Grace, 2006), one is in actual fact necessitated to incorporate and share one’s “autobiographical queer life narrative” to adequately construct a queer and reflexively “critical pedagogy” (Chang, 2005) through intra-psychic and interpersonal scripting within, as alluded to in this and the preceding chapters, a larger cultural context (Butler, 1990; 1993; Simon, 1996). Regardless of whether one performs this diversely unique gay or queer self on a micro level through constant intra- and/or interpersonal negotiation, Sears’ (2002) recommendation to initiate change from such a smaller and subtle origin in one course or through one constructive discursive encounter, heterosexual privilege nonetheless may retain its supposed dominance, but only to those who seek to remain ignorant and fearful of their own internal sexual insecurities and fear.

To explore the empirical objectives of this study, I undertook qualitative research through the use of in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires, in order to afford a link between

the theory and praxis of the gay male academic and student's use of reflexivity and rationalisation within the larger institutional culture of academia, to either conform to a homogenised (and binary-bounded) definition of homosexuality or transgress (and deconstruct the binary) such a rigid conceptualisation. The general background to the chosen metatheoretical paradigms, research design, methodology, sampling procedures, ethical considerations and biographical description of the participants, are provided in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to realise the stated general objective for the study in which I sought to **‘explore the influence of the heterosexual/homosexual binary on the identity construction of South African gay male academics and university students in terms of their sexual orientation’**, I needed to adhere to specific metatheoretical, design and methodological principles.

Chapter Four provides an overview of the manner in which the research bases of interpretivism and social constructivism inform the choice of the metatheoretical paradigm of phenomenology and micro theory of symbolic interactionism. The explorative qualitative design, inductive thematic analysis and research methods of in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires are to be discussed in addition to the sampling procedures of purposive, snowball and theoretical sampling. Although the limitations of a social inquiry are given a separate subsection in these kinds of chapters, I have decided to integrate these reflections into each of the respective sections in order to retain the necessary continuity throughout the chapter. Finally, the ethical considerations evident in the study are also afforded the necessary contemplation, as they relate to the manner in which I steered away from inflicting harm on the participants through, amongst others, the use of informed consent and the recognition of anonymity, confidentiality and privacy throughout the process.

The reader is also provided with a critical reflection on the role of self-reflexivity on my part as researcher. Several researchers have either presented findings or contemplated the potential benefits or pitfalls associated with this exercise in applying critical ‘action theory’ to a sociological inquiry (Aguinaldo, 2012; Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009; Chang, 2005; Fine, 2011; Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Grace et al., 2004; Heron & Reason, 2008; Honeychurch, 1996; Jones & Calafell, 2012; Kleinsasser, 2000; Maxey, 1999; Roggow, 2003; Slagle, 2007; Williams, 1993). Roggow (2003:36), for example believes it necessary to disclose his sexual orientation at the outset of his study. He does however recognise the necessity of acknowledging the possible influence of his personal assumptions, biases and values in order to retain the validity of the study (Roggow, 2003:37). Being mindful of this myself, I provide the

readers with an explanation as to how I, through an inductive theoretical analysis, retained both my association with the academics and students with whom I also share(d) a profile in higher education (cf. Roggow, 2003:37).

What should be noted at the outset is that the theoretical undercurrent of the methodological framework will be complemented with the accounts of empirical features, obstacles and possibilities encountered throughout the research process.

4.2 RESEARCH BASES: “WRITING THE QUEER SELF” THROUGH EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY

The importance of **epistemology** and **ontology** as interdependent bases or paradigms for any social research inquiry should not be understated. Epistemology, according to Denzin and Lincoln (1998:185) basically centres on the manner in which “...truthful knowledge” (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:642) is accrued through social research, in other words, the so-called approved “...rules” (O’Leary, 2010:5) of conducting social studies and obtaining data. Ontological considerations, on the other hand, necessitate the researcher to determine his or her view of social reality (O’Leary, 2010:5), which will subsequently influence their data collection, analysis and reporting. For the purpose of this particular study, I have chosen the combination of interpretivism and social constructivism.

4.2.1 The metatheoretical paradigms of the study

Interpretivism, which is linked to its ontological counterpart social constructivism (Creswell, 2009:8), assumes that one’s social reality is constantly constructed, reconstructed and, in keeping with my research objective and title, deconstructed through interpretation (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:40). Rooted in Max Weber’s concern with understanding, or as he termed it, *Verstehen* of social life, the proponents of this epistemological approach, of which I am one, abandons the positivists “...monistic” (Seale, 2000:21) preoccupation with merely explaining social phenomena (Alasuutari, 1996:382; Sarantakos, 2013:41). We acknowledge that our perceptions and thematic interpretations of social phenomena “...are filtered by a web of assumptions, expectations and vocabularies” (Alvesson, 2002:3). The conception of social reality as diverse, plural and varied in meaning, is articulated in Alasuutari’s (1996:382) words:

...Theories are...deconstructions of the way in which we construct realities and social conditions and ourselves as subjects in those realities. They cannot compete with lay thinking, because their very objective is to make sense of it in its various forms and in different instances.

Proponents of **social constructivism**, according to Creswell (2009:8), therefore assume that social actors attempt to actively partake in and understand the social worlds in which they live, rather than blindly and passively conform to universal expectations. Through interactive encounters with others within a given cultural and historical context, they construct their own subjective meanings of social reality, which are "...varied and multiple", complex and relativistic (Creswell, 2009:8; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:10; Seale, 2000:46). Social research then, is qualitative and inductive, in so far as the researcher develops a theory from his or her observations based on attempts at understanding the meanings individuals ascribe to their social lives (Creswell, 2009:8-9). Consider Schütz's (1962:5) commitment to a constructivist ontological assumption concerning social reality, when he states that "...there are no such things as facts pure and simple...There are, therefore [or rather] always interpreted facts" based on, what he believes to be, an "...interpretational inner and outer horizon". Pertaining to homosexuality, Halwani (1998:29) asserts that sexual orientation is culturally and relationally dependent, as opposed to proponents of an essentialist and positivist paradigm who presume a more deterministic, homogenised and generalised understanding of homosexuality. In ascribing to this view, the metatheoretical paradigm of **phenomenology** and methodological principles of **symbolic interactionism** were chosen to frame the study on the **exploration of the (de)construction of the heterosexual/homosexual binary through the identity (de)construction of the gay male academic and student.**

Symbolic interactionism, according to Blumer (1969:63), provides a "...down-to-earth approach to the scientific study of human group life and human conduct". Methodologically, it seeks to undertake a "...direct examination of the empirical social world" in order to identify the social empirical phenomena which are present for social study, gather data, analyse it, "...unearth" possible relationships between different phenomena, formulate propositions, and eventually formulate a theory which could be used deductively to examine human experience (Blumer, 1969:63). Although initially silent on sexuality, Plummer (2003:528) contends that symbolic interactionists' interest and "...concern with meanings, process, interaction and a grounded familiarity with everyday life" posit it as a "...prime tool" to engage in the social

interrogation of issues related to gender and sexuality. In ascribing to his view as well as both the theoretical (cf. Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962) and methodological principles of symbolic interactionism, I mainly adhered to four assumptions.

Firstly, that social actors' actions are based on the meanings ascribed to surrounding objects in their lives. In researching the gay male academic and student, I was necessitated to experience and "see" their surrounding personal and professional milieus "...as they [saw] them" (cf. Blumer, 1969:65). I could only adequately and accurately interpret the need for the constant interplay between their 'I' and 'me' if I were to understand the meanings the participants ascribed to their everyday action and social interaction (cf. Blumer, 1969:65). Secondly, the social actors' associations and relations with one another are based on indications towards another and the interpretation thereof. This implied that I needed to gain in-depth and subjective descriptions from the men, either through the interviews or the completed questionnaires. Only in so doing, was I able to comprehend "...how they [saw] the objects, how they have acted toward the objects in a variety of different situations, and how they refer[red] to the objects in their conversations" (Blumer, 1969:65) with others. These objects, based on the preceding theoretical chapters, were clearly demarcated into specific themes included in the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire and in Chapters Five and Six.

Thirdly, I needed to acknowledge that social acts (and per implication, social reality), are constructed through the interpretation and assessment of specific situations with which actors are confronted (Blumer, 1969:64), as per the criteria of a social constructivist methodological orientation. Because of this, finally, "...complex interlinkages of acts" comprise the various interdependent social institutions and relationships in society which exist with a constant state of 'flux' through constant social change (Blumer, 1969:64). This, according to Blumer (1981:153), is referred to as the "...social life of a human society", constructed and maintained by social actors. The interdependent interplay between the personal and professional academic lives of the gay male academic and student clearly manifested Blumer's explication of the methodological assumptions of symbolic interactionism, since both were socially constructed through constant performativity and rationalisation courtesy of reflexivity. The implicit epistemological assumptions of this particular methodological and theoretical paradigm clearly mirror the basic premise of social constructivism. It seeks to establish an interpretive understanding of human life by avoiding an attempt at an oversimplified, objectified and totalising grand theoretical explanation thereof (Denzin, 2004:83). As such, I endeavoured to

provide a social scientific explanation of the experiences of my participants, ever cognisant of the fact that their current realities resulted from their life histories, personal biographies and “...lived experience” (cf. Denzin, 2004:83).

Building on the traditions of Blumer (1969) and Mead (1962), amongst others, the importance of the metatheoretical **phenomenological** tradition, also underlay the methodological considerations of the study. Here primacy was given to the importance of the lived experiences, interpretations, social interactions and knowledge produced in the everyday life of the gay male participants (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:28; Gomm, 2008:7; Wicks et al., 2008:22). As social scientist, I adhered to two methodological postulates in order to validate the findings of my study – the **postulate of subjective interpretation** and the **postulate of adequacy** (cf. Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:69). In terms of the first, I provided social scientific explanations of the empirical evidence accrued through the in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires. These included the comprehensive literary sources used throughout Chapters One through to the present chapter on, amongst others, lesbian and gay studies and queer theory. In terms of the postulate of adequacy, Chapters Five and Six which follow will provide in-depth, ‘thick’ and accurate accounts provided by the gay male participants. Direct quotes as well as paraphrased discussions and thematic analyses correspond directly with the subjective perspectives provided (cf. Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:69).

The principle which primarily characterises phenomenological inquiry is the understanding of the lived experiences of individuals (Denscombe, 2004:97-98; O’Leary, 2010:119; Soeffner, 2004:95) in their so-called “life-world” (Husserl, 1970, cited in Denscombe, 2004:98). This, per implication, involves an in-depth focus on the routines and “...ordinary features of social life” in order to make sense of them (Denscombe, 2004:98). Two particular points are of interest here. Firstly, that I explored the manner in which the gay men actively and creatively constructed their social and sexual lives through constant interpretation of their surroundings and day-to-day social interactions with others, in an attempt to make sense of their lives (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:28). As such, in ascribing to the phenomenological approach, I do not believe that these participants blindly and passively conform to external social structures without conscious reflection and rationalisation (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:28; Denscombe, 2004:99), as presupposed by proponents of positivism. Secondly, and directly related to the first point, is the fact that the social construction of their sexually orientated performances in “doing gay” (cf. Dowsett et al., 2008) and/or using gay, is influenced by the shared interpretations of

experiences attained during continuous interaction (Denscombe, 2004:99-100). I was therefore engaged in a sociological investigation into the “...epistemological explanation of the ‘foundation’ of the life-world” that gay male academics and students ascribe to their personal and professional identities (cf. Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:68).

Per implication then, the positive features which influenced my choice and eventual use of phenomenological principles, centre on the probable authenticity of the accounts the gay men provided about their seemingly “...complex” navigation between the ‘I’ and ‘me’ of their homosexuality (cf. Denscombe, 2004:105). One is in fact given the chance to scratch “...beneath the superficial aspects of social reality” (Denscombe, 2004:105) in order to provide an in-depth conceptualisation and exploration of their experiences. In addition, it transcends a positivist orientation which treats human beings as objects and rather attempts to humanise social research through a respect for human life courtesy of the small-scale qualitative research design. Hitzler and Eberle (2004:69) contend that the “...empirical programme of phenomenology” involves the “...systematic reconstruction of multiple qualities of experience”, as per Plummer (1998a; 2003) and Roseneil’s (2002) recommended focus on the diverse configurations of homosexuality *within* the larger category of “the homosexual”. Although the ‘life world’, according to them, is not a marginal theme in social research (Denscombe, 2004:100; Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:69), I was left to ponder the possible marginality gay male academics and students experience within the heteronormatively constructed cultural schema of the university’s smaller “world of daily life” (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:28). Although they have the ability to perceive the underlying expectations and principles associated with this “charmed circle” (cf. Rubin, 1993) of sorts, they may never (or do not want to ever) fully embrace and conform to it. If they did or do not wish to do so, it was imperative to use the phenomenological and symbolic interactionist methodological paradigms in order to ‘capture’ the subjective perceptions, fears and hopes of the participants as part of their worlds of “everyday life”³⁵. As such, the respective epistemological and ontological paradigms proved to be invaluable, as is evident in Chapter Five through to Chapter Seven.

³⁵The worlds of ‘daily life’ and ‘everyday life’ refer to two distinct experiences of the social actor. The first denotes the social world which existed before the intersubjective world which preceded the birth of social actors. The world of ‘everyday life’ involves the personal “world of working” of the individual social actor (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:28-29).

4.2.2 Merging metatheory with a potentially self-reflexive project

In keeping with the preceding chapters, the underlying epistemological and ontological research bases mirror several of the concepts and themes used in the cited studies. Of particular interest here, is the manner in which the work of Goffman (1971), Mead (1962) and Schütz (1932) intersect with, not only the central contributions of gay academics, lecturers and teachers discussed in Chapter Three (Chang, 2005; Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Maxey, 1999; Petrovic, 2002; Slagle, 2007; Warren, 1974), but also the manner in which it directs this study's methodological design and execution. Consider, for example, the fact that my personal identification as gay male, in general, and gay male academic in particular, necessitated the display of what Schütz (1932) refers to as "...inter-subjectivity" on the part of me as social researcher. Brøgger and Eikeland (2009:19) consider it to be unethical when a researcher becomes too involved by overtly identifying with both those who are researched and the research itself.

This consideration, shared by proponents of a positivistic paradigm, however, further underlines the fact that "...non-intervention" (or, per implication, non-identification) on the part of the researcher with his or her research foci, could presume a so-called "...hermeneutically prejudiced and 'ideological' viewpoint or position of the observer" (Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009:19). One is left to consider the fact that regardless of the gendered, social or sexually orientated involvement or non-involvement of the researcher in his study, some influence or impact is always implied in social inquiries. I may in fact attempt to only be the "...fly on the wall', but [I was] made part of the local scene one way or the other" (Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009:19). One should acknowledge that no form of social research is unhindered by practical consequences or social change, since "...it should not be without any practical impact" (Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009:20).

Although the prior reference to my intersubjective involvement in the study could immediately assume the use of action or applied research, my chosen framework sought to establish an amalgam between the noted epistemological principles posited by proponents of interpretivism and ontology's constructivism as overarching research bases. My personal identification (cf. Roggow, 2003) already implies the noted intersubjective, value laden and inductive attempt to gain an (possibly already existent) insider's perspective and possible understanding of the subjectively socially and sexually created personal lives of gay men within a larger social and gendered (cf. Johnson, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2002) cultural schema (Blumer, 1969; Flick

et al., 2004:7; Geertz, 1973; Gildemeister, 2004:123-124; Schütz, 1932). Although this has been implied implicitly in Chapters One, Two and Three, Chapters Five to Seven, provide my explicit commitment to advocacy and emancipation for gay male academics and students in South African higher education through a thematic analysis. This analysis recalls Petrovic's (2002:151) "**radicalization of liberalism**", Chang's (2005:173) "**critical pedagogy**", Grace and Benson's (2000) "**autobiographical queer life narratives**", Maxey's (1999:199) "**critical reflexivity**" and Warren's (1974:168) reference to "**reflective subjectivity**" (cf. Goffman, 1971; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Mead, 1962). Schütz's (1932:38) conceptualisation of a phenomenological approach supports much of the inherent meaning attached to the noted "radicalisation", when he states that the researcher, as I did in this inquiry, in fact

...puts himself in the place of the other person and imagines that he himself is selecting and using the signs. He interprets the other person's subjective meaning as if it were his own. In the process he draws upon his whole knowledge of the speaker, especially the latter's ways and habits of expressing himself.

In so doing, one avoids what Janesick (2007:48) refers to as "...methodolatry". This entails a so-called "...slavish attachment and devotion to methods" to such an extreme extent, that a researcher will primarily occupy his or her time with the selection and combination of various methods to undertake research, rather than focussing on the "...substance of the story being told" (Janesick, 2007:48) by the participant. Although embedded in the paradigm of action research (which could result from the findings of my study and its recommendations), Mead (2001:66, quoted in Heron & Reason, 2008:368), in his unpublished PhD-thesis, maintains the importance of this so-called "...radical epistemology" by affirming his commitment to an experiential way of knowing whilst conducting research. Consider his justification:

...As an integral part of my being in the world, my *living inquiry* is firmly anchored in the bedrock of my experience...I have actively sought new experiences and pushed my boundaries considerably in doing so, whether it be...separation and divorce, storytelling performances, or creating and delivering large-scale educational programmes...Without such experiential grounding, I believe that action research remains as speculative and

‘theoretical’ as its reductionist cousins (Mead, 2001, quoted in Heron & Reason, 2008:368).

Experiential knowing, according to Heron and Reason (2008:367), involves the direct face-to-face acquaintance and/or involvement with the individual being studied, which is “...profoundly ‘real’ – sound, solid and vibrant at the moment of experience”. Such an experience, according to them, provides a metaphorical “...living key to appropriate understanding” (Heron & Reason, 2008:368) of the subjective and interpersonal realities of those involved in the study. Implicit in these accounts, is researcher reflexivity which, according to Aguinaldo (2012:767), recognises the academic and personal contributions made by the researcher to the study and, per implication, also necessitates the “...inclusion” of him in the study (cf. Kleinsasser, 2000:155). In considering the role of one’s sexual orientation in choosing research methods as well as an epistemological and ontological paradigm, Honeychurch (1996:343), as gay academic, argues that “...[l]esbian and gay male social researchers engaged in studying the subjects of homosexualities can escape neither the implications of our sexualities nor the heterosexual prerogatives of the schools, Academy and culture in which we are indoctrinated”. He continues:

...Forced to ponder our bodies by a culture startled by gender non-conformity and sexual diversity, social researchers who claim a queer position may best be suited to interrogating the sexual in social inquiry. Indeed, it is in the contemplation of our variance that lesbians and gay men discover not only a capacity but also a proficiency for innovation that, in turn, affirms both the fortitude and fluidity of queer bodies (Honeychurch, 1996:350).

Jones and Calafell (2012:962) also contend that if the researcher were to elicit his personal narrative as part of the research, he in fact “...engages the politics of voice [and]...talk back to hegemonic, heteronormative...discourses” (cf. Ackerly & True, 2010:32). As such, an inclusion of self-reflexivity on the part of the gay researcher, assumes some degree of power for him in terms of data collection or analysis, which is one of the reasons self-disclosure of one’s sexual orientation, on the part of the researcher, may “...unduly influence...the interviewer-respondent relationship”, since little attention may then be afforded to the narrative of the participant (Fine, 2011:529; Grace & Benson, 2000:94). On the other hand, however, this disclosure may reinforce rapport and more of an equal power balance between the researcher and participant (Fine, 2011:529).

I decided, like Fine (2011) and Roggow (2003), to disclose my homosexuality to my male interviewees in order to construct a “...solid interview relationship” and to encourage them to relate intimate and private details about their sexual orientation within their personal and academic lives (cf. Jones & Calafell, 2012:962). They may have found this difficult to do, had the researcher been heterosexual (cf. Fine, 2011:529; Williams, 1993:119). Through this, I embraced Schütz’s (1932) recommendation for an intersubjective approach, rather than privileging my personal gay male (or queer) identification shared with the participants. To refrain from emphasising my own homosexuality as pre-eminent factor during my interviews, I opted to use the direct quotes of the interviewees and those included in the self-administered questionnaires, as well as the noted inductive thematic analysis, to provide validity to my findings (cf. Aguinaldo, 2012:771-772) and avoid ‘overidentification’ with the participants (cf. Castro-Convers et al., 2005:53). This is attributed to the fact that thematic analysis contradicts its reflexive counterpart, since **open coding** of the accrued data according to specific themes, centres the contributions of the participants as products of interaction *between* the men and myself, rather than solely based on my *personal interpretations or beliefs* (cf. Aguinaldo, 2012:771). Consequently then, emphasis is placed on the provision of in-depth and “...thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) provided during interviews or in the self-administered questionnaires, since the study is embedded within a constructivist rather than a critical paradigm (cf. Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Miller, 2000:127).

The latter would have afforded me the opportunity to thoroughly explicate and describe my personal beliefs, feelings and biases associated with the research process and theme (cf. Creswell & Miller, 2000:127). Aguinaldo (2012:772) cites Honeychurch’s (1996) interviews with gay men as an example of the inclusion of his personal notes and reflections as part of the latter’s consideration of his role as researcher. Although not subscribing to the principles of the critical paradigm, my decision to disclose my sexual orientation to my interviewees, as noted, was merely to establish a stronger bond with them, and not to unduly influence their feedback. Yet, regardless of the constructive contributions research by supposed sexual minorities could make to mainstream (heterosexual) studies, Honeychurch (1996:354) concedes that the gay male academic may still face a further marginalisation within the holy grail of academia, since it may be interpreted as threat to “...conventional theory and practices...faulty, textually prurient, and perhaps even pathological...or immoral”, as noted in Chapter Three.

Therefore, in adhering to the general and specific research questions and objectives, my intersubjective commitment to transcending heterosexist academic bias or critique, is represented in the study primarily through my attempt at gaining in-depth insights into the “...life worlds” (Hitzler & Eberle, 2004:70; Schütz, 1932) of the noted participants, which provides the basis for specific practical and theoretical recommendations. Of interest here, was the focus on these life worlds gay men construct in both their personal and professional contexts based on their constant “...reflexiveness” (cf. Mead, 1962) concerning their supposed subordinate sexual orientation. Their narratives emphasised their verbal or written attempts at “writing the queer [or gay] self” (cf. Grace, 2006) within the academic context which constantly holds them accountable for their gender and sexually orientated performances. Through their in-depth and “...thick descriptions” (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:277), the necessity for ‘hands-on’ research within an action or applied methodological paradigm with participants as central collaborators in their own endeavour towards emancipation, is highlighted.

These in-depth constructivist and interpretive accounts of the participants were further facilitated through the qualitative research design.

4.3 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Associated with constructivism and interpretivism, my choice of a qualitative research design centred on its emphasis of understanding the participants and their interactions and performances within their natural settings, in both their personal and professional lives through **exploration** (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:278). The central assumptions and/or features associated with the qualitative research design clearly figured in my study. These included the aforementioned emphasis on **contextual and naturalistic inquiry** with the **researcher as intersubjective insider**, as well as the provision of **thick descriptions** as impetus for qualitative transferability, credibility, confirmability and **qualitative induction** (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:270-274; Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007:5-6; Creswell, 2009:175; Creswell & Miller, 2000:125; Sarantakos, 2013:45; Wisker, 2001:204).

Pertaining to the first, the importance of **natural contextual inquiry**, I conducted the research within either the more personal spaces of the participant, or their professional contexts as lecturers and/or researchers. In terms of particularly the latter, it was insightful to explore their comfort or discomfort with discussions which centred primarily on their sexual orientation.

Consider, for example, the manner in which one of the participants closed his office door and blinds to avoid that his colleagues would overhear the topic under discussion during the interview. As a researcher himself, he even jokingly remarked that I probably had to now make a note of his “...frantic” behaviour. But his behaviour was justified, as evident from the discussion of his narrative in Chapter Five. Others decided to travel to my campus in order for me to conduct the interview within the academic setting, but not necessarily *their* own department. One academic and one student, however, displayed a far more ‘blasé’ attitude without signs of anxiety, discomfort or fear. This, for me, was very indicative of the manner in which the physical academic context provided a clear example of the diverse experiences of gay men in academia. Although qualitative sociological inquiry does not necessarily occur within the natural environment which an ethnographer would require (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002:18), the sensitivity of the subject matter made it nearly impossible for me to either conduct all the interviews, as noted, in the academic settings of all of the participants, or to even gain access to other participants whose insights might have proven invaluable to the study. This, according to Seale (2000:108), requires the readers of the study to formulate their own generalisations of these findings to their own unique contexts, or to other milieus in which they deem it appropriate. This, in part, may be facilitated through the provision of “...thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) based on my intersubjective insider experience of the ‘lived’ experiences of my participants (cf. Seale, 2000:108).

Although traditionally associated with an anthropologist’s participant observation, **thick descriptions** are also evident in sociological inquiries, particularly through the use of research methods including in-depth interviews, focus groups or discourse and document analysis. This, according to Geertz (1973:9), is defined as researchers’ “...own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to”. Such a construction, according to Denscombe (2004:233), is “...necessary in order to convey the complexity of the situation” through an immersion (cf. Brown & Gortmaker, 2009:421; Roggow, 2003:47) into the field of study and generating detailed accounts which, in turn, provide the reader with an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of the participants. This is regarded as imperative, since it affords readers the opportunity to determine whether they regard these findings as “...justifiable and relevant for other circumstances” (Denscombe, 2004:233). Although any qualitative researcher may not claim that his or her findings will be applicable or relevant to other social

contexts, the “...**transferability**”³⁶ of the findings, are always dependent on the readers of the researcher which may wish to apply it to their own or any other given context (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:277; Chesebro & Borisoff, 2007:11). Since quantitative researchers may find it easier to generalise their findings based on their sometimes vast numbers of respondents, the practice of transferability seeks to provide the qualitative researcher the same luxury to claim the **trustworthiness** of their research.

In addition to transferability, trustworthiness, according to Babbie and Mouton (2004:276), attempts to assign neutrality to the findings of the qualitative inquiry in order to afford it **credibility**. The most basic underlying question asked in this respect can be formulated as follows: “...Is there compatibility between the constructed realities that exist in the minds of the respondents and those that are attributed to them?” (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:277). It replaces the quantitative researcher’s preoccupation with what Seale (2000:44) terms, “...truth value”. In achieving credibility, I needed to be cognisant of several factors. Firstly, I had to continue the in-depth interviews or send out self-administered questionnaires to gay men up to the point where the saturation of data occurred. I also sought to persistently retain my focus on the lived experiences and perceptions of the participants during my in-depth interviews to gather as much of a thick description as possible (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:277; Seale, 2000:44). This was done through an observation of what they communicated, whether verbally and non-verbally, during the respective interviews. To retain as much of the subjective constructions of their realities as gay men in academia, I observed the importance of referential adequacy through the audio recordings of the interviews, with the consent of each of the interviewees, of course (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:277). As opposed to a quantitative researcher’s dependence on random sampling methods, I used **purposive sampling** in order to further ensure both the credibility and, specifically, transferability of the findings. This assumes that I actively (and purposefully) sought out individuals I knew could provide insight into the research questions posed at the outset of the study based on their biographical (and arguably, socially constructed) self-identification as gay men in South African academia (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:277; Bless et al., 2011:106). The idea of purposive sampling as possibly flexible is also associated with my use of an **inductive thematic analysis** of the research findings.

³⁶ Emphasis added.

This was done, as alluded to earlier (cf. Aguinaldo, 2012:771), to refrain from a critical self-reflexive analysis of the research findings. **Confirmability**, as part of induction, ensured that the findings were based on the interviews and completed questionnaires, rather than my own personal reflexivity or biases (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:278). Seale (2000:45) argues that this involves the researcher's "...methodologically self-critical" documentation of processes associated with data collection, analysis and other relevant decisions made during the research process. This, of course, is provided for in the current chapter. Through **thematic** analysis, I **inductively** considered the construction of the model of interdependent negotiation of the (de)construction of the gay male identity within and between their personal and professional contexts, based on the findings accrued during the study. This, in part then, manifested central principles associated with grounded theory, defined as a theory which is mainly derived from the data collected systematically throughout the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2007:12). Sarantakos (2013:133) provides a further conceptualisation of grounded theory. He argues that the researcher is dependent on the very dynamic and novel insight which emerges throughout the study which, accordingly, may influence choices related to whom to include in the sample, which additional sampling methods to use, as well as when saturation has been reached (Sarantakos, 2013:133). This definition emphasises the manner in which my own qualitative and inductive thematic analysis was constantly in flux, based on the emerging subthemes which resulted from initial interviews with academics and students. I also continuously reconsidered alternative sampling methods to the purposive option including snowball and theoretical sampling (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:133).

In so doing, I was pre-empted to reassess the inclusion of an additional, specific research objective which would centre on the so-called **(de)professionalisation of the gay male identity within South African academia**. Reichertz (2004:161) best attributes this process to **qualitative induction**, when he states:

...One particular variant of the inductive processing of data consists of assembling certain qualitative features of the investigated sample in such a way that the combination of features resembles another (that is already available in the repertoire of the knowledge of the interacting community) in

essential points. In this case one can use the term that already exists for the combination to characterize one's '**own**'³⁷form.

The flexibility of the qualitative research design afforded me the opportunity for this reconsideration which may have been 'lost', had I opted to use a structured qualitative or quantitative design (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:132). It should be noted, however, that based on the preceding chapters which provided a comprehensive 'repertoire' of previous studies on the subject matter, I used several themes associated with the heterosexual/homosexual binary in order to compile the questions for the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, in an attempt to possibly add additional insights and themes to an already impressive theoretical and empirical legacy of sexuality studies. As such, I did not venture to prove or disprove a given quantifiable hypothesis based on the previous research, but rather to account for a rich, detailed and descriptive subjective interpretation in addition to previous and existent investigations into gender and sexuality (cf. Creswell, 2009:166; Reichertz, 2004:161; Sarantakos, 2013:34).

This objective was achieved through a commitment to a specific qualitative methodological blueprint. In keeping with the foregoing explication of choosing the noted epistemology, ontology and research design, this particular subsection on methodology, reaffirms my commitment to providing an in-depth exploration of the experiences of gay male academics and students in South Africa.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To complement the preceding discussion, the research methodology section will comprise three subsections, including a focus on the **qualitative sampling procedures, methods of data collection and data analysis**.

4.4.1 Sampling procedures

In order to conduct the interviews and/or disseminate the self-administered questionnaires, access had to be gained to the selected sample of academics and students. This was done through the **non-probability sampling procedures of purposive, snowball and theoretical sampling** (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:177).

³⁷Emphasis added.

“Gay men”, according to Rumens (2011:163), “...are one example of a social group often characterised as ‘hidden’ and ‘hard to reach’ because, in large part, sexuality is not always ‘visible’ or ‘obvious’ to the researcher”. In addition to this likely limitation, a fear of public identification as gay and the corresponding anxiousness associated with the possible homophobic consequences based on ‘coming out’ of the closet, also proved to inhibit sampling procedures (Sanlo, 1999:24). Sanlo (1999:24) cites some gay men’s disregard of the significance associated with studies on homosexuality for the overall well-being for the gay community, as an additional contributing factor to gay men’s silence. All of these influenced my attempts at motivating men to take part. In order to qualify for inclusion in the study, both groupings had to be biologically male, self-identified as gay and either employed at any South African university or a registered student at a tertiary institution. The area of academic expertise, interest or specialisation as well as the age, socio-economic class, ethnic origins, gender-identification and/or race were not regarded as exhaustive criteria in the selection process. This approach sought to provide as much of an intersectional representation of the diverse, plural and varied configurations within what many may describe as the gay subculture.

But since the men had to be gay identified academics or students in order to qualify for participation, the use of **purposive sampling** seemed most appropriate as initial entry into the ‘hidden’ and ‘hard to reach’ world (cf. Rumens, 2011). Gay male academics known to me were contacted and requested to participate. Of the initial five contacted, only one participated. In terms of the students, two purposive sampling-methods were used. The first comprised a concisely written background and objective to the study, which was emailed to a member of the Kaleidoscope Youth Network. This member agreed to place the notice of the research, in which I encouraged interested parties to contact me, on their Facebook and official websites, as well as forward it to their members courtesy of their comprehensive mailing list. The second was also associated with this network, when its convener invited me to present a lecture at one of their annual Kaleidoscope meetings in Potchefstroom, during 2012. Here, seven (7) participants obliged to complete the questionnaire. Partnerships, collegiality and networks with such organisations which seek to promote the overall well-being of the LGBTQ-community, according to Elze (2009:44), are the most common strategies in recruiting participants for studies. Yet, as noted, this sampling method, also presented limitations.

One such limitation forced me to temporarily engage in a critical self-reflective exercise of sorts. Since several of the gay male academic population would be known to me, readers may be left

to assume that I would find it easier to contact, communicate and even persuade them to participate in my study. They, themselves, are academics. And, as one colleague of mine at another university noted during the course of my study, "...research karma is a *bitch*", further assumed their immediate or eventual agreement to do so, since they understood the difficulty in undertaking research. I was correct to assume this, was I not? As it turns out – it was not the case. Two of these gay academics were known to me based on their exemplary contributions in their particular field of study. A female colleague of them noted that she would request them to contact me if they were willing to partake in the study. A few weeks later she informed me however that both had declined to participate. Their decision, according to her, was based on their impending academic promotion in their department, and their corresponding concern and fear that an association with me would negatively affect their career achievements. What should also be considered in this regard is the fact that members of their department (both were, and are still, in the same department) are aware of their sexual orientation and that they were guaranteed confidentiality and privacy. This corresponded with accounts of D'Emilio (1992:132), Evans (2002:533), Francis and Msibi (2011:169) and Sanlo (1999:82) of academics in both the United States and South Africa, respectively, who expressed the same fear. Another potential participant personally acknowledged that he would be more than willing to have me conduct an interview with him. However, when contacted via email to set up a meeting, he failed to reply twice. His reason, as well as that of an initial four men who indicated their willingness to participate at the beginning of the study in 2010, remains unknown to me.

To curtail the potential limits these responses presented, I depended on the good will of those academics and students who agreed to participate, in steering me towards others who fit the criteria for my study. This decision resulted in the use of **snowball sampling**. This method, according to Holt and Walker (2009:249), corresponds with Rumens' (2011) earlier description of gay men, in so far as its use assumes the difficulty associated with finding specific individuals or groups of people for research (cf. Gomm, 2008:152). A quantitative random sampling procedure would be inadequate, since there is no way in knowing who the next participant will or could be if you were to have exhausted your options (Holt & Walker, 2009:249). This proved very beneficial in gaining access to both academics and students. Relating to the latter, one student in particular indicated that he would encourage several of his peers at various universities to contact me of whom, three did. The same was true for academics, whether directly involved in the study or, as in the case of another female colleague, providing indirect

support through referrals to potential contacts known to her (cf. O'Leary, 2010:170) who met the necessary criteria (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:179).

Associated with the use of snowball sampling as well as the earlier references to inductive thematic analysis as part of the study's flexible qualitative design, was the use of **theoretical sampling**. Although not as central to the study as the two preceding sampling methods, theoretical sampling involved the gathering and immediate analysis of data throughout the study in order to inform the content of both the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, the choice of the next participants and the recontextualisation of existing theoretical studies in such a manner as to combine it with my data in order to "...characterize one's 'own'form" (cf. Reichertz, 2004:161) as part of the emerging social theory (cf. Charmaz, 2006:96; Sarantakos, 2013:178-179). Merkens (2004:169) reaffirms this argument when he attributes the use of theoretical sampling to exploratory studies, since "...[these] studies are a special case, because what is characteristic of them is that the case is not yet known but is only constructed in the course of the investigation". Again consider my eventual inclusion of the **(de)professionalisation**-theme as emergent theoretical contribution to the debate on the polarisation assumed by the heterosexual/homosexual binary distinction. This theme, as noted earlier, will be explicated in greater detail in Chapter Six as part of my concluding remarks and recommendations.

The study incorporated a between-method triangular approach (cf. Creswell, 2009:199; Flick, 2004:180) in order to further reinforce its credibility and confirmability, through an amalgam of **in-depth interviews** and **self-administered questionnaires** through which I gained insights into the noted themes.

4.4.2 Data collection

This subsection will provide an overview of the two primary methods used during the data collection process. These include **in-depth interviews** and **self-administered questionnaires**, both of which mirror the principles associated with interpretivism, constructivism and the qualitative research design.

(a) ***In-depth interviews***

Interviews, as noted by Sarantakos (2013:277), may be regarded as "...questionnaires that are presented verbally; they are 'talking questionnaires'". I conducted twenty two (22) semi-structured interviews. By using this method, I attempted to embed myself in the naturalistic realities of the participants. In so doing, I depended on their willingness to relate personal anecdotes during an "...open discussion" (Sarantakos, 2013:280) of sorts. Such "...conversations" (cf. Foley & Valenzuela, 2008:295) or 'discussions' provides one with the opportunity to establish a rapport with the participants, since you need to continuously express your commitment, empathy and interest with relation to the topic under discussion (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:292). Interviews, in some respects then, gave me the chance to share personal information on my own experiences as self-identified gay male, in order to establish and retain their confidence and trust in myself and the research (cf. Foley & Valenzuela, 2008:295; Sarantakos, 2013:288).

These interviews were conducted with the self-identified gay male participants, of whom fifteen (15) were with academics and seven (7) with students. They took place over a period of six months in 2012 between July and December, and were arranged several days or weeks in advance, depending on the sampling method used. It took place in a setting of their personal choice. For the academics, three chose my office, two a coffee shop and the remaining ten chose their respective offices. Three students came to my office whilst the other four requested to meet at a coffee shop. In keeping with the metatheoretical and study design principles, the importance of consciously listening to accounts of the participants was of the utmost importance, since these would provide me with the much needed "...thick descriptions" (cf. Geertz, 1973) alluded to earlier (cf. Charmaz, 2006:25; Sarantakos, 2013:286). In order to retain as much of the rich data as possible, each of the participants were informed that I would make an audio recording of the interview, to be transcribed later. This would only be done, if they were to give their consent, which all did. Regardless, they were also given the opportunity to request that the recorder be turned off anytime during the interview, if they felt that confidentiality or their privacy was threatened (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:286). Two of the academics did so during certain parts of the interviews.

At the start of each of the interviews, I provided the participants with a concise, yet clear, overview of the objective of the study, the duration of the interview as well as ethical considerations I would observe throughout the process. The duration of the interviews varied

from one to three hours depending on the depth of the communicated feedback provided by the respective participants. The academics, more so than the students, were particularly self-reflexive during the research. Only three students provided thicker descriptions than their peers, regardless of my attempts at respectfully probing in order to encourage them to elaborate on their lived experiences as thoroughly as possible (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:646). This worked in certain respects, where I elicited further responses to my open-ended questions or to correct possible ambiguity to questions posed (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:254).

The interview schedule comprised four subsections. Subsection A centred on the biographical background of the participant, subsection B on the academic background of the gay male, whereas C and D included the opinion-related questions. Both these sections were designed according to the overarching unbiased **themes** of the study (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:237), these being opinions on their **private gay identity** in subsection C, and their **professional gay male persona in academia** in D. This was done, as was the case in Sanlo's (1999:32) research on gay and lesbian teachers in the state of Florida in the United States, to provide a so-called "...sequential guide to sharing experiences and telling a story", which proved invaluable for the participants to explore the probable differences between their private and public gay male personas. Both were further subdivided into additional themes. Questions on the academic and students' personal lives focused on whether they identified themselves as gay, displayed the need to form part of a public and visible gay group or community, and as to whether they conformed to stereotypes associated with male homosexuality. Questions on their identity construction included a reflection on the different sequential phases or stages discussed in Chapter Two, their different 'selves', and their individual accounts of what 'the closet' meant to them. Subsection D comprised of questions on their experiences within their universities. Here themes included discrimination, the university as safe environment, the need to remain closeted and censor oneself because of one's homosexuality as well as their collegial or peer-relationships with men and women. The concluding questions encompassed an emphasis on the need for gay or lesbian lecturers, courses and/or safe spaces and specific steps their current university management could take in order to address issues which relate to homosexuality on their campuses. Refer to Addendum B and Addendum C for the **interview schedules** used for the academics and students, respectively. Addendum D provides an example of a **transcribed interview** with a gay male academic.

For the purpose of my exploration of the (de)construction of heterosexual/homosexual binary, I opted to use individual semi-structured open-ended interviews as part of the interview schedule, which afforded me with both structure in addition to flexibility based on the communicated information (Sarantakos, 2013:280). This method, according to Gomm (2008:231), is chosen to provide an accurate picture of the interviewee's subjective interpretation and reflection of his personal experiences (cf. Brown & Gortmaker, 2009:421; Charmaz, 2006:25; Creswell, 1998:99; Grace & Benson, 2000:94; Hammers, 2009:761; Williams, 1993:120; Willis, 2010:230; Wisker, 2001:168). The open-ended questions were based on my thorough research on previous empirical and theoretical studies on homosexuality in general, and homosexuality within academia in particular, in an attempt to provide as detailed and informed an interview schedule as possible (cf. Creswell, 1998:99; Dilley, 2000:131). These questions, structured according to the themes noted in subsection 4.3, were constructed in such a way, as to ensure that the responses would elicit subjectively diverse, plural and varied perceptions and "...multiple voices" (cf. Dilley, 2000:134).

In order to fully consolidate the interviewer-interviewee relationship during the research, I 'befriended' each participant, as primary party, professionally. This is done mainly to ensure a relationship of reciprocal trust which should hopefully, result in the interviewee feeling comfortable in disclosing personal and intimate information to the researcher "...expansively" (cf. Rumens, 2011:166). This was indeed the case in several of the interviews I conducted (cf. Gomm, 2008:232). Williams (1993:120), as self-identified gay researcher, ascribes the importance of honesty with oneself (as researcher) and with the participants, as necessary factor to establish and retain effectiveness and credibility during the interview. By being intersubjective, I was able, like Williams (1993:120), to learn more about both those whom I was researching, as well as myself (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:94). This explains his argument in favour of constructing questions which may also be personally beneficial to the researcher, if the social inquiry justifies it. Such researchers, according to him, have more personal motivation to engage in fieldwork and subsequently, "...do better research" (Williams, 1993:120).

The choice of this method further reinforces and correlates with the foregoing metatheoretical bases of interpretivism and social constructivism, embedded in the qualitative research design. This is attributed to its reflexive quality, openness, flexibility and the primacy afforded to the focus on the gay male's subjective life experiences (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:280). The design entailed more than merely engaging in a conversation of sorts, but rather also listening to what

the participants had to say. This, according to Dilley (2000:134), is the “...difficult [yet] essential skill” for qualitative researchers, which encompasses “...eye contact, understanding body language, and active mental consideration of both content (words) and context (emotions) of what is being said, and not being said”.

In addition to the in-depth interviews, self-administered questionnaires were also used as method of data collection over a period of one year, between January and December 2012.

(b) ***Self-administered questionnaires***³⁸

Although this method provides the participant with the opportunity to safeguard his confidentiality and privacy, but in particular his anonymity if he so chooses, which none of the participants did, it also presented me with an additional avenue to find gay men for the study. As is evident in Addendum C, the questionnaire is identical to the interview schedule in terms of its thematic structure and question content. Its use proved to be advantageous in so far as it brought about less financial strain in terms of travelling and it presented the option for an easy dissemination either via postal mail or email. In addition, the academics and students could also study and complete the questionnaire on their own time and return it at their earliest convenience (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004; Bryman & Bell, 2003:142).

Two (2) self-administered questionnaires were completed by gay male academics, whereas seventeen (17) students decided on this option as primary method for their participation. Seven (7) of the latter completed their questionnaires as part of a workshop hosted by Kaleidoscope Youth Network in 2012, to which I was invited to present a lecture. The remaining ten (10) contacted me via email based on a notice placed on the Facebook page and website of Kaleidoscope. This notice, compiled by myself and forwarded to representatives of the youth network, sought to gain as much interest from the gay South African student community. Those who contacted me, requested that the questionnaire be sent to their personal email addresses, after which they would complete it and send it back. In only three of the cases, did this not happen. Although emails were sent to these three participants in order to remind them to do so, no reply was received (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004). Only the noted two academics opted to complete the self-administered questionnaire, with one returning it via postal mail and the other email.

³⁸ Refer to Addendum B and Addendum C for examples of the self-administered questionnaires used for gay male academics and students respectively.

Participants were provided with the same open-ended questions posed in the interview schedule. Although I acknowledge that this presented the obvious limitation of ambiguous interpretation of questions on the part of the academics and students, I found that their academic qualifications and personal identification with the subject matter, aided them in completing it to the best of their ability (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:236). In this regard, it is worth noting that the questionnaires completed by two undergraduate and one postgraduate student were even more detailed than the data gathered during several of the in-depth interviews conducted with some of their undergraduate peers. This is interesting, since one of the most cited criticisms directed towards self-administered questionnaires, centres on its potential lack of in-depth and detailed empirical data (cf. Denscombe, 2004:27). Addendum E provides one of these self-administered questionnaires as primary example of my argument. Based on the sensitivity associated with the subject matter, the autonomous completion of the self-administered questionnaire proved to be a sufficient supplement to the more personal face-to-face interviews for those participants who sought to not meet with the researcher. Corliss et al. (2009:149) emphasise this thought when they argue that evidence exists in the social sciences that the disclosure of and reflection on the sexual orientation of minorities, are becoming all the more acceptable and prevalent in this research context.

Against this background then, the identification and coding of additional key concepts, categories and/or themes associated with homosexuality in general, and gay male identity in academia, in particular, are of the utmost importance. In order to do this, I ascribed to qualitative **data analysis** methods to underline the prevalence of existing modern and postmodern theoretical and empirical themes, alongside potentially novel ones within the South African academic context.

4.4.3 Data analysis

Due to the fact that I also used theoretical sampling, the classification and coding of the varied themes, espoused by the participants, happened simultaneously with the data collection process (cf. Creswell, 2009:199). Thus, in addition to transcribing the interviews after each meeting and integrating the data with that of the self-administered questionnaires, I not only coded both for particular **themes** but also identified novel themes that emerged from the data. One of the academic participants explicitly commented on the need to explore the conscious

censorship a gay male academic may infringe upon himself within his class context. The themes, included as part of the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, were based on previous theoretical studies, as evidenced in Chapters One, Two and Three (cf. Creswell, 2009:199; Gomm, 2008:244). They comprise **defining the gay identity**, a **choice between individualisation or collectiveness** (in terms of the gay group), the **private persona of the gay male** and the **gay male stereotype** (and its sources). In addition, the **symbolism of 'the closet'**, **themes associated with the identity construction of the gay male** (including the five themes cited in Chapter Two) as well as the **gay male in the academic context**, were used as central themes. The latter comprises a focus on the subthemes of **discrimination**, **safety**, the **closet**, **collegiality (or peer-relationships) as gendered** and the **assimilation of homosexual themes into mainstream curricula** (including the homosexual lecturers, courses and safe spaces).

I further delineated the noted themes as part of the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaires during thematic analysis. Coding, through such an analysis, according to Gomm (2008:250), provides the researcher with the ability to effectively explore "...how people are in general", by delving deeper into the underlying meanings which may inform and shape their "...interpretive frameworks', 'schemes of relevance'...'representational structures' or 'discourses'" (cf. Creswell, 2009:198-199). In short, to discover and organise the "...structure of people's minds" (Gomm, 2008:250; Sarantakos, 2013:373). **Open coding** provides the context in which I was initially able to work through the multitude of messages embedded in the transcribed interviews and completed questionnaires, in order to identify the so-called "...first-order concepts" or subthemes and their potential meanings, which characterised the narratives of the participants (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:373). These concepts, which may be combined with the predetermined codes or themes used during the interviews (cf. Creswell, 2009:187), provided the basis for the **(de)professionalisation model of gay male academic identity** (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:373). The newly conceptualised categories were continuously applied to the existing ones in order to determine whether they could (or should) be analysed even further (cf. Sarantakos, 2013:373). In addition to this coding procedure, I also focused on the potential for regularities in the narratives of the participants through so-called **selective coding**. This entails the selection of a particular

...core category [the (de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity], systematically relating it to other categories [rationalisation and self-

reflexivity], validating those relationships [thus how the latter two relate to the model], and filling in categories that need further refinement and development [identifying additional subthemes which potentially inform the construction or deconstruction of the binary] (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:500; Sarantakos, 2013:374).

Through selective coding, I selected the extensively critiqued centrality of heterosexism in contemporary society as my “...main storyline”, into which I added the new “...selected core category” or theme (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:501) of the heterosexual/homosexual binary in South African academia through open-coding procedures, as “...the story” (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:501). In so doing, I further demarcated the core category by identifying and illustrating the nature of other related categories or themes, including the rationalisation of sexual orientation, the role of self-reflexivity and the potential professionalisation or deprofessionalisation of the gay male identity in South African academia (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:501; Sarantakos, 2013:373-374). Take, for example, several phrases used by participants as indication of their subjective experience of their private or professional gay male identity. In terms of the overarching theoretical and empirical categories or themes of rationalisation and reflexivity, I sought to not only relate their in-depth narratives of how they construct or deconstruct their identity daily, do or use their sexual orientation or (un)consciously reflect on disclosing or hiding their homosexuality, but rather to underline and explicate the specific subthemes which inform their decisions to do so (or not). An example of this relates to how words and phrases represent the manner in which the men rationalise their sexuality through either assimilation or transgression of heterosexism. Consider, as examples, my use of Gomm’s (2008:245) model of coding a transcript through thematic analysis. The quotes included are responses espoused during in-depth interviews with participants. Table 1 centres on answers to the question as to whether (yes or no) and why, the participants **identify as gay**, whilst Table 2 provides examples of words and phrases used to reflect on the potential phases, stages or themes associated with **identity construction**.

Table 1: Coding a transcript based on in-depth interviews on gay male identity

Participant	Direct quote	Subtheme / Subcategory
James	"...I think it's the <i>one identity label which makes the most sense</i> for my sexual preferences, you know?...But it is very much about <i>wanting to be a man who wants to be with a man</i> ".	Assimilation into an ethnic model of homosexual identity
Ridge	"...Certainly I have identified myself as a gay man since I was 20 years old. But I'm increasingly <i>moving out of the 'box'</i> , I find sexuality identity categories <i>problematic</i> ³⁹ , when it comes to capturing the complexities of sexuality and desire, so, yes and no".	Queer transgression of an ethnic model of homosexual identity

Table 2: Coding a transcript based on in-depth interviews on gay male identity construction

Participant	Direct quote	Subtheme
Colin	Reference to a refusal to be "...boxed in" in terms of meanings associated with gay male sexuality.	Identity construction as intersectional process
Jack	"...climbing a ladder".	Identity construction as sequential

The quotes included in the preceding Tables serve as only two illustrations as to how I went about identifying particular subthemes within each of the core theoretical categories. My ability to do so is based on my extensive readings on queer theoretical critique of gay male homogenisation (including De Lauretis, 1991; Jagose, 1996; Sedgwick, 2008; Stein & Plummer, 1996), through Epstein's (1998) work on the "ethnic model", and my eventual practical application to the narratives of the participants. The second example on the rationalisation of the gay male identity included the focus on the manner in which the participants described their **identity construction** as either being **sequential** (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Connell, 1992; Dank, 1979; Downs, 2006; Miller, 1998a; Worthington et al. 2002) or **intersectional** (cf. Savin-Williams, 2005; Smuts, 2011; Troiden, 1998). These two broader typologies serve as the first-order concepts, which I used to identify related empirical indicators of gay male identity construction (cf. Creswell, 2009:187; Denscombe, 2004:119), included in the **direct quote**-portion of Table 2.

The subsection to follow provides a clear demarcation of the biographical variables of each of the gay men who participated in the study.

³⁹ Emphasis added.

4.5 BIOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

As is evident in Tables 3 through 6, the biographical categories used to describe the gay male academics and students included their *fictitious names*, *relationship status*, *academic faculty* as well as the *number of years in their academic career*. The latter differed in the descriptive of the students, where their *year of study* was included instead (see Tables 5 and 6). Being fully aware of the potential critique pertaining to the non-inclusion of the geographical location and name of the universities, my justification for this exclusion, is forthcoming. Although I acknowledge the value which such an inclusion would have provided in terms of establishing a comparison between the various South African tertiary institutions, safeguarding the identities, confidentiality, anonymity and yes, physical safety of the participants, was regarded as more imperative. Consider Sanlo's (1999:82) similar predicament in his study of American schools. He too, refused to include their actual names, gender categories and, even more interesting, the names of their precise schools, grades and districts. He did so, because according to him, the "...people who shared their lives in this work did so at **great risk** and with **tremendous trust** in both the **process** and in **me as researcher**"⁴⁰ (Sanlo, 1999:82). Although they were "...willing and eager to tell their stories", they "...truly and vehemently believed they would lose their jobs as teachers if their identities were discovered" (Sanlo, 1999:82).

Regardless of the fact that his study was undertaken within primary and secondary schools, the extensive theoretical account of the previous and current sociosexual context and perceptual inclination towards homosexuality in South Africa (cf. Bosch, 2007; Cameron & Gevisser, 1995; Cock, 2003; Croucher, 2002; Gevisser, 1995; Muholi, 2004; News24, 2011; 2012a; 2012b; Nkabinde & Morgan, 2006; Ochse, 2011; Potgieter, 2005; Rankhotha, 2005; Reddy, 2001; 2002; 2006; 2009; 2010; Retief, 1995; Richardson & Monro, 2012; Smuts, 2011; Women24, 2011), more than warrants my adherence to his approach. Also to be considered in this regard, is the fact that although there are several universities in the Gauteng Province (including the Universities of Johannesburg, Pretoria and South Africa and Tshwane University of Technology) as well as the Eastern Cape (Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Rhodes University and the University of Fort Hare), each with their respective campuses, the North-West Province as well as Western Cape, amongst others, do not have as many (North-West University, University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town respectively). Concerning the latter two provinces, I realised that it might be easier to identify the particular academic, if his age,

⁴⁰Emphasis added.

relationship status and area of specialisation, were to be linked to a province and university. The exclusion of these two biographical variables was an academic sacrifice I was willing to make. In addition, it is worth noting then that Tables 3 and 4 only provide information on the fictitious names, relationship status, academic faculty and years in occupation, to further safeguard the identities of the participants.

Table 3: Biographical information on gay male academics (in-depth interviews)

Name	Relationship status	Academic Faculty	Years in occupation
Anderson	Married	Social sciences	19
Christopher	In relationship	Social sciences	18
Colin	In relationship	Education	12
Don	In relationship	Natural sciences	11
Greg	Married	Social sciences	14
Hugh	Single	Arts	13
Ian	In relationship	Social sciences	20
James	In relationship	Education	20
Matthew	Single	Social sciences	1
Phillip	In relationship	Arts	10
Rick	In relationship	Social sciences	22
Ridge	Single	Social sciences	7
Robin	Single	Arts	3
Stanley	Married	Social sciences	25
Warren	Single	Arts	2

Table 4: Biographical information on gay male academics (self-administered questionnaires)

Name	Relationship status	Academic Faculty	Years in occupation
Alec	Married	Social sciences	40
Steve	Dating	Social sciences	20

Pertaining to Tables 3 and 4 on the **gay male academics** who engaged in **in-depth interviews** and completed **self-administered questionnaires**, the following biographical information was of importance. The average age of the participants was forty-three years (43). With regards to their *nationality*, all but one (who was born in Europe), were South African. All of the participants were white, with only one who identified as coloured in terms of the *racial*-category. Their *relationship status* also varied and was characterised by four configurations – either being single, in a relationship, married or dating. Four (4) were married, seven (7) indicated that they were in relationships, five (5) said that they were single whereas one (1) noted that he was currently dating. Their *academic qualifications* were all on a postgraduate level, as were to be

expected from lecturers or researchers in higher education. One (1) had obtained his honours degree, seven (7) their master's and the remaining nine (9) their doctorates. The subject departments of the academics were part of four (4) *academic faculties*. These included one participant in the natural sciences faculty, the faculty of education with two (2) participants, arts with four (4) and social sciences with ten (10) members. Their *areas of interest or expertise* also varied greatly, regardless of their seemingly homogeneous grouping within and across the four faculties. The men's *number of years in their occupations* ranged from forty (40) to one (1) year. The average number of years in the academic profession was fifteen (15) years.

Table 5: Biographical information on gay male students (in-depth interviews)

Name	Relationship status	Academic Faculty	Year of study
Dale	In relationship	Engineering	Fourth
Eric	Single	Nursing	Second
Jason	In relationship	Natural sciences	Fourth
Jay	In relationship	Economics	Third
Morgan	Single	Education	Second
Paul	In relationship	Social sciences	Third
Quincy	Single	Natural sciences	Third

Table 6: Biographical information on gay male students (self-administered questionnaires)

Name	Relationship status	Academic Faculty	Year of study
Adam	In relationship	Arts	Second
Dallas	In relationship	Social sciences	Third
Dalton	Single	Arts	Second
Henry	In relationship	Social sciences	Post-graduate
Idris	In relationship	Natural sciences	Third
Jack	In relationship	Economics	Third
Jared	Single	Social sciences	Doctorate
Kevin	In relationship	Engineering	Second
Martin	In relationship	Arts	Second
Neville	In relationship	Arts	Third
Pat	Single	Law	Second
Raymond	Single	Natural sciences	Third
Roger	Single	Engineering	Third
Russell	Single	Social sciences	Master's
Sam	In relationship	Economics	Third
Trevor	Single	Engineering	First
Victor	In relationship	Arts	Honours

The biographical background for the **students** is indicated in Tables 5 and 6. The *age-range* of the students was more homogeneous than that of the academics in the study. The average age

in this group was twenty-three (23). Regarding *racial* categories, fourteen (14) of the participants defined themselves as white, nine (9) as black and one (1) coloured. Only one (1) respondent was a foreign national (hailing from Zimbabwe), while the remaining twenty-three (23) were South African. Their *relationship status* took on two forms, these being either 'in a relationship' (fourteen) or 'single' (ten). The participants were registered students from a number of different faculties. These included five (5) students in social sciences, four (4) in arts, economics and engineering, three (3) in natural sciences and one (1) in respectively education, law and nursing. Corresponding with their *faculty*-affiliation, their *areas of study* were just as diverse. These included architecture, biochemical studies, business studies, business informatics, chemical engineering, communication and journalism, dietetics, economics, engineering, law, mathematics, nursing, psychology, risk management, sociology and spatial planning. The final biographical category focused on the student's *year of study*. Ten (10) students were in their third year of study, seven (7) in their second year and two (2) in their fourth year. The remaining participants were either in their first year of university study or postgraduate students (Honours, Master's and Doctoral). One (1) only indicated that he was currently enrolled for his postgraduate studies, without giving more specific detail.

Associated with the foregoing demarcation of the biographical variables of the academics and students as well as subsections on sampling, data collection and data analysis, are the ethical considerations.

4.6 ETHICAL PROCEDURES

Sarantakos (2013:15) asserts that ethical standards should always play an "...integral" role in qualitative research since it arises out of any form of interaction with other people, where they may be expected to "...reveal personal information about themselves" (Babbie & Mouton, 2004:520; Gomm, 2008:365; Holt & Walker, 2009). As such, I was expected to adhere to a strict ethical code of conduct prescribed by North-West University's ethical practices protocol pertaining to the treatment of participants during the research process. The inherent prescriptions included, amongst others, a commitment to not inflict physical or emotional harm on the gay participants, the principle of voluntary consent, and to acknowledge the importance associated with the protection of the identity of the gay men in both the interviews and self-administered questionnaires. The latter was attained through a strict commitment to the

principles of confidentiality, privacy and anonymity (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:523; Gomm, 2008:377; Holt & Walker, 2009:134; O'Leary, 2010:41).

Much of this was integral to the sensitive nature of the subject matter to be researched, being homosexuality. Martin and Meezan (2009:19) reiterate the fact that the LGBTQ-population may still be regarded as marginalised in the United States, and per implication (and perhaps more so) in South Africa, as evident in its discussed anti-gay legislation and challenges faced by sexual minorities. If the gay men were to feel that their rights were not being protected, Corliss et al. (2009:149) argue that they may have been prone to disclose false or misleading responses in an attempt to foreclose on information which would be to their detriment. As such, these individuals may feel at risk of homophobic exploitation and discrimination in several contexts, whether these are family or work orientated (cf. Corliss et al., 2009:149). Taking this into consideration, I needed to ensure that no **harm** would come to those who opted to participate in the study. Although physical harm may be easier to identify, emotional and psychological harm are far more difficult to detect (O'Leary, 2010:41; Rumens, 2011:168). These two could have manifested in the form of "...resentment, anxiety, embarrassment, or reliving unpleasant memories" (O'Leary, 2010:41; cf. Sarantakos, 2013:18), but no such issues arose during the research process. As such, the representatives of Kaleidoscope Youth Network confirmed that they would be of assistance in the event of emotional or psychological distress, based on their network of gay-friendly doctors, psychiatrists and psychologists. If such an event were to have arisen, I would have contacted members of Kaleidoscope.

With regard to the principle of **voluntary participation**, participants were given the opportunity to autonomously decide as to whether they were willing to be interviewed or complete the questionnaire (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:521). To ensure the realisation of this ideal, the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, were accompanied by a written **Informed Consent Statement** (cf. Elze, 2009:53; O'Leary, 2010:41). I was able to provide the gay men with the necessary informed consent through my in-depth explanation of the nature of the study, in order for them to fully understand the central concepts, procedures and objectives of the study (cf. O'Leary, 2010:41) and correspondingly protect their rights (cf. Elze, 2009:53). In so doing, I sought to establish a relationship in which an "...ethic of trust" (Rumens, 2011:169) would be created between the interviewee and me, which in turn, facilitated an atmosphere of comfort and trust. This included disclosing my own homosexuality if the situation warranted it and listening attentively and empathetically to the narratives. Additionally, the informed consent

document, included in Addendum A, was attached as cover page to both the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire. It provided an overview of the rationale of the study, the participants' voluntary participation in the study, the procedures to be followed as well as the importance of adhering to and upholding ethical standards during the study. The document was signed by myself, my supervisor and the participants, which provided me with the necessary permission to publish research findings (cf. Neuman, 2003:124; O'Leary, 2010:41). By adhering to these principles, I acknowledged that each of the men were competent to make an autonomous decision to take part in the study with the due understanding that they would not be coerced or induced (cf. O'Leary, 2010:41).

In addition to the use of the informed consent, I also observed the **confidentiality**, **privacy** and **anonymity** of the gay men (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:523; Neuman, 2003:124; O'Leary, 2010:41). Through **confidentiality**, I sought to protect the identity of the participants by assigning pseudonyms to each of the participants as replacements for their respective names (cf. Ackerly & True, 2010:266; Neuman, 2003:126). In addition, as noted in subsection 4.5 on the biographical description of the men, I also refused to include the names of the geographical location (province, city, and suburb) of the individuals or link their specific areas of specialisation or the names of their universities to each of the respective participants. This decision is supported in O'Leary's (2010:42) argument that "...pseudonyms may not be enough to hide identity. If others can figure out who you are speaking about, or who is doing the speaking, you need to further mask the identity" (also see Brown & Gortmaker, 2009:420-421). In adhering to the principle of **privacy**, I maintained that I would not probe the academics and students on personal issues which they may have been uncomfortable to talk about, of which there were a few examples during the interviews. Through **anonymity**, particularly in terms of the completion of the self-administered questionnaires, potential participants were granted the opportunity to anonymously request the questionnaire (through, amongst others, Gmail or yahoo-email accounts), and after completion, return it in a similar fashion (cf. Babbie & Mouton, 2004:523; Neuman, 2003:126; O'Leary, 2010:42; Sarantakos, 2013:20). Three students contacted me in this regard, yet failed to return a completed questionnaire and, as such, none of the eventual participants required this ethical provision.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Through an explorative study, as noted by Babbie and Mouton (2004:80), a researcher attempts to gain better insight or comprehension on a social phenomenon being investigated. In adopting this principle, my study was embedded within social constructivism and interpretivism as ontological and epistemological bases, respectively. The progressive contributions of Blumer (1969) and Schütz (1932), complemented these bases with their focus on symbolic interactionism and phenomenology, respectively. The underlying principles of all of these, including the attainment of intersubjective, rich, detailed and one-on-one accounts, necessitated a reflection on the manner in which my own homosexuality could in fact negatively influence the study and findings.

In citing several others who have previously contemplated this probable limitation (Aguinaldo, 2012; Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009; Chang, 2005; Fine, 2011; Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Heron & Reason, 2008; Honeychurch, 1996; Jones & Calafell, 2012; Kleinsasser, 2000; Maxey, 1999; Roggow, 2003; Slagle, 2007; Williams, 1993), I was able to explain how my previous or current identification with the subject matter and participants could be facilitated through an inductive thematic analysis. This ensures an emphasis on the thick descriptions of the perceptions and experiences of the gay male participants during the interviews and through their completion of the self-administered questionnaire, rather than a one-sided reflexive account of my personal biases and beliefs. In so doing, I retained my commitment to the provision of a social constructivist, rather than a critically action research-based research design.

The methodological considerations centred on a critical discussion of the use of in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires, based on the procurement of participants through purposive, snowball and theoretical sampling. In conclusion, the importance of ethics was also considered. I explained how, through the use of voluntary consent and my commitment to providing the participants with the necessary anonymity, confidentiality and/or privacy, I established a reciprocally safe, secure and constructive research environment.

Chapter Five now provides a detailed, in-depth and 'thick' account of the data procured during the research. The chapter's structure is based on the themes used in the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire.

CHAPTER FIVE

(DE)CONSTRUCTING THE IDENTITY OF THE GAY MALE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT IN SOUTH AFRICAN TERTIARY EDUCATION: FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As introductory remark to this chapter, I wish to recall Plummer's (2003:519) critical consideration of the potential amalgam between modern and postmodern research paradigms. He argues that regardless of the fact that proponents of micro sociological inquiry acknowledge the utility of postmodern work of queer theorists, it "...does not wish to lose its grip on the 'obdurate empirical world'...[whilst it still acknowledges] that human sexualities [have] become destabilized, decentered and de-essentialized". Against this background, and following on Chapter Four's in-depth demarcation of the methodological and research bases considerations associated with the study, the objective of this chapter is to initialise a potential link between the empirical narratives of the participants with later theoretical analyses in Chapter Six.

The first section centres on the provision of a comprehensive discussion of the narratives of the seventeen (17) gay male academics regarding their experiences in their respective academic contexts. Secondly, and associated with the first section, is a detailed argument on the insights provided by the twenty four (24) gay male students with regard to their experiences on university campuses. Although analytical insights characterise much of the chapter that follows, it should be noted at the outset, that a critical explication and integration of the central theoretical themes with the empirical findings, typify Chapters Six and Seven.

The various headings and subheadings used serve as reflection of the thematic sections included in the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, respectively. Subsection 5.2 focuses on the views of the **academics**, whereas subsection 5.3 concludes with a detailed account of the experiences of **gay male students**.

5.2 THE GAY MALE ACADEMIC AS POTENTIALLY RATIONALISED AND REFLEXIVE AGENT

The themes used to guide the discussion centre on the general identity of the gay male academics within their personal and social setting, followed by their reflexive considerations on

the manner in which their private sphere may in fact merge with their public or professional self in the context of higher education in South Africa.

5.2.1 Defining the gay identity

Relating to the first of the subthemes covered in the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, participants were requested to note whether or not they thought of themselves as gay. The justifications for their chosen answers provided both conceptualisations of the gay male identity, as well as the non-rational (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010) explanation of their sexual orientation. Fourteen of the participants affirmed their sexual orientation as gay, three refrained from this label, whilst three sought out a middle ground of sorts in answering *yes* and *no*.

In terms of the first **affirming definitional perspectives**, eight of the participants, Alec, Anderson, Don, Greg, Hugh, Ian, James and Steve cited their sexual attraction to other men as clear indicator of their homosexuality. Here Ian equated his physical attraction to other men with “...normality” (“...*normaliteit*”), whereas Alec conflated his sexual desires with an emotional and mental attraction to another man. On the other hand, Don regarded the question as “...weird”, because one merely has to equate same-sex attraction to same-sex behaviour, which are mutually reinforcing. James believed his gay categorisation to be the “...one label which makes most sense”, but argued that he did not believe his homosexuality to be an orientation but rather a preference, since “I am a man who wants to be with another man”, a thought echoed by Hugh. Those men who opted for a more **non-definitional and non-rational account for their same-sex orientation**, also provided varied justifications. Alec recalled that he was gay “...since I can remember”, Ian noted “...that’s just how it is” (“...*dis net hoe dit is*”), Warren believed that he just had more of an inclination to move towards *that* side of the sexual continuum and Colin exclaimed “...it’s just *what* I am” (“...*dis net wat ek is*”). Phillip, Rick and Steve, respectively, reiterated these notions by stating “It is what I am, I don’t want to and can’t be something else” (“*Dis wat ek is, ek wil en kan nie iets anders wees nie*”), “...it’s the way in which I view, experience life” and “I know that labels (LGBTI for example), don’t capture the full nuances of identity and practice, but I’m reasonably comfortable with the label ‘gay’”. Although identifying as gay, Ian underscored the fact that he does not constantly “...think about” his sexuality reflexively (but implicitly does), since he does not “...present” himself as gay” but acknowledges the fact that he does “...put in more energy where...normality...” (heteronormativity) is deemed imperative.

Two of the three who **did not identify as gay**, ironically also posited themselves in the previous grouping, they being Phillip and James. Phillip believed his life and existence within the mainstream, predominantly heterosexual society made it unnecessary to be assimilated into a separate gay community. James, on the other hand, cited the negative effects of stigmatisation as main reason for abdicating his full commitment to a gay label. Matthew believed the stereotypical images of gay men as oversexed or effeminate, made him incredibly uncomfortable, and also pre-empted establishing a distance from the gay label. Three of the men's answers denoted more of a **conflicting** view. Steve and Ridge's reflections mirrored a queer and intersectional theoretical perspective. Steve thought the gay label to be a so-called "misnomer" since it excludes the "...rich variety of gay people from different classes, backgrounds, religions, political views, gender identity and gender presentations". If one were to explicitly identify as gay, it has to happen at "...strategic, political, circumstantial moments" to provide an organised effort at challenging homophobia, racism and sexism within and external from the homosexual community. Christopher's response also manifested a contradiction of sorts, since he does identify as a gay man, but given the choice in a more inclusive environment, would opt for a queer label. Ridge continued along these themes, by stating the following:

...Certainly I have identified myself as a gay man since I was 20 years old. But I'm increasingly moving out of the 'box', I find sexuality identity categories problematic, when it comes to capturing the complexities of sexuality and desire, so, yes and no...So, I would rather identify as queer because of the fact that in my own work [...] I cannot separate between my public and private sphere, I find this distinction proposed, problematic.

After their consideration of whether to define themselves as gay or not, I sought to explore the potential influence of an individual or collectively orientated affiliation on the gay male academic's identification as homosexual.

5.2.2 A choice of individualisation or collectiveness: The (in)visibility of the gay group

This particular subsection will deal with the distinction between a choice to either assimilate into a more visible gay group, community or culture, or to follow a more individualised inclination.

(a) *The public persona of the gay male academic*

Seven of the seventeen gay male academics emphasised the **importance associated with forming part of a visible gay community or group** based on several reasons. These ranged from a need for acceptance and inclusiveness, highlighting diversity in the gay community, political transgression and the provision of role models to a mere need for socialising with those who display similar needs, experiences, interests and support in coming out. Alec and Ian felt that such an association was “...nice” and “...fun” and, as Matthew noted, was necessary “...sometimes” (“...soms”), since it provided a so-called “...emotional regeneration” from a heterosexist world which may be “...rife with discrimination” (Alec). This, according to Alec, could be attributed to the fact that mainstream (heterosexual) society only offers varied degrees of acceptance or mere tolerance, whereas the gay community may provide a type of “...alternative family” and, as Warren sees it, a “...united front” (“...verenigde front”) against homophobia. Much of this underscores Christopher, Hugh and Matthew’s arguments that such belonging was a necessity particularly when they were younger gay men struggling with their sexual orientation, regardless of Christopher and Matthew’s non-identification with the gay label. Alec, Hugh, Ian and Stanley emphasised the importance of being part of a more overtly visible gay group during one’s teenage and early adolescent years, since, as evident in the feedback from James, a basis for much needed social cohesion is afforded, regardless of its centrality and need in the lives of homosexually identified individuals. As he notes, “I think communities by their very nature have stronger and looser boundaries, and people in them situate themselves at the margins or at its centre, both are an example of belonging...whether it’s a looser sense of belonging or stronger sense...”

Four participants, however, did not share this positive linkage to a visible gay group. Robin attributed his purposeful distance from such identification to his individualist orientation. Regardless, and even ironically, he does underline the “...very close, banal” bond he attempts to establish with other gay male colleagues in social settings separate from the university, since it provides the opportunity to have fun and “...giggle” about anything. Although his view points

towards a need to transgress isolation and invisibility on the part of gay men, he reinforces the role of assimilation and essentialism through his reference to his attempt at immediately censoring himself in such a close knit group, the moment when a heterosexual individual joins. He does this, according to him, “...out of consideration for heterosexuals” and attempts to establish stronger gay bonds on a more “...underground” and “...secretive” level which may exist unbeknownst to the mainstream heterosexual society. Heterosexual (and per implication heteronormative) society implicitly then, provides a justification for polarising itself from homosexuality, since Rick believes that gay men still ascribe to heterosexual norms in an attempt to better understand themselves, as per Derrida’s (1998) reference to “...supplementarity” (cf. Fuss, 1991; Namaste, 1996). In other words, a gay man will constantly look to heteronormative socialisation ideals in order to answer the question – “...what is a man?” (“...wat is ‘n man?”).

He continues, by highlighting the importance of merging the gay male and heterosexual worlds, since it is also, according to him, the responsibility of the gay community to enlighten others in the heterosexual context on what it means to be gay. As such, it becomes all the more important to have so-called “...mixed friendships” (“...*gemengde vriendskappe*”) in order to establish reciprocal understanding and respect. Colin agrees with Rick in so far as he posits himself merely as a “...normal” individual who does not want to be labelled, addressed or thought of as someone’s gay friend, gay lecturer or gay colleague. The role of commoditisation and social class also figures as factor in determining whether to assimilate or avoid group identification. Here Ian notes that, based on his financial standing, he is afforded the chance to easily embed himself into the mainstream heterosexual culture since he mainly requires a sense of “fun”, rather than a source of support, as he did when he was a younger gay man. Although he does acknowledge that he and his current group of friends reflect or meditate on issues related to beliefs and spirituality, he has already moved beyond the closet and “...it is part of my past...we have gone through the developmental things...[currently] I am positioned [socio-economically], I’m not a freak. My kind and I fit in nicely, when you look at your suburb and neighbours”⁴¹.

Ridge, based on his social scientific focus, implores a queer reading of the disjuncture in the power relations between heterosexual and homosexual society. He believes that a unique and

⁴¹Original Afrikaans quote: “...dit is deel van my verlede...ons is deur daardie ontwikkelings goeters – [huidiglik] is ek [sosio-ekonomies] geposisioneer, ek is nie ‘n freak nie. Ek en my soort pas mooi in, as jy na jou voorstad en bure kyk...”

somewhat isolated gay male community only fuels ideas on the supposed, and according to him, non-existent “...common thread” (cf. Epstein, 1998; Seidman, 2002a) that ties such a minority group together. Consider his poststructuralist account:

...You see I find the notion of gay community very problematic, any notion of community is problematic, because it presupposes some common thread that runs through all the members of community. And if this thread is that you sleep, or have sex or desire men, well I guess be it...The so-called community and gay spaces have been important to some extent in my life when I was moving around...because when you move from one socio-cultural context to the other, it's actually much easier to get to know people, on the basis of sexual identification...I think it's important to be part of queer spaces, spaces where sexuality is not an issue, whether you identify as a gay man or a lesbian, or queer, it's just fine. That is important.

Christopher reaffirms Ridge's view, since he also deems membership of a community or group as “...nice to have”, but not necessarily a priority. He attributes this to the fact that at a younger age, he, and possibly other gay men, were more prone to play roles which exacerbated gay stereotypes, as means to establish bonds and identify with others akin to his sexual orientation. When older, one is more content to establish bonds with heterosexual and homosexual individuals based on shared beliefs and interests, and not to better understand yourself, define homosexuality or progress through the phases of coming out.

Regardless of the reason to identify or refrain from assimilating into a gay group, the following subsection provides an overview of the more public contexts in which gay men may get together.

(i) *Contexts of public gay male association*

Seven of the participants indicated that they frequent or, have in the past, gone to public places of which the patronage was predominantly gay men. Although Alec indicated that he attends religious services at a mainstream Christian congregation with his partner on a weekly basis, clubs and bars were mostly cited as the preferred setting in which the men wish to socialise with other gay males. Warren attributes his preference to the fact that gay clubs, in general, and

based on his own experience, “...condone gayness” which provides the opportunity to exhibit what Matthew termed as a “...whatever attitude” (“...whatever houding”). He does however contend that he is more comfortable with this attitude in foreign settings such as his visits to a European city have proven. Here he was able to just “...be myself, anonymous”, whereas his South African milieu in, particularly smaller and conservative towns, (even) makes a public display of same-sex attraction in marginalised gay settings near impossible. He notes, “...People know me in South Africa. In [my city] people are aware of me. I’m afraid they will recognise me” (“...Mense ken my in Suid-Afrika. In [my stad] is mense bewus van my. Ek is bang dat hulle my sal herken”). This apparent display of self-reflexivity is necessary, since he does not deem it important for anyone to be aware of his sexual orientation, and since he has not explicitly told his parents about being gay.

Others, who live in the same town as Matthew, displayed a somewhat more carefree attitude of visibility in especially mainstream social contexts. Franchises such as the bar The Mystic Boer, was cited by Christopher, Hugh, Robin and Warren as a most appropriate “...gay friendly” environment in which gay and heterosexual individuals interact. Its “...bohemian style” according to Robin, creates a feeling of “...home” (“...voel tuis”) and justifies a more “...subtle” experience for gay men to interact within a seemingly larger heterosexual context for Hugh (who frequented bars more often when he was younger). The role of bars and clubs in the exacerbation of the oversexualisation of gay men was also commented on by Ridge. The role of age, cited by Christopher, Colin, Don, James, Phillip, Stanley and Steve, again arises in Ridge’s account, based on his recollection of the “...extremely exciting” experience of going to a gay bar in a European city, which was “...very conservative, where homosexuality was still taboo”. He continues:

...but it was exciting, it was a whole sense of doing something which wasn’t allowed, the bar’s door was this...dark door, where you had to press a button and they open the door...of course I was young, 20, a lot of attention, acknowledgement, boosting for one’s self-esteem, was nice – I’m here, and all these men are also looking for other men and I’m a sexual object – there is a duality, now I find it more, it’s not as appealing as then – it was a new thing. It made me very happy...I wouldn’t sleep with all the men, but the fact that I was acknowledged as sexual object was great.

His example provided an insightful contradiction. This is attributed to his reference to the “...dark door”, which may in fact symbolise the door of ‘the closet’ through which men enter into an exclusive and secretive milieu. This, in turn, may foster the idea that the seemingly “...liberating” (as noted by Christopher) contexts, reinforce the hidden nature of homosexuality from the disapproving eyes of heterosexual society. In doing this, Namaste’s (1996) reference to the “...engendered paradox” facilitated through the supposed ‘coming out of the closet’, is recalled. Colin too, remembers how his first experience at a gay club was “...extremely bad, strange even, to see one man dancing with another,...it was just too taboo” (“...vreeslik erg, selfs vreemd, om een man te sien dans met ‘n ander,...dit was net té taboe”). Don also provides a negative perspective when referring to a working class bar in his particular city. When asked as to whether he will go to the bar to form part of a visible group of likeminded individuals, his response was, “...Hell no!”

Another public setting which was cited was the university campus. Although this will be afforded more in-depth attention in subsection 5.2.5, it is still invaluable to consider the fact that Warren regards his campus as conducive to be “...more gay” overtly. Rick, on the other hand, cautions against being “...too much” (“...te”) in presenting colloquia on issues related to homosexuality. One has to avoid “forcing...” these issues “...down the throats” of other non-homosexual colleagues, since the existing “...line of tolerance is already very thin as it is” (“...lyn van toleransie is al reeds baie dun soos dit is”). Because of this, he opts to be less visible and apparent as gay man, and only reveals his sexual orientation during those times when it is necessary to support a colleague or student educationally.

Rick’s attitude was supported by several of the other participants who abstain from going to public ‘gay places’. Since Robin prefers a more integrated social setting, he avoids gay clubs and bars “...like the plague” (“...soos die pes”) since the so-called “...bitchiness” of gay “...queens” irritate him. Christopher, like Robin, also favours a “...mixed contingent” of individuals in public settings which, as he believes, creates the opportunity for both groups to “...adapt” to each other, rather than “...only one to the other”. Such integration is also viewed as more appropriate for Ian, who “...does not get a ‘kick’ out of socialising with homogeneous groups” (“...kry nie ‘n ‘kick’ uit kuiers met homogene groepe nie”), but prefers “...gay friendly coffee shops”. Phillip too, noted that he felt like “...an outsider within” (cf. Collins, 1991, cited in Renn, 2000:131) gay orientated bars and clubs, based on its noisy and promiscuous nature. Evident from their views is the clear assimilationist rather than transgressive tendency gay men

may ascribe to when attending public places. James for example, underlines the role of his age as central yardstick to consider, with great care, the type of social gathering to attend:

...I used to go to...pubs and bars and restaurants in the 1990s, and it was pleasurable to do so with friends because there was a variety of contexts to explore what it meant to be free...But with age, becoming more careful with how you spend your time, they are not as compelling nowadays,...my and those friends' interests have changed.

Steve provides a similar view when he states, "...to be honest, I am too old to go to these venues, house parties are more my style" (cf. Achilles, 1998; Castells, 1983; Levine, 1998; Warren, 1998). A queer interpretation of their views, could argue that they in fact posit themselves as shadowy figures, a characteristic predominantly white men displayed during the Apartheid-era in South Africa (cf. Cock, 2003; Croucher, 2002; Gevisser, 1995). The centrality occupied by heteronormativity in these accounts, was also commented on by Warren, who believed that the "...gay/straight division only justifies emphasis on a missing essence of similarity" ("*...gay/straight onderskeid regverdig slegs die 'missing essence' van ooreenkomste*") between the two.

(ii) *Positive and negative features associated with overt gay male identification*

Positive features associated with membership of a more overtly visible gay community or group, included **four** themes. **Firstly**, the foregoing reference to **belonging and support** enjoyed most of the emphasis in the feedback of the participants. Alec, Anderson, Rick, Ridge, Robin and Steve all underscored the importance of a safe environment in which gay men are given the opportunity to socialise with others akin to them, related to their sexual orientation. Such an environment could take on a configuration of, for example, what Don terms a "...band of brothers" who serve as both support and role models. Alec, Ian and Rick, however, again underlined the generational issue at play in ascribing to this need of belonging and support, since much of this manifested more evidently during their initial coming out phases in their teenage and early younger adult years. Ian mainly associates with gay men based on their socio-economic position in society, due to the fact that this establishes a context of shared 'commoditised' beliefs and experiences. He cites similarities around social issues including religious beliefs, spirituality and views on identity as primary examples. The importance of

economic factors, however, underline much of his feedback on adjusting and assimilating into his “...kind”, in terms of the nature of their homes, belongings and shared economic interests in order for him not to be regarded as an isolated “...freak”. Alec believes that these spaces are currently providing more of an “emotional regeneration” based on the noted shared ‘sameness’, whereas Steve merely refers to the “...relaxed” nature of more communal gay spaces where you “...can just be” (“...net kan wees”) as stated by Don.

Secondly, an awareness of the existence of gay men in society at large is also provided for through increased visibility which could, per implication, advocate for the emphasis on **diversity** and **plurality** within the supposed homogeneous confines of the gay community or group. Colin, Hugh and Robin articulated the importance of exemplifying the inherent diversity and uniqueness of gay men, rather than the stereotypically homogeneous image perpetuated in mainstream society. “Variance, in terms of style, views, external projections of who they are” and “...different forms of gayness” were two of the examples of this particular objective.

In the event of probable threats, the provision of a **safe** and **secure context** serves as **third** positive feature. Here it was Matthew and Robin who postulated that the always “...underlying fear of threat” they face on a daily basis, is more than enough of a reason to associate with other gay men. The creation of such safe communal spaces, posited as **gay**, could unfortunately, according to Ridge, further exacerbate a polarisation between the heterosexual and homosexual communities, through its implicit exclusivity. He advocates for the creation of **queer** rather than gay spaces, since the latter may provide a more inclusive setting for all of those homosexually identified individuals who wish to socialise without a persistent threat of discrimination or prejudice based on their difference. He argues, “...just to not have someone jump out of their seat when they see a man touching another man. I am very adamant not to conflate gay spaces with queer spaces, in other words,...a queer space is not necessarily a gay space for me. It is open for all types of sexualities where, even people who identify as heterosexual could also go there, but with the knowledge that non-normative sexualities will be there,...where they wouldn’t pass judgment”.

Finally, a sense of gay male communal identification was also linked to possible **political provocation and mobilisation**. Alec noted that the visibility of formally organised gay groups in particular may facilitate an articulation of struggles homosexual individuals face in attaining equal rights in contemporary society, since it provides “...numerous opportunities for public

education". Phillip and Steve took it a step further by advocating for the formation of visible pressure groups in order to provide the necessary context for mobilisation to, as noted by Phillip, "...stand up for who I am" ("*...staan op vir wie ek is*").

Negative features of such a group encompassed the following. **Firstly**, constant **intimidation** and **threats** were cited as dominant negative factors which may (and have) impede(d) a full realisation of the gay male identity on an overt level in mainstream society. Accounts of Anderson, Don, Hugh, Matthew and Robin underlined this point. Alec and Robin argued that the ever prevalent persistence of homophobia may overshadow what Warren refers to as the "...bravery" ("*...dapperheid*") of those gay men who are open about their sexual orientation. Hugh typifies homophobia as a "...constant threat" which necessitates gay men to be extremely "...careful for judgment" because of their overtly proud gay identification. Matthew is of the opinion that one could become a "...target" based on the annual Pride Parades nationally and internationally, since these events reinforce "...exaggerated" images and definitions associated with gay men.

Secondly, such group identification may **reinforce negative stereotypes** associated with gay men, as was evident in Matthew's contribution. Based on, amongst others, stereotypical media imagery, one's work is influenced by your sexual orientation which may even become the pre-eminent factor by which you are judged within the organisational context, according to Hugh. Colin also critiqued the overemphasis and possible blind adherence to preconceived stereotypes associated with gay men, including effeminacy. Such stereotypes, according to him, reinforce "...ignorance" on the part of heterosexual individuals who seek to retain either negative perceptions of homosexuality or avoid discussions on the subject matter altogether. He, himself, also does not identify or even approve of those gay men who act like "...queens" in an overtly *and* overly effeminate manner in mainstream society, although he does not necessarily judge them. Their behaviour mistakenly becomes the yardstick against which gay men's behaviour is measured on a universal level. Anderson cites the "...sexualised" ("*...geseksualiseerde*") nature of gay men as another negative stereotype. Robin also referred to the negative impact of stereotypical categorisation of gay men in relation to the organisational benefits employees are entitled to, including formalised examples such as provisions made for his sibling's tertiary studies in terms of a smaller registration or study fee, or more informally, arrangements around work functions or vacation periods which favour married heterosexual couples with children, and not those who do not conform to heteronormative ideals.

Thirdly, Anderson, Christopher, Rick and Steve highlighted a so-called **ghettoised gay male identification**. Christopher believes that the ideas on life in general and being gay in particular, become isolated from the broader society which underlines the “...us versus them”-stereotype and possibly even exacerbates a so-called minoritisation or, as noted by Steve, ‘ghettoisation’ of gay men. His thought is mirrored in the contributions of Rick and Steve. Rick argues that through an exclusive identification of sorts, gay men “...shoot themselves in the foot” (“...skiet hulself in die voet”), since they inhibit any real opportunity to establish and celebrate truly diverse and unique gay male configurations, based on their need to conform to a homogenous understanding of homosexuality through group pressure. “[Conforming in this way] only creates viciousness,...There has to be a balance, you have to have gay and straight friends, there has to be integration, because if you only isolate yourself, you will constantly walk into things in which conflict is embedded, within yourself and others”⁴². Warren recalls being excluded from or being the target of “gossip” courtesy of certain gay groups, based on the lack of uniform features between him and other gay men. This, in turn, could reinforce Downs’ (2006) reference to overcompensation, as evident in Ian’s reference to the fact that, although trivial and not warranting further discussion, constant competition about materialistic issues also characterise his experiences with other gay men, because of his constant emphasis on his higher socio-economic status.

Since several participants indicated their preference to avoid what could be termed as an ‘overtly gay identification’, I found it necessary to assert their perceptions of their private home context as opposed to public gay spaces.

(b) ***The private persona of the gay male academic***

In order to gain insight into the lived experiences of these individuals, three questions were posed. The **first** centred on a short description of the content, design and layout of the homes. Three themes emerged from the feedback, these being the **creation of the ‘WOW’-factor**, **equating the home with one’s relationship** and **affording the home a political and queer character**. Pertaining to the first, the **‘WOW’-factor** mainly involves a conscious and intense

⁴²Original Afrikaans quote: “...viciousness,...Daar moet ‘n balans wees, jy moet gay en straight vriende te hê, daar moet integrasie wees, as jy jouself net afsonder doen jy ‘n groot onreg aan jouself, jy gaan jouself vasloop in dinge wat jy in konflik mee gaan wees in jouself en met ander”.

effort on the part of the gay male to impress his visitors through a distinctly unique and diverse (read stereotypically gay) environment. Here I thought it appropriate to integrate the information accrued from the **second question on financial expenditure** on their residential contexts. If one recalls Ian's constant reference to "his kind" of gay men, in terms of a particular social and economic class, it should come as no surprise, that he coined the 'WOW'-exclamation in describing his home as something "...you fall into...", based on its luxurious nature. Robin also equates his home with his personality and interests, including his taste in expensive art, his piano and art prints, whereas Phillip referred to his home's "...carpets, wooden floors, lots of paintings, three bedrooms, three baths, high ceilings, antique wooden furniture" and Colin noting that his home "...must be beautiful" ("*...moet mooi wees*").

Regardless, all but one (Ian) of the seventeen (17) participants did not go to greater financial lengths to create a more comfortable environment which could safeguard them from a possibly hostile external environment. Several designed their homes for themselves and did not do so as attempt to impress others, including Anderson, Colin, James, Matthew, Robin, Stanley and Steve. The need for a "...pleasurable place of belonging, being yourself" according to James, found representation in Robin's reference to creating a space where people can come together or Christopher's need for a larger kitchen to facilitate more "...intimate visits with friends". Those who sought a more queerly created residence also provided interesting insights. Steve, for example, thought of himself as being "...anti-design", whereas Rick heralded a more intersectional view on being surrounded by people of different nationalities and races. Ridge's need for simplicity amid expensive art and furniture, symbolically posited sexuality as more simplified, akin to traditional conceptualisations which favoured an emphasis on same-sex behaviour and emotion, rather than rigid categories. His taste in "...simple, yet expensive things, designer things,...has more to do with few objects connected to the house to have, never too many...", also leaves me to ponder the thought that, metaphorically speaking, the expensive and rare objects symbolise the difficulty associated with obtaining *and* retaining sexual diversity and plurality as a simplistic, non-categorised entity in Western culture. Regardless of these views, Ian felt financial expense was necessary in order to fully capture the unique and pluralistic nature of gay identity, as is evident from his words:

...Maybe...I like to entertain, food is my passion. Yes, yes...The core is more creative creation, creative thinking, that is what I like about my being gay, to give myself permission from a Calvinist background to be a rebel. This is My

Life, as Shirley Bassey sings,...in reaction to but correspondingly alongside a creative space, uniqueness, that a part of you and part of them comes out⁴³.

In **equating the home with their respective relationships**, Alec and Rick made it clear that they would not hide their sexual orientation from others around them. Alec stated that he "...made it clear from the first day that they were a couple, not bachelors". Although one could regard this as evidence of political transgression through asserting one's sexual orientation, he forfeits inclusion in that category, because he implicitly underlines his acceptance of assimilating into an existing gay culture because he found the acceptance from older Afrikaner couples in his building "...amazing". He recalls receiving periodic invitations to building functions. Rick's discussion of his residential context was comprised of a focus on the androgynous "companionship" he shares with his partner, which does not necessarily take on the configurations prescribed by heterosexual norms. But, yet again, he acknowledges the importance society ascribes to a clear masculine and feminine role for the respective partners and, in the absence of clear gay role models, they have adopted the "...straight model" for their purposes. Stanley, contradictorily and explicitly confesses his outright disdain for the surrounding heterosexual families living in his suburban townhouse complex, since he finds their "...normal family life as irritating, I have a desire for peace and quiet".

Ideals of a political and queer transgression did come to the fore courtesy of the remaining participants. Queer principles were evident in James' statement that he does not want a "...coherent home space", a thought which could be likened to Ridge's reference to his "...minimalist" design taste and art as "...mixture" of African and European pieces. Although Steve's account verges on an inclusion under the 'WOW'-theme, his reference to an "...eccentric" and mixed taste of "...retro, antique...and modern pieces", also recalls a queer inclination of sorts. Robin and Warren's propensity to make their own rules, "...my house, my rules" ("*...my huis, my reëls*") also reinforces a politically transgressive quality. Cumbersome however, is the fact that Ian and Robin, both refer to their homes as providing safety from a seemingly hostile world, which in many respects may emphasise an ethnic model of binary divisions along the lines of sexual orientation (cf. Castells, 1983; Epstein, 1998; Warren, 1998).

⁴³ Original Afrikaans quote: "...Miskien..., ek hou van 'entertain', kos is my passie. Ja, ja...Die kern is meer kreatiewe skepping, kreatiewe denke, dit is wat ek hou van gay wees, om jouself die toestemming te gee vanuit Calvinistiese agtergrond om meer rebels te wees. Hierdie is *My Life*, soos Shirley Bassey sing,...in reaksie op, maar saam daarmee, 'n kreatiewe ruimte, uniekheid, dat 'n stukkie jy en stukkie hulle uitkom".

This thought is underscored by seven participants who thought their homes to be a **safer environment** than their external social and work contexts.

Posed as **third question**, the issue of **safety** figured strongly in the men's accounts. Robin equated his home to a "...sanctuary" which opposes the "...unholy heterosexual world". It is here where he is able to make his own rules. James, Phillip, Steve and Warren shared Robin's interpretation of his home. Phillip notes that "...in a sense...I feel emotionally and physically at ease. I like to be home and surrounded by my 'warm' own created environment". Steve also describes his place of residence as "...a sanctuary...a private retreat which I feel is safe, pleasing (for me), comfortable and private. It is not invisible, but I am selective about who I invite there". Warren mirrors their perceptions by referring to his home as "...my area" whereas for James, a private and redemptive context separate from his public academic life, is a necessity, because there "...has to be a place where I can *be*, that is not in the eyes of people...and that's what home is". Ian contradicts Steve's belief that his home is not necessarily invisible, based on his emphasis on the high walls he built around his home to ensure privacy and safety. Stanley and Greg also emphasise the importance of privacy, protection and selectivity regarding who is allowed entrance to their homes. Matthew's reference to his home as "...relatively" ("*...relatief*") safer space, positions him firmly between those who equated their home with safety and those who did not.

Six **did not** believe their homes to be a safer context. Here participants merely answered 'no', since they equated their lack of safety not as something based on homophobia because of their sexual orientation, but rather the general crime-ridden South African environment. Alec, Christopher, Rick and Ridge cited the equal ease they experience in terms of their safety in more public and private settings, whereas Anderson noted his view of the heterosexual society as safe, since he is comfortably "...integrated" into it.

In addition to considerations on how space may produce or reproduce a gay male identity, questions were also posed as to what such a stereotype would entail.

5.2.3 The gay male stereotype: Internal versus external scripting

This subsection considers the contributions of the participants as it relates to their views on gay male stereotypes and its sources. The reference to **internal** and **external** scripting, serves to

underline gay men's propensity to potentially construct their identity based on both their own intra-psychic and interpersonal scripting (cf. Simon, 1996) **within the gay community**, as well as the manner in which **external labels** from heterosexual (and/or heteronormative) individuals **possibly** add to their considerations as to whether to conform to a particular stereotypical "homosexual role" (cf. McIntosh, 1968; Simon, 1996).

(a) ***The gay male stereotype as blueprint for "gay sensibility"***

Concerning the questions posed on the participants' inclination to conform to or challenge certain proscriptive stereotypes, some participants **affirmed** and others **refuted** its potential influence in their lives.

Those who **affirmed their affiliation** with stereotypical understandings of homosexuality heralded the following reasons. Phillip attributed his answer to the fact that shared sexual preferences, values, culture, ideas and interests within a particular gay group on a social level, made it more advantageous to mirror the underlying ideologies to which these men conformed. This was done, mainly, to provide a sense of **security**, "...to feel safe" ("*...om veilig te voel*"). Matthew, on the other hand, echoed earlier statements of Ian on social class and commoditisation, since he associated his gay sexual orientation with clothing, "...nice and beautiful things...Shopping is nice, to buy beautiful things" ("*... 'nice' en mooi goed...Inkoopies is 'nice', om mooi goed te koop*") (cf. Downs, 2006:76). He also identified certain types of movies which are mainly romantic (so-called 'weepies'). Non-verbal behaviour, typically associated with certain effeminate gestures or "...smoking in a certain way..." were seen as certain stereotypes to which Hugh mainly conformed.

Four tangible examples of gay male stereotypes, which were included as part of the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, comprised **excessive body consciousness**, **a preoccupation with female artists, entertainers or writers** and a tendency to establish **friendships with predominantly women**. These four supposed stereotypes, frame the narratives of those who refuted and partly embraced its potential influence in their lives. Participants, including Alec, Christopher, Colin, Don, Phillip, Rick and Robin **refuted** the role associated with stereotypes. Colin denied the influence of gay stereotypes, since his answer "...unequivocally *no*" ("*...onomwonde nee*") clearly critiqued the importance of the "...latest fashion trends" ("*...mees onlangse mode neigings*") as compass for gay men in "doing gay" (cf.

Dowsett et al., 2008), which Matthew found very necessary. Related to **body consciousness**, Rick, a social scientist, declared that he was “...absolutely against” (“...absoluut teen”) excessive exercise or a particular dress code for gay men. As part of his feedback during the interview, he was adamantly in favour of highlighting the so-called “...liquorice all-sorts” view of gay men, which celebrated a fluid, diverse and plural view of human beings, whether gay or heterosexual. Consider his justification:

...It is dangerous to use these stereotypes as markers for being gay, because being gay is not rigid, it is just like being straight...it is fluid....Yes, gay men are more prone to react to the physical, that is why physical appearance is important. It is not something with which I identify...it is the whole package...these men also grow old with time⁴⁴.

Both Christopher and Phillip cited the difficulty associated with conforming to a specific uniform image of homosexuality. Christopher noted that there was “...nothing I can think of”, but acknowledged that his attention to aesthetics and beauty in general, a trait shared with his heterosexual counterparts, could be conflated with his sexual attraction to men. Referring to his weight issues, Robin believed that he was “...clearly not into exercising...” (“...duidelik nie ‘into’ oefen nie”), but rather “...fat and happy” (“...vet en vrolik”). What was however of more importance to older gay men, as evident in the responses of Anderson, Don and Greg, was an affinity for healthy living, rather than overly obsessive bodily appearance.

An obsession with body consciousness was, however, also a contested and divergent issue for other gay men. As social science scholar, Ridge’s words serve as clear reflection of differing notions on body consciousness:

...[Laughing] I guess...Do I conform, then I’ll say no, but do other people feel that I conform to a stereotype, yes. I’m interested in physical exercise, not obsessed with it, I’m not obsessed with clothing...lots of other stereotypes with which gay men are associated. I have been perceived...as camp, because I like to be excessive in the way I say certain things...I am very

⁴⁴ Original Afrikaans quote: “...Dit gevaarlik om die stereotipes te gebruik en te sê dit is oor gay wees, want gay wees is nie so rigied nie, dis net soos straight wees, dis fluid. ...Ja dis wel so dat gay mans meer geneigd is om op die fisiese te reageer, daarom is die fisiese voorkoms belangrik. Dit is nie iets wat ek mee identifiseer nie...dis die hele pakkie, die persoonlikheid, die uiterlike pakkie...hierdie mans raak ook oud mettertyd”.

open...it has more to do with my sexuality in the way I am very in your face, perhaps over-usage of wittiness, and at times being very hyper-critical of things. I don't control my voice, it ranges from a darker tone and meaningful to vacuous.

The contradictions, as evident from his quote, are based in the most part on his own internal reflexive definition(s) of himself as opposed to labels courtesy of others. This argument was particularly apparent in the accounts of Warren. He noted that he does not have a "...particular style" ("*...spesifieke styl*") and is not prone to "...flap" within his university context, since such behaviour could exacerbate stereotypical labels. He attributed this to his constant awareness of the possible reactions of heterosexuals and homosexuals based on a more expressive gendered or sexually orientated 'performance'. Although younger, Warren's view mirrored that of his older academic counterparts. Steve, a social scientist, adds to Warren's reflexive nature when he states that "...I do worry about my body and what I wear and I do believe that I have a particular aesthetic when it comes to design", but much of this, according to him, has changed as he grew older, a theme with which Alec and Ian identified. According to Steve, "...as one ages, certain aspects of young gay culture become elusive, mysterious or simply irrelevant" (cf. Gamson, 1995). For Ian, aging has brought with it a clear reprioritisation in terms of body consciousness, since healthy living through regular exercise or the use of facial crèmes and sun blocks, as noted by him, become more important.

The second possible stereotype resided in the noted **preoccupation with female artists, entertainers and writers**. Here Christopher, James and Robin cited their appreciation for music or particular genres in music, rather than the performers themselves. Christopher underlined the importance of context and ascribed a possible infatuation with these so-called 'divas' as circumstantial, a view shared by Robin. Examples of these divas varied from Billy Holiday, Bette Midler, Barbra Streisand and Sarah Vaughn to Cher and Madonna all of whose "camp humour", according to Christopher, adds to their mystique. Although not a clear diva-devotee, James identifies non-sexual identification and shared oppression as two reasons why gay men may find these women fascinating:

...gay men find women as a sex interesting because of the absence of sexual desire. Take figures like Lady Gaga – her gay fans, for example, find it easier to empathise with her, than someone you don't want to have control over as

a man,...neither wish to be controlled or oppressed in a patriarchal set-up, they have interests and sympathies in common, both are in a sense oppressed groups.

Rick, Steve and Warren thought female entertainers such as Cher, Madonna, Streisand and the opera singer Maria Callas to be strong influences in their personal lives. All three ascribed this intense identification to the shared hardships and struggles several of these women had to endure based on their supposed subordinate or oppressed existence within a patriarchal and heteronormative social context – experiences they share with gay men. Warren referred to them as “...cult figures” that provided him with an “...escape” (“...ontvlugting”) through music and theatre to so-called “...happy places”, away from normalised and “...dull” everyday contexts. Ian’s examples of particularly the work of female writers such as Winterbach and Marlene van Niekerk as examples of subtle references to sexual diversity and fluidity, only add to the perceived existent relationship between gay men and female writers. He however contends that his appreciation for their work is not an explicit or overtly evident “...pink parade...this [appreciation] is another thing – it’s the Karoo, war, mountains” (“...pink parade...dit is ‘n ander ding...dit is die Karoo, oorlog, berge”). Gay men, according to Rick, are natural entertainers and divas, “...just place us on a platform” (“...sit ons net op ‘n platform”). The importance of performance underlines Rick’s reference to the manner in which gay men, as divas, are granted a permission of sorts to be more assertive, bitchy and sarcastic.

Conforming to the so-called ‘**fag hag**’ relationship in terms of gay male and heterosexual women friendships, also presented interesting insights. James highlighted the fact that he was more prone to heterosexual male friends in the work context and friendship with women and other gay men outside of the university. He also attributed his friendship with women to shared interests irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identification, a response which also resonated with Alec, Anderson, Don, Stanley and Robin. The latter even went as far as to define women as “...irritating” and “...less discerning” (“...minder diepsinnig”), but still expressed the need to identify with more “...extravagance” (“...uitspattigheid”) and “...big hair” (“...groot hare”).

Ridge and Steve critiqued gay men’s tendency to be preoccupied with women as friends. According to Ridge, his friendships are more “...balanced”, since he always strives to establish a so-called triad between himself, a man and a woman, a thought shared with Steve. Ian found the so-called ‘fag hag’ relationship label very problematic. This unease with the fag hag-label is

associated with what he terms the “...tokenised gay male friendship” with women, in which the gay male’s sexual orientation becomes the main impetus in establishing a friendship bond, something he avoided as younger man since he did not grant heterosexual women the “...pleasure” (“...*plesier*”) of being their *gay* friend. Warren however underlined the importance of establishing a mutually beneficial relationship. Since both gay men and heterosexual men are outcasts in his particular patriarchal academic setting, establishing and maintaining a “...united front” (“...*verenigde front*”) and “bond” (“...*band*”) are imperative. It provides the necessary relational context in which the two are granted the opportunity to discuss, reflect and mobilise themselves to curb possible insecurities within their joint struggle against heteronormativity. Much of this could be attributed to the need for an empathetic and supportive listener and soul mate, according to Rick. Ian’s interview made it abundantly clear that the need for such a friendship was more prevalent during his younger years whilst he was struggling with his sexual orientation, a thought one could liken to earlier references to the importance of gay group identification. These friendships may also challenge superficial assumptions which could arise if a gay man were to be friends with a heterosexual male. Here it would be the latter who may be labelled as gay if he were to transcend a more platonic male-to-male friendship with gay men, akin to Goffman’s (1963) “...with relationship”-analogy. If men were to express the need to have stronger bonds with other men, Hugh argues that gay male friendship seems to be the most appropriate or even “...safer” option. His statement is explicated implicitly in his references to the terms of endearment used between gay men in his group, including “...girlfriend” (“...*meisie*”). Such a reference does not only serve to conflate homosexuality with an effeminate gender performance, but also seeks to establish a “...sense of shared experiences and a common bond”.

Additional stereotypes not included as part of the interview schedule with which the participants could not identify, included Robin’s reference to his non-infatuation with dance, drug use, partying or even the media’s juxtaposed de- or over-sexualisation of gay men. A **hyper-critical**, **hyperanalytical** and **opinionated** orientation was, however, seen to be prevalent in the everyday academic and social contexts of amongst others, Ridge and Warren. The latter made it clear that he enjoyed observing day-to-day ritualisation within heterosexual and homosexual lifestyles and enjoyed “...making fun of people and their [routine] behaviours”. Warren, also displayed a **queer inclination** in so far as he found the reclamation of a previously regarded derogatory concept such as “...fag” (“...*skeef*”) as powerful instrument to be used against homophobic individuals through academic and everyday interrogation of the words.

Steve mirrored their views by stating that he regards himself "...as empathic, in touch with aspects of 'femininity', good at cooking and design savvy, but I also like fast cars, sport and am competitive and aggressive when I need to be. You decide!"

Whether they embraced or distanced themselves from particular stereotypes, the subsection to follow considers the possible **sources** associated with homogeneous, universal and, per implication, stereotypical images of the gay male.

(b) ***Sources of the gay male stereotype***

Although Alec did not view the media as a pre-eminent institution in his life as gay man, the **media** as source for gay male stereotypes was cited by several participants. Much of the feedback centred on the negative manner in which print media (books and magazines) as well as audiovisual examples (film, radio and television) retain and reinforce stereotypes. Related to the use of television, Steve referred to the subtle and more "subversive images and messages" shows like *Modern Family* portray through a contradictory "camp but traditional" gay couple. Radio, on the other hand, posits gay men as more effeminate since their voices are characteristically "...sibilant, nasal, feminine – these annoy and irritate me". Some magazines, as noted by Steve, provide an array of diverse and varied examples of gay life, for example the British edition of *Attitude*, whereas others are more inclined to "...undermine" this and "...prop-up...stereotypes". Colin and Matthew, however, thought self-help books and magazines to be of value to those looking for a degree of communal identification or, in the words of Matthew, merely provide readers with images of "...nice things, and information on how to dress".

Other accounts of general depictions of the media were less than favourable. James underscored the lack of intersectionality in specifically American and European media, which mainly advances a pursuit of hedonistic sexual pleasure through a contradictory but paralleled existent de- and oversexualisation of gay men, without any balanced account of the sexual lives of gay men, an evident notion in the feedback from Hugh. Ridge's perception on sexual identity has been (and continues to be) informed by a queer reading of academic texts which facilitate a more balanced, nuanced and liberating endeavour for him to challenge gay male categorisation and encourage emphasis on sexual pluralism and diversity. I find it appropriate and applicable to quote his view at length, since he is one of the few who consider a moment beyond rigid categories:

...I realised sexual desire and sexual identity were two different things. This was something I very much conflated, equated, I had completely bought into 'if you desire men, then you're gay', after reading queer theory, being gay is an identity category with its own history and on its own, whereas the fact that you desire another man, cannot really be 'boxed' into this identity category. So at the moment,...the influence I have is mainly from my theoretical readings...I also still read literature on queer theory, it has a huge influence in the way in which I see myself as academic and in my private life...so that's why I'm more reluctant to identify as a gay man, although I have no problems with the category, but I also believe that it is this category which has backfired – I guess I have been out as a gay man too long to actually consider to going back and do something else, or experiment with something else. That's why when I teach queer theory, I always say that categories are fine up to a certain limit, for me when I was 19 or 20, but then you realise it obscures certain aspects of your sexuality to play out, if you've just identified too long with a specific identity.

The role of **peer groups** as primary socialisation agent mostly came into play during the younger years and initial stages or phases associated with coming out, as was apparent from Colin, Ian and Matthew's recollections. Christopher believed that he merely "...fell into" a larger peer group of gay men, after he underwent his own introspection and later experimentation. Although the nature of such a group of gay friends may not necessarily, according to Phillip, be as "...cut and dry", one is afforded the opportunity to live out a more flamboyant, exaggerated and satirical part of yourself when you are in the company of likeminded men.

Reflections on either embracing or refuting the influence of certain stereotypes associated with male homosexuality, recall the overarching themes of the study. These include the **rationalisation** (Jackson & Scott, 2010) associated with "doing" (Dowsett et al., 2008) and/or using gay through potentially proscriptive gender and sexual performances, assigned by either a "...gay sensibility" (cf. Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a) or heterosexual "...ritualisation" (cf. Ingraham, 2002). In addition, the narratives of the academics proved to be highly **reflexive** of the potential benefits or pitfalls stereotypes may present in their everyday construction,

deconstruction and/or negotiation of their projected gay male identity. Such a consideration may be one of the reasons for constructing and maintaining the metaphorical image of 'the closet'.

5.2.4 The symbolism of the closet in practice: (Hiding) the gay male academic

Several central concepts or images were provided to define 'the closet'. These ranged from those accounts which deem the closet as **individual creation** to those which ascribed it an **external societal** quality. Conceptualisations included Anderson's reference to the self-hatred of the gay male who "...detest[s] yourself because you lack the courage to act according to your conviction", Warren's belief that gay men place themselves in the closet since it offers a "...womb, fort" against external persecutions and Phillip's argument that you consciously avoid "obvious" gay people based on a fear of possible identification with them. Further negative accounts which persist within an external society included images of a "...cold, hostile place" (Anderson), "...unhappiness" (Ian), "...Bad, limiting, compressed" ("*...Sleg, beperkend, ingedruk*") (Matthew), "secretive,...repression" (Steve) and "...hiding", "...shame" (Christopher), "...personal conflict" and "...confusion" (Rick). Associated with the 'hidden' nature of one's sexual orientation inside the closet, Colin refers to the use of "...masks" in order to project a particular "...front" to the outside world which, according to Hugh, maintains the closet based on its members' "...ignorance". This ignorance, according to him conflates varied sexual practices such as men having sex with men (MSM) with a man's gay orientation, thus explanations completely devoid of emotional or cognitive components. Only three of the seventeen interviewees cited a liberating quality presupposed by the closet. These included Ridge and Warren's emphasis on the beneficial nature of the closet for particularly younger men who need an "...interim place for self-examination" ("*...interim plek vir self-ondersoek*") (Warren) and the need of some individuals to proclaim their divergent sexual orientation to significant others in their lives, respectively.

An **amalgam** of the two views of 'the closet' as individual or external creation was provided by Greg, James and Ridge. References to Namaste's (1996) work on the so-called "engendered paradox" of creating and 'coming out of the closet', was very evident in the contributions of particularly Ridge. He finds "...this metaphor very problematic – 'coming out of where and into what?'" He continues by highlighting the fact that the closet retains the 'minoritising'-logic of gay people, through the efforts of activists, no less, who view gay male identity as removed and separate from mainstream society. This identity suddenly arises based on the projections of the

heterosexual rituals of society from which the gay male differs and the need to be accepted or tolerated by those who are supposedly 'normative':

...It's also very much based on this idea that we have an identity that suddenly crops up and suddenly you jump out of the closet...It is so narrow...I guess, and this is something I have huge problems with gay activism...It is reproduced by the activists themselves...In many ways it reproduces a heteronormative way of seeing the world...it's as if everyone else is out and you are somehow not...it's a very minoritising process...In an ideal world, there is no need to come out, in the same way heterosexual people don't come out suddenly at 18 and tell their parents, 'Mom, dad, I'm heterosexual!', and it's like why?...I did do this when I came out for my mother, for her it wasn't very groundbreaking for my parents...they knew it all throughout...yet they don't really understand the practical implications...they had an idea that homosexuality was something confined to the private space [the closet], they did however realise it's not only a private thing, but very much a public and political idea [...]

Ridge clearly provides a queer critique of the metaphor of the closet, when he echoes arguments that acceptance and tolerance should be regarded as homophobic (cf. San Diego State University, 2009; Sanlo, 1999; The University of the Witwatersrand, 2011). He argues,

...I have issues with the notions of acceptance, tolerance is even worse...the question is, why bring up the question of acceptance in terms of sexuality,...why would acceptance be salient for homosexuality? Rather than in terms of race, because this may be taboo to say 'I accept you because you're black. I accept you because you're white', but it's absolutely fine to talk about or say 'I accept you because you're homosexual'...I don't actually want your acceptance at all. It's like giving a token of pity.

The closet is for many, according to James, "...a chance and opportunity to survive and prosper alongside heterosexual individuals by compromising their own sexual freedom" by succumbing to fear. There is in fact nothing "hidden" about the closet, because it is about "...choices you think you have to make to survive, to carry on. You live this construction your whole life, every

day, you act out your public identity in an exaggerated way. You only affirm it in a place where your sexual orientation is not known". Since the gay male was not socialised in becoming gay, he is constantly made aware of heterosexual rituals and norms, and in many respects, as noted by James, may even attempt to conform to it, since there are no existing norms to create diverse and unique rituals akin to homosexuality. As result, "...gay men conform to the outside expectations of heteronormativity, and deviate from that which is inside you". Due to the fact that these rituals were reinforced through the processes of primary socialisation during the formative phases of the gay male, he finds it "...difficult to unlearn the rituals...and is unaware of his constant compensation in his everyday life...At this stage he doesn't even notice it". In a way then, by conforming to heterosexual rituals, one could argue that they become uncritical of heterosexist practices and expectations, but all the more self-reflexive in adhering to traditional and contemporary gender and sexually orientated expectations. Based on the latter, he still concedes that he has never willingly remained in the closet within both his private and public spheres, but that the closet is in fact only created either *after one comes out* or *whilst one realises that a certain context is not conducive for it*. He states, "...one makes a definite decision at one point since you don't know how to get out before you're even in it...you recreate it every day when you're interacting with heterosexuals, you are constantly caught between pride and denial,...there is no comfortable position".

Greg provides a concrete contextualisation of the varied influence of the closet which is constructed through intra-psychic and interpersonal scripting (cf. Simon, 1996). He argues that there are "...different ways of being in the closet, different identities". Although one may believe that he is "...totally open", certain situations may compel you to return to a closeted existence based on contextual and social constraints. He recalls vacationing in Arab countries and India, where he and his partner had to conceal their sexual orientation because of their (valid) fear of persecution. This underscores the critique of several theorists (Savin-Williams, 2005; Smuts, 2011) against the perceived linear progression of gay men during the phases or stages of identity construction. It also demonstrates the negotiated nature of one's gay self (or selves) of which the formation is dependent on the particular context of which the gay male forms part. This was particularly evident in the participants' views of whether they exhibited only **one self** or a **multitude of selves**.

Seven different configurations of the self, based on the gender or sexual orientation, were highlighted. The first was that of the **lecturer self**, also termed the "...career" (Christopher),

“...management” (James) or “...professional” (Phillip, Don and Anderson) self. Colin, Matthew, Rick and Robin, regardless of their difference in terms of age, all commented on establishing a clear distance from their students within the university context. Matthew noted that he is “...another type of gay at work” (“...’n *ander tipe gay by die werk*”) but remains true to who he is, although he does not flaunt it explicitly, particularly towards his students. Colin also attempts at keeping his gay identity hidden from his students, although his colleagues are in fact aware of his sexual orientation. But, as was the case with Matthew, he attempts at distancing himself from stereotypical gay traits of being “...bitchy” or a “...queen”. In line with these two responses, Anderson and Robin also work at keeping a responsible and professional distance from their students, by insisting that they refer to him by his academic title. Regardless of the fact that his colleagues are also aware of his sexual orientation in the faculty of arts of which he forms part, he remains cautious of entering into debates on sexual orientation. Rick shared this perspective by also separating his gay identity from his lecturing role, since he argues that the main impetus should be placed on the “...excellence” of his work and not his sexual orientation, since the latter should not have any bearing on his professional work. Hugh and James opted for a similar approach to safeguard both their reputations and work.

Hugh stated that the manner in which he exudes his gay identity, differs substantially between the two contexts. His explanation for this, as he himself conceded during the interview, is somewhat superficial; “...I tend to be more ‘jokey’ at home than at work with my students”. Christopher, Colin, Matthew and Robin were, however, of the opinion that their identity did not change when they moved between their private and professional contexts. Colin and Robin underlined the importance of discretion and relevance associated with ‘outing’ oneself in a professional public arena, as did Greg who recommended a “...testing of the waters” before coming out. Others including Alec, Don and Steve directed attention to the fact that the inherent differences associated with the two contexts imply adjustment of gay men in adhering to more formal and strict codes of conduct within the professional sphere, regardless of one’s sexual orientation. A “...gay-only space” according to Steve, provides the opportunity for more relaxation and “...play...but I believe my core is the same”. Robin also identified with the idea of freedom in his residential and social contexts, and stated that he avoided acting in a “...controversial manner at work [by not]...flaunting his homosexuality”.

Ridge, Steve and Warren, however, assigned more importance to an **openly gay lecturer self** within the work context. Steve states that he uses his sexual orientation “...as a teaching tool

around discrimination, stigma, respect, diversity” and exudes high levels of confidence and assertiveness. Ridge also sees no need in divorcing one’s gay identity from the professional role as colleague and lecturer within an academic context, mainly because his courses lend themselves towards themes which centre on gender and sexuality. He notes, “...I’m very much queer with friends...and my students and at the university and anywhere else...there are shades of queerness, some aspects become more salient and others more grounded, but definitely when I arrived at [my current university]...it was clear that I was a self-proclaimed gay man”. Although younger than Ridge and Steve, Warren echoed their views through his exemplification of a convergence of all his different selves as part of his courses in the faculty of arts.

The second formation of the gay male identity manifests the **social self**. Here participants described their ‘self’ as providing them the opportunity to “...get away from academia” (“...wegkom van akademie”) (Christopher) or to be more “...opinionated or stereotypically gay” (“...uitgesproke of stereotopies gay”) (Colin). Don, Hugh and James expressed the ability to be “...freer”, “...private” and “...outgoing”, respectively.

The third form identified by participants was the **political self** through which the gay male may attempt at expressing his views on issues about which he is “...passionate”, according to Christopher in an attempt to elevate homosexuality to a worthy equivalent of the perceived dominance of heterosexuality. Rick stated that his political self may in fact merge with what Steve terms their **network** or **strategic selves**, through which sexual orientation may be used to realise objectives through a subtle rendering of an individual’s gay undercurrent, without scaring off anyone. The fifth configuration was that of the **family self**, to which only six of the participants alluded. Here Christopher noted that he does not engage in discussions on his sexual orientation with family members, since he regards it unnecessary to “...perform” his gayness. The familial setting provides Hugh, Phillip and Steve the opportunity to connect with their family members without having to fear the latter’s retribution since, as stated by Stanley, you need not act in a pretentious manner, but merely be yourself. Robin even went as far as to equate his mother with the stereotypical ‘fag hag’ and close friend, whereas his father’s reformatory attitude forces him to share as little as possible about his homosexuality. Finally, in accordance with the noted feature of freedom associated with family life, the **partner** or **relationship self** also provides the necessary space in which the gay male can be more creative and expressive, as is the case for Rick, whilst Phillip typifies his current relationship as

formation based on love and support. Three participants refuted the differentiation or demarcation of their respective 'selves', whether sexual or social. Alec, Ian and Warren were of the opinion that each of their 'selves' constantly forms an integrated, "...authentic and true self, regardless of the situation", as noted by Alec.

The participants clearly acknowledged the centrality of 'the closet' in their everyday lives, simply through their reflections on the varied 'selves' which constitute their gay persons. This "...reflexiveness" (cf. Mead, 1962) subtly requires them to differentiate between the different configurations they may wish (or are required) to exhibit within or outside the parameters of the academic environment. Of particular interest here, was the fact that regardless of their respective ages (ranging from early 20s to late 60s), the men expressed their disdain with the constrictions associated with the closet. As a result, they either used it as weapon against heterosexist assumptions, or as refuge from discrimination and prejudice. This may consequently also influence their attempts at constructing their identities. In keeping with the in-depth theoretical discussion of the potential phases, stages or themes associated with constructing a gay identity, I provided the men with similar supposed linear (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Dank, 1979; Downs, 2006; Miller, 1998a; Plummer, 1975; 1996; Troiden, 1998; Worthington et al., 2002) and intersectional (cf. Savin-Williams, 2005; Smuts, 2011) classifications. These are elucidated in the next subsection.

5.2.5 Themes associated with the construction of the gay male identity

Five themes, which include **acknowledging same-sex attraction, confusion and shame, tolerance through marginal involvement, accepting and authenticating the gay male identity** and **gay male identity pride and synthesis**, as identified in Chapter Two in subsection 2.3.2, guide the discussion to follow.

(a) *Acknowledging same-sex attraction*

Three periods were identified as the initial experience of acknowledging a different feeling pertaining to sexual and emotional attraction to other individuals, these being **early childhood (four to six years of age), primary and secondary school (eleven to fourteen)** and **student years (eighteen+)**. In terms of the first of these, thirteen participants identified fourth to sixth year of life as indicator of their supposed non-normative emotions and behaviour. Based on his

immediate familial environment which was embedded within a very conservative, Broederbond, Voortrekker and Dutch Reformed Church milieu, coming out was not an option for Alec. This was "...where being different caused massive guilt" which only reinforced "...fear, anxiety and confusion", feelings usually associated with the second theme. These feelings were also apparent to Steve, who through his physical attraction to other boys, identified feelings of "...uncertainty and anxiety". Three participants, Phillip, Robin and Ridge, conflated their initial realisation of a divergent sexual orientation with their gender identity. Phillip recalls that pictures taken of him as a young boy had him dressed in female clothing and holding a purse. "...I was different...I was taunted...you're a fag!" ("*...Ek was anders...Ek was gespot...Jy's 'n moffie!*"). Ridge echoed Phillip's words, since he was "...convinced I was in the wrong body, that I was in fact a girl, I always experimented with the female roles – the princess...I was actually a transgender individual". Robin also equated his realisation with a "physical reaction" ("*fisiese reaksie*") towards boys he found attractive, whilst he constantly exuded "...flapping, I was a girl" ("*...flapping, ek was 'n meisie*"). He noted that he turned his difference towards those who sought to discriminate against him throughout high school.

Other accounts centred on more irrational and less concrete explanations for same-sex attractions. These included Anderson, Greg, Hugh, Ian, James and Warren's experiences. Although Greg's account does touch on the previous discussion of gender, he underlines the fact that, as a young boy, he was "...effeminate" and it was "...easier and more natural to act differently, since you don't know better...what you are you are, you don't try to act differently or explain it to yourself". Anderson remembered that he was gay since "...very early, it was always my experience, I wasn't like other boys" ("*...baie vroeg, dit was altyd my ervaring, ek was nie soos ander seuns nie*"), a thought shared with James who, despite his inability to verbalise his experience, "...had a sense that what I wanted, who I was...was not normal, not usual in terms of the people around you". Ian also provides a similar account, and regardless of the fact that he cites primary school and the high school years that followed as period for acknowledgment, he noted that it "...seems forever". He refers to constant bullying at the hands of others as well as an internalised homophobia, which he struggled with for several years, since "...being different, didn't work for me back then". But the clear link with Greg's explication, came courtesy of Ian's insightful consideration of whether it is the "...difference which makes you gay, or is it the gay that made you different? Just for the record..." As a young boy, Hugh also felt that he "...couldn't explain that I liked him [saw a man to whom he was attracted], yet it was a different physical attraction". Such a physical attraction at a very early age was also characteristic of Warren's

experiences, because at the age of five, he “...felt a closeness to another boy, I wasn’t fearful about this, I was always in touch with myself” (“...’n ‘closeness’ gevoel tot ‘n ander seuntjie, ek was nie bevrees hieroor nie, ek was altyd ‘in touch’ met myself”).

Of the three men who cited their school years as realisation period (Christopher, Matthew and Rick), Rick’s narrative comes the closest to that of Warren. He always knew that he was not part of the “...[heterosexual] clan”, and his close friendship with another boy provided enough evidence for him. He regarded their relationship as very close-knit and even likened it to being a “couple”. This relationship, as will be evident in the discussion of the second theme, later resulted in his first sexual experience. Matthew clearly identified physical and sexual attraction to members of the heterosexual “...clan”, as noted by Rick, as the main indication of his varied sexual orientation. Several social contexts, particularly those which were male segregated, such as school camps and showers, provided him with ‘ideal’ configurations of masculinity. He was attracted to those boys with “...shaved bodies”, since he wanted to look as good as them. He, however, suppressed these feelings throughout his high school years and even attended his matric year dance with a girl. Christopher also attributed sexual attraction to other men as precursor to eventually being labelled as a gay man.

Colin was the only one of the academic participants to acknowledge same-sex attraction during his higher educational studies. He initially suffered an intense inner turmoil and felt that God and his parents were “disappointed” in him, and that the word “fag” (“*moffie*”) was written across his forehead for all to see. He could not express or experience his emotions on an overt level. Such challenges were absent in the accounts of Don and Stanley. Stanley recalls “...not fitting in” during his primary school years, yet never experienced a sense of loneliness since he had a “...strong sense of myself”. Don also provided a liberating account in noting that he “...knew he was different” without the generally expected feelings of disappointment or internal struggle.

(b) ***Confusion and shame***

Pertaining to the second theme, **confusion** and **shame**, **three** subthemes highlighted the narratives of the seventeen (17) men. These included **confusion about gender identity**, **ostracism** and **anxiety**.

Six academics recalled a **confusion and initial conflation of social constructed categories of gender and sexual orientation**. Christopher remembers his attraction to women during his late teenage years, which he associated with a disjuncture between reason and emotions, the latter being more dominant. Warren goes as far as to exclaim, "...I wanted a girl! But they did not want to make-out with me" (*"...Ek wou 'n 'girl' hê! Maar hulle wou nie met my vry nie!"*), but acknowledges that he "...cherished" thoughts about same-sex relationships in secret. Later, and per implication today still, he does not care about what others perceive him to be. Matthew, on the other hand, explicitly refutes ever experiencing feelings of shame but, in accordance with his previously noted caution of being publically identifiable, *still* "...sensors" himself in terms of his words and mannerisms. Steve also related his same-sex feelings to his gender identity during his early teens, but notes that he has "...come to see this as a response [which people mistakenly make] to a world which is informed by narrow gender definitions and of course, anxiety about same-sex attraction". His words thus recall Meem et al. (2010) and Schilt and Westbrook's (2009) reference to the cisgender-model which refers to the seemingly indispensable and unavoidable universal and linear link between one's biological sex, social constructed gender identity and sexual orientation.

This model also added to the confusion experienced by Anderson, who believed that he experienced an "...over-identification" with women in general, and his mother in particular. He justified his behaviour by citing his lack of supposed masculine traits, especially since he was not interested in any kinds of sporting activities. Rick also sought to establish congruence between his gendered and sexually orientated identities through the invasive and brutal practice of conversion or "...shock" therapy. He went for these sessions as means to "...exorcise demons" (*"...om duiwels uit te dryf"*) which, according to him, only added to his confusion. Although this was followed by a period of intrigue into the world of gay men, on his part, he was too fearful to attempt an initial exploration. Only at the age of 32, "...I had had enough" (*"...ek het genoeg gehad"*) and moved beyond feelings of doubt and shame. Conversion as means to re-establish the cisgender model, also figured in the narratives of Greg. At the age of 16, he went to a Catholic retreat with a female friend, who wanted to convert him to heterosexuality. During this time he attempted to compensate through a "...masculine performance" since "...I was not comfortable with me, although I hadn't gone to a gay club yet, I had spoken to my [female] friend about my attraction to men...even when I went to clubs, I felt confused". As a result, a romantic relationship ensued with this girl, which comprised sex, "...so I think I was trying to compensate". The need for compensating (cf. Downs, 2006) was also evident in Stanley's need

to be physically “...stronger!” He noted that he experienced a great deal of so-called “isolation anxiety” based on his sense of being different. He did not know “...how to conform to have people be happy with me. I was not into team sports, I was small, physically weak, something which quickly became a persistent theme throughout this period”.

In addition to the subtheme of gender identity confusion and shame, **ostracism** (or fear of ostracism) was also noted by six participants. Phillip linked much of his confusion to his lacklustre masculine gender performance in the army. He had to endure “...constant taunting...[based] on the focus on how you looked and fared physically, you had to be fit – which I was” (“...konstante spottery...[gebaseer op] die fokus op hoe jy fisies lyk en vaar, jy moes fiks wees – ek was”). Heterosexual men, according to Phillip, were the main source of prejudice and resulting shame. In addition to this he, like Rick, attempted therapeutic approaches, although his was not as physically intense. The counsellor “...wanted to ensure that I was sure that I was gay” and that he would progress to an acceptance of himself, which followed gradually. For Colin, ostracism resulted in increased **ensorship**, since a female friend of his in high school, constantly cautioned him about making overt verbal remarks about his appreciation of handsome classmates – “...Be careful about what you say, others won’t understand it” (“...Pasop vir wat jy sê, ander sal dit nie verstaan nie”).

As was evident from Alec’s previous experiences, he sought to “...prove his worth...” through an intense focus on his career to retain job security amidst an atmosphere of discrimination and prejudice. A degree of secrecy in the workplace also surfaced in Hugh’s recollection of finding it “...difficult to talk about...” issues related to his sexuality. If someone were to inquire about this, he would immediately refute it, particularly if these individuals were his colleagues or students. In addition to Alec and Hugh, Ridge’s recollection of being “...ostracised and teased...” in primary school, resulted in him working harder, as Alec did, “...to be the best [in his work], but **not** in terms of masculinity”. Ironically enough, and recalling Anderson and Steve’s reference to the role of strategy, the ostracism and taunting ceased later in primary and high school, when his fellow students realised that his academic inclination, could aid them in their own studies, “...because I was able to understand the work and explain it to them. So in a way I was exploited by them”.

Only three of the seventeen men were able to provide a more liberated account of transcending confusion and shame. Ian noted that he did endure bullying, but that it was “...nothing to cut

your wrists about” (“...niks om jou polse oor te sny nie”). Don’s strong “...sense of self” and inner “...contentment” (“...berusting”), allowed him the opportunity to never “...fight” (“...veg”) with himself because of his sexual orientation. According to James, he never experienced the feelings of self-doubt or shame, mainly because he was always “...ambitious, driven. I did not feel I was lacking in other areas. I’ve always been in control of my life and not concerned about measuring up”.

(c) ***Tolerance through marginal involvement***

Six participants noted that they afforded themselves little to no marginal involvement following their initial experiences of acknowledgement, shame and confusion. Alec again underlined the fact that he immersed himself in his work in order to prove himself, and in so doing, he “settled” into a long-term relationship in his early 20s and “...never had the time or need to go to clubs or bars”. Phillip, like Alec’s focus on his studies and work, sought out literature and professional help to learn more about his sexual orientation. Role models within academia, were also at the order of the day for Robin, who believed that his self-identified gay professors implicitly taught him the “...ins and outs of being a fag⁴⁵” (“...‘ins’ and ‘outs’ van moffie wees”) through their day-to-day interaction during classes. This, according to him, made it easier to understand his seemingly “...deviant” sexuality. Others who experienced minimal marginal involvement included Christopher, Colin, Stanley and Steve. Colin told me that he had a relationship with a woman from his second to fourth year during his studies. “We were a wonderful couple”, yet when the issue of sexual intercourse arose, he was unable to reciprocate her sexual attraction, and the relationship ended. Christopher’s first face-to-face introduction to gay men was with two “...very effeminate and flamboyant” men in his high school. Based on their clearly stereotypical behaviour, he found it very difficult to associate with them, which only added to the already existent disjuncture between his rational, emotional and physical attraction to men and women. Steve, however, felt “...confident and comfortable” from when he was nineteen, without an extensive group of gay friends.

Stanley was one of the first, in terms of this theme, to vividly (and unknowingly) reflect and comment on Jackson and Scott’s (2010) reference to the rationalisation of sexuality.

⁴⁵It should be noted that this use of ‘fag’ (or the Afrikaans ‘moffie’), was used in a humorous and joking manner by the participant, and not in the derogatory way which characterises much of contemporary LGBT and queer studies-rhetoric. His use of the word recalls earlier academic conceptualisations courtesy of Brontsema (2004), Epstein (1996), Gamson (1995) and Jagose (1996) in Chapter Two.

Nonetheless, he was also very withdrawn and displayed more of an individualistic orientation in understanding himself; "...[I] may have taken a different path if I was more physically attractive, maybe then [I] would have dated women". He thought that his evident conflation of gender (an ideal to be more masculine or muscular) and sexual orientation (which would have resulted in heterosexuality), could be attributed to his first "dominant" same-sex physical experience which he equated with "...being raped". He spoke of a very attractive seventeen year old athletic boy in his high school, of whom several rumours persisted pertaining to sexual escapades with younger boys:

...I remember him flirting with me. I remember wanting it, wanting him. I was scared. We went into a darkroom of the school used for developing photos...He took advantage of me...It was my first experience. It felt like being raped. But I allowed it to happen. My feelings moved from excitement, to pain, trauma.

Based on the noted rumours, "...a scandal erupted" after the athletic boy was caught with another male student and was publically scorned, humiliated and eventually expelled from the school by the principal. Since the issue of homosexuality was ridiculed in such a public way, Stanley feared that his involvement (as one of many) would be discovered, which did not happen. Relationships which followed were also characterised by disappointment and pain, based on the first as "...hidden and closeted" and the second ending "...traumatically" and without warning (both of which he did not want to elaborate upon in further detail). Stanley's marginal involvement through sexual intercourse was also apparent in Ian's interview. Although it was "...less of a public thing" ("*...minder van 'n openbare ding*"), he was able to discuss more "...fragile" ("*...broos*") things about sexuality during his years as university student. This freedom, however, was embedded within a dualism, since its "...excitement" ("*...opwinding*") went hand-in-hand with "...fear, anxiety" ("*...vrees, angstigheid*"). Sexual experimentation, both physically and academically existed concurrently. He did not "...want it to happen, but it did, it was at the order of the day" ("*...wil nie hê dit moet gebeur nie, maar dit het, dit was aan die orde van die dag*"). Regardless, he, as was the case with Colin, dated women, since the topic of homosexuality was still very much taboo for both himself and the external world he found himself being part of. Another dualism came to the fore courtesy of Rick's reflections. He recalled the confusing initial sexual relationship he had with his friend in high school, but credits his years as university student as pre-eminent "exposure" to gay life. His dualism was ascribed

to the fact that although he sought “freedom” (*“vryheid”*) as gay man, he was not entirely ready for it. He notes:

...I could not accept myself, since there was a big part of my being which was not ready for it...on the other hand I yearned for being free, who I wanted to be as I saw in their [his fellow gay students and lecturers] lives. This caused many psychological struggles, I developed a schizophrenic personality...with times I would be a rebel and livid and other times I would be in such denial that I would even tell a gay guy ‘fuck off’...⁴⁶.

Others who equated this theme with sexual experimentation *within* a predominantly gay community, included Anderson, Don, Greg, Hugh, Matthew, Ridge and Warren. A larger contingent of gay male friends made initial involvement all the more easier for Hugh, Don and Ridge. Hugh even reflected on “...how would I incorporate the rest of my life with this?”, which heralded a queer thought, since one would assume that the reverse consideration should rather be true. Anderson, Greg and Matthew all provided an international account of their first gay experiences. Greg’s sister served as his guide and role model when she accompanied him to a gay and lesbian club, whereas the other two men recalled the liberating effect a European city had on their views of being gay. Anderson noted that in Europe he was given more of a “...choice” (*“...keuse”*) to visit these gay spaces, and although Matthew found his first introduction to gay culture in clubs “horrible”, based on his ignorance on issues related to gay culture and sex, “...eventually it wasn’t so bad and I was able to tolerate it and just let go!” Both deemed the South African society less accepting and inclusive based on the country’s “...internalised oppression” of sexual minorities (Anderson) and judgement “...the moment you exude it [sexual orientation]” (Matthew).

By progressing through the phases, stages and/or themes of marginal involvement and possible tolerance, the participants provided examples in their narratives of the acceptance and eventual authentication of their gay identity.

⁴⁶Original Afrikaans quote: “Die gewaarwording was tweevoudig, meer onseker laat voel, want ek kon myself nie aanvaar nie want daar was ’n groot deel van my menswees wat nog nie reg was daarvoor nie...aan die ander kant het ek gehunker dat ek kon vry wees, wie ek wou wees soos ek in hulle lewe gesien het. En dit het gemaak dat ek baie sielkundige worstelings gehad het, ek het ’n baie skisofreniese persoonlikheid begin ontwikkel...met tye was ek rebels en woedend en ander kere was ek so in ‘denial’, dat ek selfs vir ’n gay ou sou se ‘fokof’...”.

(d) ***Accepting and authenticating the gay male identity***

Three varied periods characterised a sense of accepting and authenticating the gay identity. **Firstly**, five participants noted that it was during their early 20s that they first started to accept their homosexuality. According to Ridge he was “...most comfortable with my own body between my 20s and 30s”, which one could attribute to his initial positive interpretation of being judged as sexual object. Steve entered into a five-year relationship between the ages of 21 and 26, a period during which he was able to expand his network of gay friends and also affiliate himself with LGBTQ organisations. The role of individuals or groups in attaining acceptance, as was the case with Ridge and Steve, was also a welcome source for Greg and Robin. The former again cited his lesbian sister as undoubtedly supportive to be “...fine” with his sexual orientation at the age of 21 since “...she helped me immensely, she guided me”. Robin commented on the examples provided by his professors as blueprint for his gay lifestyle whereas James’ visits to several gay bars during the late 1980s provided “unbelievable” insights into the possibility to “...socially, not sexually, explore what it meant to be gay”. Of interest here is the fact that he believes that much of gay acceptance, and per implication authentication and synthesis, have been reduced to hedonism. Bars and clubs, for many gay men, become the first context in which they can communicate and connect with others, predominantly through their physical bodies. In later years, he was disappointed with the lack of social support these milieus afforded him, since he had no list of rules, rituals or socialisation into a gay lifestyle. Sexual intercourse, according to him, affords men the opportunity to experience connectivity, regardless of the fact that it may be momentary.

Secondly, the interim period of middle 20s up to early 30s was a turning point for several of the gay men, including Rick. The moment he experienced unquestionable acceptance within himself, was when he confronted his mother with the news that he was getting married to a man, which he thought of as “...less supportive”, since she was concerned about the reactions of others. The mere fact that he was able to assert himself in her presence provided him with a sense of acceptance. Parents also figured in the recollections of Ian who argued that he accepted himself “...precisely at 26 years of age, the night of my father’s death”. During the moments directly following a phone call informing him of his father’s passing, he recalled sadness but remembers exclaiming, “I’m free, you don’t need to fool nobody no more!” Stanley’s traumatic experiences in high school made this period ideal for recognising himself as gay

because he “...wasn’t going to play anyone’s game...I never want to be younger than 25, those were not easy years and times”.

The **third** period is partially embedded in a queer paradigm, since Alec, Christopher, Colin, Hugh, Matthew and Warren all alluded to the “...process”-quality of their identity (de)construction. Alec noted that he continuously progresses from one group and context to another, each of which presents its own unique advantages and limitations, including a constant explanation and reaffirmation of your sexual orientation to others. This incessant process, for Christopher, is based on the critical proclivity afforded by his academic specialisation field (as part of the social science faculty), which necessitates him to regularly use his studies “...as mode to explore, experiment and politicise sexual attraction”. Warren noted that he was still “...in process, I don’t talk about it” (“...steeds in proses, ek praat nie daaroor nie”). What makes it even more difficult for him, is the fact that there are very few gay men who serve as role models he could aspire to be and, as such, he is always looking for that one image or person which will convey what he believes ‘gay’ means. Although also “...in process” (Warren), the remaining three provided more negative views on their lack of acceptance. Hugh attributed his feeling to the fact that he was “...not yet completely comfortable...” with his homosexuality. Matthew referred to his fear of judgement and Colin experienced an unease with the category ‘gay’, since he refuses to be labelled and “...boxed in” (“...ingeboks word”).

If one were to refuse an overt identification as gay, it may become all the more difficult to establish, what Cass (1990) refers to as an identity pride and synthesis. This is because such an inclination assumes one’s commitment to advocating on behalf of the gay lifestyle and ‘consolidating’ (Connell, 1992:744) one’s homosexuality as an inherent part of your social and sexual self (cf. Troiden, 1998:273). Of interest in the feedback of the academics, was the fact that they mainly associated this pride with activism to attain acceptance and inclusion of homosexual individuals in society.

(e) ***Gay male identity pride and synthesis***

As an example of the preceding reference to activism, Steve referred to developmental work in LGBTQ-organisations since his late 20s nearly thirty three (33) years ago. Moreover, Anderson, Christopher, Don, Greg, James and Phillip indicated that they would confront homophobia or other forms of discrimination and inequality directed towards sexual minorities, when the need

or opportunity arises. The relativity associated with meanings ascribed to 'identity pride' or even 'gay', brought about that Ian and Warren refuted any possibility of ever mastering such a theme in their own lives. Ian thought himself "...comfortable with his own life" and Warren argued that "...gay is what you make of it", both of which present a constructionist ontological view, rather than a queer eradication of gay homogeneity. James referred to a similar ideology, since he again reiterated the fact that gay men, including himself, will continuously find it difficult to know "...where to look...[or] which norms to ascribe to..." in being gay. You have "...no means of understanding who or what you are sexually because you are subsumed into the fabric of heteronormative culture as a minority". Such categorisation would remain intact based on Anderson's justification for his position as academic/activist by arguing that "...as long as you fight against the oppressor, you are caught in the struggle" for equality. In Greg's case however, contextual factors came into play, as he recalled being surrounded by a group of men at the gym in the locker room, where the majority of them made negative comments about homosexuality. Rather than confronting or joining them, he remained quiet, based on the fear of what the consequences of his pro-gay statements would be.

The only academic that opted for a queer critique of assimilation of the gay male identity into heteronormativity was Ridge. He cited his role as social scientist, as basis for his reasoning:

...That [the position of identity pride and synthesis] is precisely where I am at the moment. Teaching about gender and sexuality... I'm not a gay activist, I am very critical of the gay movement in SA. I feel that I display an academic activism through the study of gender and sexuality, I try to make it very visible in the academic environment.

The remaining individuals indicated their lack of identity synthesis, with Rick lamenting the fact that he has far too many things that have not yet been "...dissolved" in terms of questions and struggles about his sexual orientation. Both Colin and Matthew felt that they have never reached this point in their (gay) lives, mainly because of their disdain and fear associated with negative labels and possible prejudice.

The decision to integrate themes with the phases or stages associated with gay male identity construction proved to be invaluable. This is because the narratives of the respective academics clearly indicated an inherent intersectional quality to their attempts at coming to terms with their

homosexuality. Although their feedback imbedded their experiences within particular phases, Smuts' (2011) critique of the proponents of linear identity construction models (including Cass, 1990; Downs, 2006; Miller, 1998a) was evident. One needs only consider the fact that references to the "...process" quality of gay identity formation signals a continuous interplay between the intra- and interpersonal scripting (cf. Simon, 1996) of the participants, depending on their given context and available resources. In keeping with the extensive theoretical overview in Chapter Two, this subsection again exemplified the challenges and opportunities faced by the academics in both their personal and professional lives. In terms of the latter, the subsection to follow provides a detailed account of the data accrued during the seventeen interviews on the role of the gay male identity within the parameters of the **university context**.

5.2.6 The gay male academic in the tertiary educational context

In keeping with the objectives of the study, the processes of rationalisation and reflexivity characterised not only the experiences of the academics in their private lives, but also those in their professional contexts. One needs only to consider the preceding references to the reflexive attempts of the participants in order to consciously differentiate their different 'selves' depending on their immediate environment. So as to extensively explore this argument, six themes, based on the literature consulted in Chapter Three, guide the discussion to follow. These include a focus on the potential **discrimination** against sexual minorities in academia, whether the participants deemed their university campuses as **safer contexts**, the probability of remaining or coming out of **the closet**, the **gendered nature of collegiality**, the 'gaying' or 'queering' of higher educational content and finally, the role of **safe spaces** or **zones** on campus.

(a) *Discrimination as overt or covert*

Three responses typified views on questions related to discriminatory practices directed towards the participants on the respective campuses. These included recollections of **explicit** and **subtle** examples of homophobia as either interdependent or separate. The third subset of responses posited the participants as more **conflicted** concerning the issue of discrimination.

Three men provided accounts in which they posited discrimination as being **explicit**. Anderson recounted his experiences as proof of **explicit homophobia** during his initial years in the academic profession. He recalls that his first interview as undergraduate student to continue his

postgraduate studies at his then university, members of the particular department lambasted him with religious and heteronormative rhetoric and questions in an attempt to impress upon him their non-acceptance of homosexuality. His interview lasted longer than those of the other prospective students, who, according to him, did not contradict the academic and religious ideologies of the department. The most recent incident occurred when he was criticised for focusing on research which dealt with homosexuality and gay rights, rather than other forms of social inequality and exclusion in South African society, which include class, ethnicity and race.

In accordance with Anderson, James argued that his participation in a series of discussions on diversity at his university, provided examples of discrimination. He attributed this to the fact that although institutional management requested the initiation of such discussions as an attempt to sensitise university staff and students to sexual diversity on campus, these managers failed to attend the sessions. This "...spoke volumes" of their disassociation with the theme of sexual diversity in general and also in particular, from the presenters involved. He was of the opinion that their own absence and that of any representative(s) from their offices signalled their perception of oppression from homophobia as "...meaningless and unimportant". He also commented on the inherent irony such lacklustre support fostered, since institutional management constantly (and still do) emphasised the importance of teamwork, yet avoided any association with the workshops. The reason for this, according to him, centres on the fact that they only encourage teamwork when it is on *their* own terms. They thus facilitate and reinforce a twofold message, (a) that homosexuality and the plight of supposed sexual minorities are insignificant for mainstream and/or academic debate, and (b) that you and I who are involved in "...acting out" issues associated with gender and sexual diversity, are also to be considered "...meaningless and insignificant". The mere fact that gender and racial diversity and equality are always listed as pre-eminent priorities in line with the progressive South African Constitution and, per implication, form part of the national discourse (as evident in Anderson's noted experience above), sexual orientation is, according to him, constantly sidelined and underlines the message that if "...I'm not part of the norm, when I try to do it [participate in workshops on sexual diversity or lecturing courses on LGBT issues, for example] on your own, you will be left on your own and to your own devices".

The more **subtle** example of discrimination faced by Rick centred on the “...implicit” heterosexual norms which govern general behaviour in his university context as well as specifically in his department. These behaviours are subsumed in subtle examples of formal criticism of his colleagues during departmental meetings, rather than explicit verbal or non-verbal homophobia. Such so-called constructive criticism was, according to him, examples of underlying “...personal vendettas” (“...*persoonlike vendettas*”) founded on his sexual orientation. Stanley also provided an example of his superiors and fellow academics citing departmental objectives and need for course material, as evident examples of the manner in which debates, which he included as part of a course which dealt with, amongst others, sexual diversity issues, to be curtailed in mainstream courses. He notes that some of his colleagues probably thought him to be “...eccentric or just silly” in wanting to present the course. He continues, “...I tried to fight for the course...but you know the department felt it was peripheral, non-essential, eccentric and non-sensible for [the] mainstream”.

Such accounts, arguably, could lead to the justification given by one of Rick’s colleagues positioning himself as “...self-proclaimed gay academic” in his academic institution and specific department, which in turn, may exacerbate the polarisation of the heterosexual and homosexual ends on either side of the sexuality continuum in academia. In doing this, Rick both questions the meaning of such a self-proclamation and the particular academic’s degree of acceptance if he expresses the need to explicitly disassociate and distinguish himself from heterosexuals.

Six participants expressed their **conflicted** perspectives on discrimination. Although no one has ever explicitly discriminated against him, Hugh argues that people make “...summed up assumptions about you” before they have met you. This makes it all the more difficult to change their eventual perspectives. Greg and Stanley also ascribe more of a subtle and “...hidden” quality to prejudice. According to Stanley, gossip persists consistently about those individuals who are different from the mainstream, whereas Greg regards himself as “...lucky to choose my career as lecturer, most of my colleagues are female, which makes it easier, it provides a ‘different feel’”. Regardless, he is very cautious in his overt behaviour on campus because of the likelihood of homophobia courtesy of his head of department. In terms of his own experiences as gay lecturer, Ridge contends that he was informed by his students that certain lecturers in his department “...struggled” with his emphasis on “...non-heterosexual” themes in his professional life. He notes that

...if you are a formal [academic], or you do formal research, they do not fully understand the practical reasons or implications of why I do what I do. There was never an incident, an overt discrimination, but sometimes what is not said, or the sighs, rolling of the eyes at certain meetings are more telling than any words.

Ridge does however believe that it would be “...unfair” of him to equate his colleagues’ behaviour as evidence of their disdain with homosexual individuals. In contrast to Ridge’s experience, Ian noted that his work environment provides a “...touch of okayness” for being gay, since many of his colleagues are also gay or lesbian. Colin also noted the implicit nature of discrimination through exclusionary practices – “...It’s the gay guy, he doesn’t do it [participate in sport] with us” and they correspondingly also do not even attempt to entertain the idea of his possible willingness to take part.

Finally, seven men noted that they **did not** experience any direct or indirect personal discrimination. Based on his mostly ‘ad hoc’ involvement in academic work at several universities over the last few years, Alec expressed the view that his sexual orientation was not relevant. Many of these universities, upon requesting his services, explicitly request presentations on LGBTQ issues, during which he purposefully delves into his own life experiences to supplement the academic content. Steve’s narratives expressed a similar perspective when he stated “...my work is about sexuality, gender, identity and discrimination, so me being gay is not a surprise to anyone!” In accordance with Ian, Christopher wholeheartedly conveyed his appreciation for the freedom and “...tolerant” context his academic department facilitates “...through the pursuits of creativity”. Warren, who ‘resides’ in a similar faculty as Christopher, this being Arts, also reflected on the “...comfort” of his immediate academic context based on the fact that other lecturers are in fact also gay. As such, he believes that this liberating environment affords him the chance to serve as role model for his gay students, something he would have cherished. Matthew, on the other hand, expressed more of an inclination of self-critique (or what one could consider as internalised homophobia) in the manner he manages himself in public, especially towards colleagues and students. This process intensified after students asked him whether he was in fact gay, based on the manner in which he spoke and articulated his words. Robin, like Matthew, also seeks to keep his private life “...private” and does thus not experience direct threats, whereas Don has opted to remain

“...famously blind for certain things...I don’t allow my being gay to interfere with my work, I’m one of the team”.

The perceptions of the participants regarding experiencing discrimination in the academic environment based on their sexual orientation also related to the ideologies they ascribe to in their professional lives, with a principal focus on their views pertaining to **safety** in the academic milieu.

(b) ***The tertiary academic context as safe space***

As with the foregoing discussion on discrimination, the gay male academics provided conflicting responses to whether they regarded their academic context as **safe environment**.

Seven of the men believed their university campus **to be safe**. Amongst them were Alec who still lamented the fact that his own department, after all these years, has not requested any academically orientated contributions from him on the subject matter of lesbian and gay studies, whereas other departments have. Christopher again underlined the definite safety *within* his department, whilst he still censors himself during his lectures, “...It is wrong to push the gay agenda. People are too sensitive for it” (“...*Dit is verkeerd om die gay agenda te ‘push’*. *Mense is te sensitief daarvoor*”). Although Phillip answered “yes”, he still hesitated seconds later with a “...I think so. It is necessary to include these issues in the curriculum for students to be exposed to it, so that they are exposed to diversity...It provides more freedom to the lecturer” (“...*Ek dink so. Dit is nodig om die kwessies in die kurrikulum in te sluit sodat studente daaraan blootgestel word...Dit gee meer vryheid aan die dosent*”). Anderson, Colin, Matthew and Warren also answered in the affirmative. For Colin, the fact that he is not “...explicitly out” (“...*eksplisiet uit*”), makes this inconsequential. If he were out, however, he believes that it may become a problem. Although secretive, Matthew referred to his ability to use the university’s computer system (Internet) to navigate between various gay dating sites during work hours, whereas Warren attributed the “...incredible openness” (“...*ontsettende oopheid*”) of his campus for gay people to the fact that he receives several Facebook-invites from gay students weekly. As academic, he believes the world to be more “open” (“*oop*”) and that he is “...super comfortable” (“...*‘super’ gemaklik*”) in expressing his sexual orientation. Much of this, for him, is based on his access to academic literature courtesy of proponents of queer theory.

The responses of seven participants signalled more of a **conflicted**, rather than an 'either-or' view on the issue of safety. Although Ridge's responses serve as example of Cass' (1990) identity pride and synthesis, he is still nervous when meeting students during their first year of studies, since he does not know what their views on the subject matter may be within a more generic module. He contrasts this feeling with a greater sense of assertiveness when interacting with postgraduate students, since they have made a conscious decision to continue with their research in his particular field of expertise. Rick echoed Ridge's approach in so far as he is "...careful" ("*...versigtig*") in his interaction with colleagues and especially students. He deems discretion as imperative, since one will never fully know how others will react or act towards you, if they were to be aware of your sexual orientation, regardless of the "...gay friendly" nature of his university. "Tolerance", according to him, "...is context specific". Greg exemplifies this argument when he recalled his HOD's (Head of Department) apathetic reaction to his marital status, "...He did not even congratulate me. It would have been different had I married a woman, maybe he would have congratulated me".

The role of context also figured in Steve's account. He commented on gay men's intrinsic ability to denote possible underlying prejudices, because "...spaces where homophobia may be covert, or hidden, or implied and I believe one learns, as a gay person, to pick up these vibes and act accordingly..." In addition, Don, Hugh and Robin also adapt to their particular class or departmental contexts, to avoid any possible identification and resulting discrimination.

Only two participants thought their academic contexts did **not** provide a safe environment, namely James and Stanley. Stanley's views complemented James' cynicism concerning his university management's lack of constructive input to safeguard sexual minorities. Building on the post-1994 climate in a New South Africa, Stanley started to write academic articles which provided a "...way of coming out...you were labelled, but you didn't care". The evident incongruence between his private and public identities was expressed in his statement that such research was "...encouraged" but that the "...default position in my personal life is to be more cautious". James in turn regards the notion of safety as a "...fraught idea" because of the "...tenuous position you as lecturer have in relation to your students...How do you [as gay man] lead by example? How do you intervene to create a safe space? This is very difficult". He continues by emphasising the relative ease black individuals may experience in dealing with racial discrimination, based on the affordance of primary importance to issues of race and racism in the national discourse. "Sexual minorities", according to him, "...are not provided with

this preferential treatment, you are not regarded as designated minority in the country. To normalise your sexual orientation, you have to put yourself out there, but again the question remains to what extent you have to put yourself out there to make a difference". His argument recalls several academic references to the incongruence between the South African Constitution's protection on the basis of sexual orientation, and the actual "...lived experiences" of sexual minorities as reflected in (the absence) of policies and practical procedures put in place by, amongst others, institutional managers of universities. Before this happens, the creations of such safe(r) spaces are not likely. Consider his explanation:

...There's a problem for gay people in power, by its very nature it's complicit in a range of disciplinary, subject, body or thought issues...when I'm interacting with my managers, I'm not in a safe space. When people are interacting with me, they're also not in a safe space. The only way in which you will be able to make a difference, is by tapping into your agency on an individual level...you have to do more to establish change...

Varied responses typified the views of the academics on the nature of discrimination on their respective campuses. Regardless of whether the participants experienced it as overtly or hidden, homophobia underlay much of their narratives. Reasons for this related to the centrality of heteronormativity, stereotypical views of homosexuals or a lack of constructive action on the part of the university management to safeguard their sexual minority constituency. Conflicting responses characterised the views of participants on the relativity of meanings assigned to the concept of **safety**. Regardless of the fact that seven academics thought their campuses to be safe, such safety was (and potentially continues to be) subsumed in the heterosexist fabric of the campus climate. Associated with the theme of **safety**, consideration was also afforded to the nature of **the closet in academia**.

(c) ***(Un)Locking the closet door in the tertiary environment***

Several participants indicated they consciously remain closeted in their work environment. Colin cited that he was more prone to remain closeted on campus for "...professional reasons", particularly in his area of specialisation. Hugh expressed his disdain with the fact that gay men are expected to proclaim their sexual orientation to others, whereas heterosexuals are not expected to do the same, a thought alluded to earlier by Ridge. As such, he does not identify as

gay publically. In the case of Ian and Steve, both indicated that their sexual orientation is known to the majority of their colleagues and students, but based on probable "...fear of discrimination", they remain closeted. According to Ian, his mannish appearance leaves those with whom he interacts to assign a heterosexual label to him. He does not necessarily and willingly correct them, since he avoids "splashing" his sexual orientation through "...flamboyant" or "...flapping" mannerisms on an overt level. Steve, on the other hand, chooses to hide his sexual orientation in those instances where he could use an assumed heterosexually applied label to his advantage strategically, or where he in fact fears discrimination or prejudice at the hands of those who are homophobic. Greg, correspondingly, argues that his research interests centre on the position of minority groups in South African society. Regardless, he does not choose to proclaim his sexual orientation to members of his immediate department, since such a choice, according to him, would first entail an in-depth reflexivity beforehand to determine their possible response, an approach favoured by Matthew as well.

Alec and Christopher noted similar views as explanations of remaining closeted. Christopher attributes his decision mainly to spare ignorant individuals "embarrassment" if they were to be confronted with a homosexually identified individual. He argues that it "...is different for heterosexual lecturers, you [as gay lecturer] have to avoid 'saying too much'. I have become too desensitised. Would a straight lecturer even consider this?" Don provides a similar description of his sexually orientated and gendered workplace performance. He argues that he does not use a "...gay sensor as such, I just alter my sentences to keep references to [biological] sex as neutral as possible. Based on my course [in the faculty of natural science], I need not edit 'gay' out of my presentations"⁴⁷. Alec recalled experiencing prejudice during his initial years as part of the social science faculty of his university in the latter part of the 1960s. During this period, he became involved in efforts to establish equal rights for homosexuals. He remembers that "...although his academic performance was good,...they sabotaged my every attempt to find [and secure] a job [in their department]...I eventually found a job and realised that I had to keep a very low profile and work my butt off to prove my value in the workplace... (probably the equivalent of staying in the closet)...but it did not prevent me from participating in gay research". Anderson, Colin, Phillip and Steve heralded similar accounts of their current workplace behaviour. As part of the faculty of arts, Phillip initially had to welcome and entertain national and international guests who assumed that he was heterosexual. In an attempt to avoid any

⁴⁷Original Afrikaans quote: "...'n gay sensor as sulks nie, ek wysig my sinne om verwysing na [biologiese] geslag so neutraal moontlik te hou. Gebaseer op my kursus [mikrobiologie], hoef ek nie 'gay' weg te 'edit' nie".

unnecessary publicity for the department, he consciously refrained from proclaiming his sexual orientation publically. So too, Colin noted that certain events involving fellow colleagues or students, necessitate him to remain closeted.

Anderson and Steve emphasised the necessity to use their sexual orientation, through amongst other disclosure or foreclosure, to gain strategic benefits. Anderson recommended that one should allow others (heterosexual colleagues and students) to first provide their perceptions on certain issues pertaining to gender and sexual orientation, "...before you disclose your sexual orientation first". He explains his recommendation as an effective means to *gradually* introduce and sensitise colleagues and students to "...something different from themselves". His field of specialisation affords him the opportunity to constantly address and challenge stereotypes directed towards sexual minorities. Because of this, he believes that he has never had to hide his sexual orientation from others, since his work environment is currently extremely "...liberating" ("*...bevrydend*"). Steve also underscored the importance of a gradual disclosure of one's gay sexual orientation as strategic means to an end. Although he regards coming out as "...a political act", he cautions against the alienation of heterosexual individuals upon a rushed disclosure. He explains, "I prefer to build a rapport and then come out. It's much more effective and challenges their perceptions".

In addition to Anderson, four other participants did not understand the necessity to foreclose their sexual orientation in the academic environment. Based on his focus on gender and sexuality, Ridge is adamant that he does not purposefully censor himself or remain in the closet in the academic context. He in fact uses personal anecdotes to establish a rapport with students in order for them to relate abstract theories to their own lives. In doing this, he underlines his main objective as lecturer, "...my teaching is about being uncomfortable, it's all about unsettling common sense...I don't believe in censorship". Although not censoring himself, Christopher is however weary of not forwarding his own personal or political agenda through his teaching, whereas Stanley's cautiousness is overwritten by his need to "...fly a kite and see where it goes", as it relates to presentations on homosexuality in his module content. His need to establish a balance between caution and "...flirtation with controversy..." is in a sense attributed to the greater ease he has come to experience with his sexual orientation over the last few years. In stark contrast to these two accounts, Rick has kept the closet door and its lock firmly in place to avoid unnecessary public identification. He recounts that he has and will never establish a stronger bond with his students through, for example, disclosure of his sexual

orientation. He argues that a reciprocal sharing of experiences and struggles between lecturer and student, can turn into a dangerous game of power, not exclusively sexual. The moment students realise that there is a common ground they may use it to their advantage to manipulate the lecturer. As such, he is very "...cautious" ("*...versigtig*") about students, "...they are dangerous...You have to sensor yourself...there is a place and time for everything" ("*...hulle is gevaarlik...Jy moet jouself sensor...daar is 'n plek en tyd vir alles*"). He thus believes that if you were to serve as role model for a gay student, it should occur on a spontaneous and *not* purposeful manner, in order to safeguard your professional reputation.

Finally, James, on the other hand, argued that the more important question to consider is not that of censorship or foreclosure on the part of the gay academic, but rather whether the university's management has in fact ever called on him to address the topicality and importance of sexual diversity in an academic context – "...This is a shared responsibility, when initiatives are taken by individuals, pitch up!" His words are based on the noted lacklustre and apathetic response the institutional management of his specific university displayed in terms of initiatives, to sensitise staff members and students about gender and sexual diversity.

(d) ***Collegiality as gender performance***

Seven participants commented on the probable relationship between 'gay male-heterosexual female' bond within the organisational context. Don, Phillip, Rick and Warren seek to establish a stronger bond with female colleagues, based on their negative perceptions of heterosexual male collegial relationships. Phillip finds heterosexual men "...bombastic, intimidating...toxic", Don has no "...frame of reference" in terms of such relationships and Warren regards women as "...more interesting" ("*...meer interessant*"). Men, according to him, are very insecure about their sexuality, which in turn, renders the establishment of a deeper bond with them difficult. Rick cites the age and traditional ideologies of the older white Afrikaner male academic contingent as central factors which inhibit stronger gay male-heterosexual male bonds. Greg, on the other hand, focused more on his cynical perception concerning gay male competitiveness and "...bitchiness" within the gay community or groups. "Women", for him, "...tend to compete more amongst themselves, not with gay men". Matthew and Robin underscore Greg's perception respectively, since they find it easier to "...talk to women about men regularly" and if they were to choose, women were seen to be the preferred group, based on a shared experience of marginality. Eight of the men preferred a balanced relationship with both men and women, citing

the importance of the shared interests, personality traits and reciprocal comfort with women, regardless of their biological sex. Only Colin commented on his more asocial inclination as reason why both men and women may be friends, if he so chooses. The only other individual to note the importance of male friendship/collegiality was Robin. He did, however, qualify the sexually orientated nature of his choice, as being gay men.

James, on the other hand, provided an insightful argument on collegially gendered behaviour. He argues that based on the pristine "...heteronormative ritualisation" into which heterosexual individuals are born, or as he phrases it, the fact that they are "...born into unthinkingness", discrimination and inequality faced by sexual minorities are posited as unimportant to heterosexuals. As such, he notices discomfort of both certain men and women with homosexual individuals, based on their ignorance of the subject matter, rather than the preferences of the gay men. Based on this, gay people are not necessarily given this luxury and subsequently, have to become all the more reflexive in determining the most appropriate behaviour for a given context. "Socialisation" for gay men, according to James, "...comes through the body, there are no social norms. Straight people have strategies, guides, rituals, to contextualise their behaviour. Gays try to make light in a dark space, without these sources". Creating such a bond through bodily contact, is an all-encompassing and ever existent feature in the lives of gay men in particular.

It became all too clear based on the feedback, that the gendered nature of collegiality did not play as evident a role as the research in, amongst others, the United Kingdom indicated (cf. Rumens, 2011).

Conversely, several insights were in fact provided on the inclusion or exclusion of homosexually themed topics in higher educational curricula.

(e) ***Assimilating homosexuality into South African academia***

In order to explore the role of assimilation of LGBTQ themes in either mainstream or exclusionary curricula in tertiary education, this subsection will focus on the probable influence of the areas of expertise of the academics on their conceptualisation of their gay identities. In addition, the necessity to have a gay lecturer in classes as well as gay themes in university courses or modules, is also addressed.

(i) *The influence of academic specialisation on being gay*

Some of the academics including Alec, Don and James, acknowledged the possible link between their particular area of academic expertise and the construction or experience of their gay male identity. Although stating that for him “...**no**, but in the case for many others, **yes**”, Alec recalled the indirect manner in which he was able, under very demanding circumstances, to construct a more positive sense of self. He remembers that during the 1960s and 1970s, academic content on homosexuality in his field of study, was marginalised as “...deviant, a moral issue” to dispense of. Don based his choice on the lack of any precise link between his academic area of specialisation in natural sciences and sexual orientation. James too, believes that his lack of emphasis on activism in favour of the gay community and his position of power at his particular university, lead to the fact that his “...academic work doesn’t lend itself to it...if I was doing work on sexual orientation or identity formulation or theorisation, I would have been more interested in a gender run community”.

As to be expected, those who answered **yes** provided different reasons based on the divergent content of their varied disciplines. Ian noted that in his discipline, studies on sexuality occupy a central, “...consistent” (“...*konstante*”) place, since “...diversity is a constant given, constant, constant” (“...*diversiteit is ‘n konstante gegewe, ‘constant, constant’*”), a thought echoed by fellow scholar, Anderson. In terms of the two academics who reside in the faculty of arts, Hugh and Robin emphasised the creative freedom their area of specialisation provides homosexual individuals. Hugh explained that their field “...affords the opportunity to be more expressive and [that it] is comfortable with issues on sexuality...you break down barriers since you need to be honest in your performance. Such honesty forces students to be honest in their work as well, since they are comfortable with themselves”. Robin, also stressed the centrality of queer theory and debates on sexual orientation in this field.

Those in the faculties of arts and social science (Warren and Ridge) cited the association of their sexual orientation with their work. Warren reiterated the role of queer theory on diversity and sexual plurality as imperative parts of his modules, which in turn, has motivated him to alert students to the importance of studying academic literature in a critical way to unearth possible truths about their own sexuality. Christopher also highlighted the role of gender and queer theories in his own understanding as well as those of his students in their own lives, and their

representation of diversity in contemporary society through their fine arts. Relevant theories in his particular field of study (in the faculty of arts) have, according to Phillip, necessitated him to read "...widely on the topic of sexual diversity..." in order for him to "...discover new information and aspects of his self...", something that has unmistakeably broadened his view of social themes. Both Greg and Stanley, as social scientists, display an interest in the position of marginalised groups in contemporary South African society. Because of this, foci on sexual minorities have not only alerted them to the struggles faced by these individuals, but also inspired and "reaffirmed" Stanley's commitment to fight injustice, based on his own perceived subordinate position.

Three social scientists, i.e. Matthew, Rick and Steve, provided contrasting interpretations to justify their answers. As has been evident based on his narratives, Matthew's current context inhibits him to attempt the eradication of discrimination against himself and others, regardless of his commitment to it. Rick, however, has come to realise that gender and sexuality are fluid and that every individual, including him, daily narrate a different account of his experiences. He has been alerted to the "...brutality of man" ("*...wreedheid van die mens*") and has sought out a link between his "...persona and being gay...my persona is more dominant than my being gay, through this I am afforded people's trust, respect and understanding of what I want to do, there is room for creativity". Steve compliments his research on sexuality as main source for putting him at ease about his sexual orientation, based on his extensive reading of relevant literature. Colin, as educational scientist, echoes the words of Rick, in as much as his research has informed him of the rights of homosexual individuals in education in general, but also his personal rights on his own campus.

Academic specialisation, as biographical variable, undoubtedly influenced the perceptions of the participants. Those specialising in particularly the arts and social sciences commented on the manner in which their respective disciplines require them to either project higher levels of honesty, civic engagement or a queer critique as these relate to issues associated with homosexuality. Such a commitment may in fact also entail an explicit or subtle use of one's sexual orientation as **gay academic**, whether this manifests as lecturer or researcher.

(ii) *The role of the gay male in academia*

Colin's realisation of his importance as gay educator (although invisible, based on his previous answers), is mirrored in that of James, who believes that students "...need to wake up to the fact that they live amongst diversity". Yet, somewhat contradictorily, he notes that such a realisation on the part of the student should lead to a "normalisation" of sexual fluidity, since these students are given the opportunity through tertiary education to "...grow up intellectually".

Such an exercise in intellectual maturity may be supported through an increase in visibility of gay and lesbian lecturers in the university classroom. Even though Ian advocated for a more neutral approach to teaching and Steve accentuating visibility through disclosure as based on "personal preference", nine participants argued that it was of the utmost importance for gay lecturers to serve as role models for their heterosexual and homosexually identified students. "Nothing beats a good role model", according to Alec, who further identified two positive features associated with a visibly proud gay academic. Firstly, it may create an awareness of well adjusted gay people in their everyday lives and environments which could coincidentally have a "...healing influence on the lives of young people". Secondly, through such exposure the provision is made for an "...incidental educational effect" to mainstream heterosexual individuals in an attempt to enlighten them about homosexuality, an argument supported by Christopher who equates this effort with a "...need [for students] to be confronted by diversity" to posit it as "...normality" ("*...normaliteit*"), something which is gravely lacking on his campus, as was also evident in the accounts of Hugh and Robin. In so doing, Phillip believes that this confrontation of sorts could sensitise others about the problems associated with discrimination and prejudice. Role modelling of this nature could further create an "...open, more approachable and accepting" class culture, versus the more "...rigid old professor in a box" ("*...oop, meer toeganklike en aanvaardende*" / "*...rigiede ou professor in 'n boks*") which seeks to establish a clear boundary between him and his students. Stanley compliments Matthew's thoughts by stating that regardless of the fact that it may be "...over-generalised, it has become apparent to me that we are prone to be more sensitive, attuned to our environment, more nuanced and can provide a more insightful analyses of society". An awareness of diversity could manifest what Ridge believes to be a destabilisation of the centrality of heteronormativity. Consider his assertion:

...Heterosexuals don't realise that they are constantly flaunting their sexuality – them being married, their kids...it's so hegemonic. So dominant that people have stopped seeing it, so it's good for me to be openly non-heterosexual, brings sexuality into public sphere...If I were not open about my sexuality, I believe I would be doing a great disservice to the next generation of [social scientists]. It's a thoroughly political act.

Four gay academics dismissed the necessity to have a gay or lesbian as lecturer. "A lecturer is a lecturer, why does gay have to be added?", Colin inquired. "Competency", according to Don and Warren, should override the sexual orientation of any lecturer, despite the fact that it may provide some implicit support to minority students. For Greg, the representation of these individuals by themselves, or by the institution as "...tokenised", should be representative of the true demographics of society's diversity, rather than a stereotypically homogenised view. Whether necessary or not, Stanley stressed the "...acute" understanding of gay people concerning "...life's battles" considering their own "...anguish" through marginalisation, which in turn, could provide a critical edge to higher educational learning. As such, Anderson emphasised the necessity of 'out' lecturers to use their disclosure as means to further normalise and integrate varied sexual orientations in mainstream academia, if the academic course, lends itself to it.

(iii) *The necessity for including homosexual themes in tertiary curricula*

Educational scientist James, questioned the necessity to incorporate or link human rights to academically orientated courses and curricula, in other words, why should a link be established between the personal and academic? And in the event of such a course, one should consider the integration of such modules or curricula into mainstream programmes, rather than standalone or exclusive LGBTQ courses. So, in reiterating Anderson and Don's wish to have the course "lend" itself to the discussion of content on sexual orientation, James' words underline two possible configurations that homosexual themes could take if included in tertiary curricula. But did gay academics deem it necessary to do so?

Although all seventeen of the academics considered such a course or inclusion of content in other disciplines as beneficial, some displayed trepidation. Consider for example, Alec, Rick, Stanley and Steve's recommendation for a more "...mainstream integration" to avoid a

“...separate and exclusively exceptional course” (Steve) which could lead to the course becoming “...ghettoised and stay[ing] hidden” (Stanley). According to Steve, these courses should be based on expert knowledge as means to mobilise efforts of visibility and resourcefulness on a broader level. Alec does however believe that it could prove valuable to first implement a course as more exclusive and specific in order to identify the particular themes, elements and principles which will form the bases for future initiatives. Whether exclusive or appealing to a broader student corps, Christopher, Colin, Hugh, Matthew, Phillip and Warren considered it necessary as means to inform, sensitise and educate students on both secondary and tertiary levels.

Ian and Ridge cited the responsibility of tertiary educators in compiling a course as means to implore an intersectional focus on race, class, gender and sexual orientation as mutually reinforcing and influential. Ridge attributes this to the fact that, as alluded to by James, the national discourse facilitates and guarantees continuous and excessive debates on mainly gender and race. It does not, however, do the same for debates on sexual orientation. So too, Robin believes that such a course could bridge the disjuncture between the provisions of the South African Constitution and grassroots efforts through rigorous discussions which could influence policies and practical procedures concerning the experiences of sexual minorities. The mere fact that interested parties who may wish to attend will forego to do so based on fear of being labelled or targeted, according to Greg, more than substantiates the necessity for an in-depth consideration of the importance of homosexuality on the national agenda.

The participants identified **twelve themes** to be included in such courses. These ranged from basic **terminology** and **definitions** to a **historical perspective on the lives of sexual minorities** nationally and internationally in several disciplines such as politics, psychology and sociology. Such a historical focus could comprise foci on South African history, religious debates and historical invisibility in the past. Thirdly, the values of the Constitution based on reciprocal respect for human life should also be afforded attention in sections on **equality and similarities between heterosexuality and homosexuality**, whilst a social constructionist account on the inherent **diversity within gay communities**, could serve as fourth section. The influence of **homophobia** and **counter reactions** and a **sensitisation** to gay lifestyles were also listed as imperative fifth and sixth sections, respectively. The importance of **feminist, gender** and **queer theory** should also not be underplayed by the activists or experts who wish to introduce debates on sexual orientation to the higher educational context, as evident in the

seventh, eighth and ninth recommendations. Pertaining to feminism, Steve believes the inclusion of critical debates on gender and patriarchy are very important, whereas queer thinkers such as Judith Butler, David Halperin and Gayle Rubin's contributions, must provide the framework for various subsections. This could underscore the tenth recommended section on the **distinction between gender and sexual orientation**, according to Rick, which adds to the same critique heralded by Rubin (1993) and Sedgwick (1993, 2008). The final two sections could provide an in-depth account of **African epistemologies** on sexuality and the **interrelated relationship between sex, gender and sexual orientation**.

In addition to the preceding views on safety in subsection 5.2.6 (b), the importance ascribed to this particular theme on South African university campuses, again arose as a primary consideration. Whereas the subjective experiences of the participants were at the forefront of the previous discussion, the following section demarcates specific **recommendations** made by the gay male academic concerning the safety of sexual minorities in academia.

(f) ***The university as safe(r) space in South Africa***

Here emphasis will be placed on the recommendations directed towards university management to become key players in safeguarding homosexual individuals on a higher educational level. This will be followed by a critical consideration of the potentially liberating effect of safe(r) spaces on university campuses in South Africa.

(i) ***The university as central role player in advocating sexual diversity***

Nine recommendations for involvement from institutional management of South African universities were provided courtesy of the seventeen (17) academics. These included the following.

Firstly, management's involvement was (and is) deemed imperative. Stanley again implores a movement away from the "excessive" focus on gender and racial equality, and an exclusive focus on the inequalities and struggles faced by sexual minorities. The accounts of some academics, most evidently James, have painted a very stark picture of current initiatives in this regard.

Secondly, if in fact involved, management should clearly **compile and demarcate clear policies and practical procedures when dealing with discrimination**. Alec, Ridge and Robin felt this to be necessary since management should act with “...conviction and clarity” They did express their concern and fear about either the lack of existing policies or the ambiguity associated with formal procedures. This was evident in Colin’s statement that he “...doesn’t even know what they [management] do”. He believes that they currently turn a blind eye since their ignorance informs them of a harmonious status quo: “...Maybe in the long-term something will be done” (“...Moontlik oor die langtermyn sal iets gedoen word”).

Thirdly, in getting involved, one could assume that institutional management could further add to its responsibilities by **normalising homosexuality** through more inclusive advertising and/or publicity, as well as moving away from a strict reformatory or religious ideology which excludes individuals based on religious or faith-based ideologies. In terms of the publicity, Hugh and Robin recommend placing a “...gay face” on the university website or using gender neutral language, with various links to information related to the institution’s LGBTQ-life and not merely shy away from sexual diversity.

Fourthly, one could only assume that normalisation will lead to a clear **campaign against hate crimes based on sexual orientation**. These campaigns courtesy of management should be made clearly visible, according to Steve, as to reinforce the importance and support based on plural sexual identities.

As **fifth** recommendation, **debates** on sexual diversity should be introduced and facilitated through institutional and management initiative, and not merely based on individual initiatives on lecturing levels. Individual contributions, such as that of Anderson addressing managerial caucuses of several universities are laudable, but impede proactive contributions from vice chancellors, rectors and deans. In taking up this challenge, Rick believes that a modern (and clear non-queer) “...tolerance” could be afforded and as noted by Steve, “...raising awareness for staff and students” could build the necessary bridges.

Through debates, management could green light **courses on LGBTQ** issues on their campuses. These courses could be, as evidenced in the previous subsection, more mainstream in nature (incorporated into gender and sexuality courses in various disciplines) or more

exclusive. Regardless, Alec, Anderson and Christopher argue that its inclusion is imperative, and serves as **sixth** recommendation.

In the **seventh** place, **funding for relevant research** should be provided. Here Anderson indicated that he has indeed received such financial aid courtesy of his faculty. In gaining this support, one would be able to attend conferences, deliver papers and write articles which in turn, is not only advantageous for the university in terms of merit or financial gain, but also for the individual researcher in establishing networks.

An **eighth** initiative could include the support afforded to **LGBTQ student organisations** on university campuses. But, these organisations, according to Phillip, should not merely take on a sociable objective, but rather be given the opportunity to deliver input on higher managerial levels (whether faculty or senate based) with regard to policies concerning the safety of sexual minorities as well as academic initiatives such as courses and research.

Finally, Steve believed that **safe spaces** should be provided for. This initiative was of course explicated in more detail in the last section of Chapter Three. Views on its role and need will be discussed in the final subsection to follow, pertaining to the narratives of academics.

(ii) *The role of the safe(r) space in academia: Assimilation versus transgression*

Two questions were posed to participants to determine the feasibility of safe spaces on university campuses – whether it would be **beneficial**, and if so, what **form** should it take.

Safe spaces as beneficial (or not)

In terms of its potential **benefits**, nine academics thought safe spaces to be a good idea. Alec and Anderson believe that students, who may currently be struggling with certain issues or adversities, may find these spaces or people very helpful and supportive, a thought highlighted by Don and Steve as well. To alleviate the stress and uncertainty associated with coming out, gay people need to be surrounded by like-minded individuals, something safe spaces should be able to provide. Based on several reformative counselling models in religious based universities, sexual minority students might be faced with recommendations of “...praying away” homosexuality based on naivety or ignorance according to Christopher. In an attempt to bring

them towards an acceptance of their sexual selves, Christopher, Hugh and Matthew recommend a more objective, non-judgemental and open-minded context. Both Ian and Robin also highlight these advantages, but comment (although differently) on how safe spaces may further reinforce assimilation into heteronormativity. Ian recommends a “bottom-up” approach to the creation of such spaces in a “...organic manner, since I hate it to force something on people...it needs to be organic in order for people to buy into it. There are enough rigid people out there, it is not necessary to encourage more of them [so]...you have to attract people” (“...organiese manier, want ek haat dit om iets op mense af te forseer...dit moet organies wees sodat mense daarop inkoop. Daar is genoeg rigiede mense daarbuite, dit is nie nodig om nog van hulle aan te moedig nie [so]...jy moet hul aantrek”). Robin, on the other hand, takes on less of a purposeful essentialist attitude since he believes that safe spaces, although laudable, could reinforce the idea that your sexual orientation encompasses your entire identity, something which, according to him, is not an issue for heterosexuals.

There were those academics, including Rick, Ridge and Stanley, who regard safe spaces as potentially beneficial, but advised its initiators to ‘proceed with caution’. In the short term, as means to sensitise and safeguard sexually dissident groups, Ridge regards safe spaces as advantageous. Yet,

...it is a clash in my mind between the ideal world and the real world. In an ideal world we should not be kept safe when, for example we walk hand-in-hand in [a mall] with another person, irrespective of their gender, man with a man, woman with a woman, or a transgender person, and no one should react. But unfortunately, that’s not the reality...*If safe zones are here in 20 years’ time it means we have failed somewhere.*⁴⁸

In addition, Rick refers to the inherent dualism existent within the safe space. On the one hand, universities are in fact obligated through law to protect these individuals but, in doing so, propagate the message that the ‘us versus them’, ‘the other’ or heterosexual/homosexual binary, is justified. Rick explains this by arguing that such protection “...alienates” (“...vervreem”) gay men, for example, from the ‘real’ world, since they come to expect that they will be protected everywhere from any possible threat. This also serves as strong comment on Halperin’s (1995) criticism against the younger New York-based members of Queer Nation in

⁴⁸Emphasis added.

the early 1990s, who believed that they were entitled to protection based merely on their transgression of gender and sexual boundaries, without a clear understanding of the historical events which made their claims possible (cf. Gamson, 1995). Stanley explained his trepidation about safe spaces by contemplating the problems several academics may in fact face in deciding as to whether they want to opt for an academic *and/or* activist role, or neither. What may make this particularly difficult for the conscientious academic, as noted by Stanley, is the fact that the individual will need to make a choice: On the one hand, to take on a greater degree of objectivity as purely academic, or on the one hand, as in the case with Queer Nation, to position himself as academic/activist, thus a self-entitled subjective transgressor of scientific conventions, which may call into question his contributions in terms of lecturing and publications.

Such contentiousness was elaborated upon by three other academics. The central theme which characterised the negativity Colin, Phillip and Warren displayed towards safe spaces, was the fact that it creates an **exclusive space** which becomes a **soft and easy target for victimisation** from anti-gay groups. To alleviate such a problem, Warren recommends that one incorporates sexual orientation intersectionally with other social variables such as class, ethnicity, gender, race and sex, to address several possible sources of exclusion and prejudice.

The many faces of safe spaces

In the event of the implementation of such spaces, I provided examples as part of the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, of the **varied configurations** it may take on for the consideration of the interviewees. Their preferences included **one-on-one consultations** as part of a student's guidance centre (Alec), qualified and informative sessions with lecturers (Christopher), the dissemination of pamphlets as part of a follow-up service (Matthew and Warren), and the participation of other professionals including psychologists and social workers (Hugh). Don and Christopher did caution against the possible threat such a close-knit relationship between lecturer and student presupposes, especially if no clear institutional policies and procedures in terms of same-sex sexual harassment are in place. To overcome this, Rick advocated that these consultations should not arise out of a conscious and formal initiative, but rather spontaneously based on day-to-day adversity and struggle.

Secondly, **social activities** were also commented on as probable safe space. Steve argued that universities should provide formal or informal resources to facilitate these kinds of activities for homosexual individuals, which could take on the form of weekly get-togethers for both students and lecturers alike, according to Greg. Matthew even went as far as to recommend that homosexual individuals should invite heterosexuals to a "...gay-night", in order for the gay or lesbian group to feel more at ease within a particular context. The already noted **LGBTQ courses** were also identified as safe space. What could be interesting in positioning safe spaces into the realm of mainstream disciplines, is the fact that gay and lesbian individuals could then feel safe within a non-homosexual milieu, and per implication the larger university context. This thought underlined the ideas of mainstreaming brought to the fore by Alec and Stanley within this context. Finally, in order to avoid overt identification of individuals who wish to access support services, Christopher, Colin and Don recommended the use of online, e-mail, telephonic or cellular phone services. Don for example noted that a student could be requested to send his or her student number as a text message to a cellular phone number, upon which a confirmation for support will be sent back to the student.

This pre-eminent focus on the safety of the sexual minority academic and student, may in fact serve as example of the taken-for-granted centrality of heterosexism on university campuses. As such, of interest in the preceding section, is the fact that the theoretical and empirical themes addressed in Chapters One to Chapter Four, clearly surfaced as part of the narratives of the academic participants. Consider for example the explicit examples of rationalisation, self-reflexivity, performativity, attempts at curtailing heterosexism or debates on challenges and recommendations associated with the safety of gay academics. The mere fact that these central concepts, categories and/or themes emerged from the empirical findings, more than justifies the research objectives of the study. The participants' narratives comment on the potential influence of the heterosexual/homosexual binary in contemporary society, and the subsequent negotiation academics may need to engage in, concerning the varied components of their social and sexual self (or selves).

In keeping with the listed general and specific objectives of the study as well as the outline provided in section 5.1, the section to follow centres on the accrued findings courtesy of the views of the twenty four (24) gay male students who participated in either in-depth interviews (seven) or completed a self-administered questionnaire (seventeen). This is done not only to

explore their lived experiences, but also to consider how they may differ from their academic counterparts.

5.3 THE GAY MALE STUDENT AS POTENTIALLY RATIONALISED AND REFLEXIVE AGENT

In order to explore the perspectives of the students and determine whether differences or similarities exist in terms of the experiences of gay male academics and students on their respective South African campuses, the identical themes concerning the opinion-related questions posed to the participants, were used to frame the discussion.

5.3.1 Defining the gay identity

When asked whether the students identified as gay, all twenty four (24) answered **yes**. Three dimensions were identified as indicators of what it means to be gay – **emotional, romantic and sexual attraction**. Several of the participants noted a synergy between either two or all three of these dimensions, including Eric, Jared, Jay, Kevin, Pat and Victor. Eric noted that, initially, his attraction to other men was solely physical and sexual, but with time, emotional connectivity also became important. Although also emotionally attracted to men, Jay ascribed most of his emotional bond to women, whereas his sexual attraction is solely for men. Such an “...exclusive” physical appeal was cited by thirteen participants as primary dimension used to define themselves as gay. They related statements which included “...I think boys are hot”, “...I am physically attracted to men, not women”, “...I like guys”, “...I know I like men because that’s who I think of when I masturbate” and “...I enjoy sleeping with men”.

Others who could not necessarily provide a tangible reason for their homosexuality, as was the case for several of the lecturers, heralded remarks which included Dallas’ “...I am who I am, just me”, Jack’s “...this is simply the way I was born” and Neville’s “...I feel something for other men”. Dallas, Pat and Trevor also added a religious explanation as part of their more unexplainable attraction (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010). The former, for example, argued that “...If God wanted me different, I would have been created differently”, whereas Trevor stated “...This is who I am, and who I was created by God to be”. Adam and Russell’s contributions provided more of a critical reflection in defining their sexual orientation.

Russell felt “...more comfortable with the concept of being ‘homosexual’, as opposed to ‘gay’”. He noted that although the category of homosexuality was “...old” or “...tainted” with less than positive connotations, for him, it is more indicative of how he experiences his sexuality, since it implies the noted physical, emotional and romantic attraction to men. The concept ‘gay’, on the other hand, refers to a “...lifestyle...behaviours, opinions, views and culture...ascribed to...because I am romantically attracted to a person of the same sex”. This, he feels, makes him more vulnerable to be stereotyped by others than merely being defined as homosexual. But although he does not wish to ascribe to the ‘gay’-label, it becomes incredibly difficult to disassociate the two concepts because, “...in order to survive and navigate through life in a way that is psychologically balanced and healthy, does require some endorsement of gay culture”. Adam underscores much of Russell’s argument, because he believes that the ‘gay’-label presupposes an identity to which men are “...forced to conform, or at most, are expected to follow”. In an attempt to eradicate such a rigid and stereotypical homogenisation of gay men, he is “...slowly shifting away from the label and standing as a human that is attracted to members of the same sex”, rather than a gay man.

This queer approach to human sexuality could also influence an individual’s preference to either associate or distance himself from a visibly gay community or group. The students elaborated on the choice as to whether they wanted to conform to a communal view of homosexuality by forming part of a gay group, or opting to remain separated from others who also identify as gay.

5.3.2 A choice of individualisation or collectiveness: The (in)visibility of the gay group

This subsection will firstly introduce the reader to the perspectives of the participants on public gay male identification, and secondly, give an overview of their private personas.

(a) *The public persona of the gay male student*

Regardless of the reason for identifying with or refraining from assimilating into a gay group, the following subsection provides an overview of the more public contexts in which gay men may come together.

(i) *Contexts of public gay male association for students*

The question on whether establishing a visibly public gay male identification should be regarded as important, was met with varying responses.

In terms of those who **affirmed its importance**, seventeen participants provided different reasons as to why they want to form part of a gay community or group. The provision of a **role model** was cited by Jason and Jay. Jay noted the importance of such a person or group depending on the specific stage of a person's life, whereas Jason deemed it necessary to "...teach" ("*...leer*") someone how to be gay. The importance of a **place of security** (or **safe space**) was also highlighted by Dalton, Kevin, Roger and Victor. This could afford the gay male the chance to be himself without fearing judgement, excessive labelling or isolation. This could lead to the creation of a **social support structure** of which the individual may form part. It might also make it easier for him to share his needs and beliefs with other gay men, as was evident in the feedback from several of the participants. Dallas noted that one may be able to alleviate some of the challenges and difficulties faced as part of a gay lifestyle, yet this group need not be formalised. In order to choose such friends, Adam and Dale regarded it as imperative to associate with individuals who display similar interests, regardless of sexual orientation. But if these individuals are in fact gay, it makes it easier to talk about Dallas' noted concerns. In so doing, you are, according to Eric, given the opportunity to get to know yourself better. Trevor illustrated this point in reflecting on his membership of an inclusive gay church, "...I discovered my identity, values and purpose in life".

Although the importance of a reciprocal social support system could prove invaluable, Quincy and Russell displayed more trepidation in their answers. The former cited his individualistic orientation as central reason for being somewhat weary of public gay male identification, because he "...does not need them to be powerful and independent" ("*...nie hul nodig om kragtig en onafhanklik te wees nie*"). Russell also considered communal identification as beneficial, but not as "...permanent point of identity reference". It should only serve a temporary purpose for those recently out of the closet in order to meet more gay people and gain "...understanding, guidance and support". This should however become less important after the gay male has learned "...how the system operates" pertaining to certain "...behavioural cues, body language (collectively: 'gaydar')". If one were to stagnate and conform to a specific guideline of how to be

gay, you will inhibit any chance of defining and understanding your own sexual identity and its expression in a unique and diverse manner.

Russell's view resonated in Pat's argument. He, alongside Morgan and Paul, did **not consider communal identification as important**. According to him, individual development could be hindered if one were to be "...overwhelmed" by the pressures of conforming to the expectations of a larger group. The latter two students were far more negatively inclined than Pat. Morgan expressed his absolute disdain for gay groups, since they only provide "...forums for sleeping around", whereas Paul stated that it would open you up to unnecessary ridicule and scorn, based on an inability on the part of a gay male, to conform to certain stereotypes.

Depending on their answers, students were also requested to reflect on whether they attend public gay spaces, including bars, churches or clubs. They again provided varied responses.

Several of the gay students indicated that they **do indeed attend** public contexts which are either gay-friendly or primarily gay orientated, including bars, clubs, churches and even hair salons. Relating to the latter, Quincy reflected on the therapeutic effect female hairdressers and other "...random" patrons afford gay men while doing their hair, since one is afforded a context in which you are able to talk about your emotions. He also provided a clear distinction between the different objectives and effects bars and clubs manifest for their gay clientele. Bars, according to him, offer men the chance to "...visit, catch[] up with friends" ("*...kuier, 'catching up' met vriende*"). A club, on the other hand, is "...all sex, dance, enjoying yourself" ("*... 'all' seks, dans, geniet jouself*"), a context in which Jason argues "...men come together, get drunk, reckless. [The] gay reputation of sleeping around" figures greatly. Paul is of the opinion that gay men tend to "...exaggerate" their homosexuality in such settings, regardless of the fact that some may argue that they "...act" their true selves. But the mere fact that you are not given the chance to do this outside the parameters of the gay bar or club, reflects an inherent problem with both the groups with whom gay men associate as well as problems with their own sexual orientation. He does, however, contend that these places may safeguard one from fear of being ridiculed by the mainstream homophobic public.

Akin to Quincy's differentiation, Jay also stated that he is very "...loud and his 'funny self'" at bars and "...way out" at clubs. When attending the gay church in his area, he attempts to act more "...prim and proper" ("*... 'prim' en 'proper'*") because of the more respectful behaviour

deemed appropriate in this context. Gay churches for Eric, however, are “...too unnatural” (“...te onnatuurlik”) since you are forced to mingle with a specific homogeneous group of people, something with which he has a problem. The existing bars and clubs in his immediate environment are also not conducive, because the gay patronage appear to be too “...uncertain” (“...onseker”) about themselves and thus attempt to be “...different”, but become more similar – “...rude, and visit too much with each other” (“...ongeskik, en kuier te veel met mekaar”). This thought was mirrored in Dale’s account of the key principles which are regarded important in a gay bar, which lead him to consider **both** the **benefits and potential difficulties** associated with going to gay bars and clubs:

...gay people always want to look better, younger and more desirable than the people surrounding them. They go out to ‘meet’ people and not to have a good time...the atmosphere is ‘stiff’ and uncomfortable for people.

As such, he prefers going to gay-friendly, heterosexually owned and operated bars and clubs, since these are free of the noted “...pretentiousness...[and] uncomfortable looks”.

Those who noted that they **do not attend gay bars, clubs or churches**, provided the following reasons for their answers. Russell reiterated Jay and Quincy’s differentiation between the three noted settings as part of his explanation. Bars and clubs, according to him, are always very sexual in nature, “...so unless you’re there to simply dance and enjoy yourself, with the emphasis on *yourself*, it is quite unpleasant and boring, unless you’re looking for a hook-up”. He recalls that all initial acquaintances were “...sexually charged” and created a context which was “...very competitive...and extremely superficial”, as noted by Dale. Churches were just as problematic, because they appeared to be comprised of several cliques which were not welcoming. He recalls attending one such church where a copy of the *Exit*-newspaper was in full display upon entering. Although he bears no ill will towards the particular publication, he does however question the necessity to provide a newspaper “...with sex classifieds” in a church – heterosexual churches do not hand out copies of *You*, *Huisgenoot* or *Junk Mail*. In short then, his experiences in all three were “...awful”, and he does not believe that any of these contexts currently serve any purpose or even provide the opportunity to network or meet other people in order to establish “...a sense of belonging”.

Trevor echoed Russell's sentiments, in so far as he fears that it may reinforce stereotypical thoughts and behaviour which validates promiscuity and heavy drinking, particularly in bars and clubs. Although Morgan initially opted to attend bars and clubs in order to meet other gay men, he was overwhelmed by its intrinsic nature. The clubs, according to him, were "...literally too dirty" ("...letterlik te vuil") in terms of its physical facilities, but also "...too dirty and disturbing" ("...te vuil en 'disturbing'") concerning the behaviour exhibited by others. Regardless, his first visits resulted in a 'morning after'-experience, when he woke up next to a naked man in his bed, to which he responded "...holy shit!"

The participants also elaborated on the importance of public gay male identification, as reflected in their views on its potential benefits and/or pitfalls.

(ii) *Positive and negative features associated with overt gay group identification*

Positive features associated with overt gay group identification included the following. It provides a context which facilitates **advocacy and activism** in order to work towards the acceptance of homosexual individuals within mainstream society. This could **educate** heterosexual and non-heterosexuals about gay identity and life. In doing this, Russell believes that both groups will be more informed and able to understand and "...read social cues in terms of being gay" as part of, what he terms, a "...gay school". If such understanding is created, gay men should move beyond a mere identification with others akin to their sexual orientation, and integrate into mainstream friendships with heterosexual men and women in order to further "...enlighten" them, something he regards as one of his primary responsibilities. Yet, at this stage in his life, there are very few positive features he associates with identifying with a larger group, since he has been able to establish a balance between his heterosexual and gay friendships – with very few ties with the latter group. Additional educational efforts could also centre on **safe-sex advice** (Idris), **role modelling** (Pat) and an **expansion in knowledge** (Dale, Idris) through, amongst others, the provision of **advice on current lesbian and gay issues** (Adam, Dale, Henry, Jay, Neville and Trevor).

References in the preceding subsection (i) on the provision of a **support group or structure** in order to **establish a sense of belonging** were again mentioned by several gay students. This is regarded as imperative by Morgan, because it serves as guide to the gay man through his initial stages of coming out. It also provides individuals the opportunity to join after such

disclosure (Quincy) as well as “...comfort” (Jack) and “...self-confidence” (Eric). Such self-confidence also manifests based on a **power in numbers**-approach, because forming part of a larger group of homosexually identified individuals, you may experience a sense of safety, joint mobilisation and “...speak for those who can’t speak”, according to Jay.

In addition to the more positive side of communal identification, numerous **negative features** were also mentioned. It was argued that **labels could be assigned** to the gay male in order to further reinforce **specific stereotypical understandings** of homosexuality. This, according to Jay, could result in exclusion from mainstream society or exacerbate stigmatisation, taunting or mocking of homosexual individuals, as evident in Raymond’s remarks. As such, gay men, as noted by several students, become **easy targets for homophobia** which could result in abuse, bullying or other forms of prejudice. As a result, **further divisions** between heterosexual and homosexual individuals are created according to Roger, because you are “...always reminded that you are different” (“...altijd herinner jy is anders”) and thus opt to rather remain in the closet (Kevin, Neville and Sam).

Divisions may also be established **within the gay community** based on several issues. These include generalisations about the meaning of homosexuality (Jay), jealousy and gossip (Dale), “bitchiness” as well as a “...outsider/within” (Paul) feeling based on exclusion if you are not able to conform to certain expectations. Such expectations might lead to **individual gay men being judged based on the actions of the larger group**. Here stereotypes such as sexual promiscuity and drunkenness were again cited by Morgan who stated, “...I am just me. I’m not going to go to all that trouble to come out, and then become something else other than my true self” (“...Ek is net ek. Ek gaan nie moeite doen om uit te kom en dan iets anders as my ware self te word nie”). Idris and Trevor reiterated Morgan’s words by underlining the **superficiality** and **homogeneity** gay group identification presupposes. The former referred to the fact that these spaces are merely used for sexual “...hook-ups” whilst the latter targeted particularly electronic forums, such as Facebook for its role in perpetuating rigid conceptualisations of gay male sexuality. He notes:

[These sites or forums are]...just about gay rights, parties, drinking, photos of attractive guys or guys furiously looking for a ‘boyfriend’ although they are not even at peace with themselves...[It] creates a ‘doomed picture’ of a ‘doomed

existence' as outsider, where drinking, promiscuity and partying are the only elements of life.

Based on this, Dale believes that gay men “...**overstep boundaries**” of acceptable behaviour in society by reinforcing stereotypical and destructive behaviour.. For a young man emerging from the closet, a **pressure to conform to stereotypes** is embedded in their frame of reference, including the noted oversexed behaviour or being “...full out gay...[by] swearing, yelling [and] talking about sex” (“...‘full out’ gay te wees...[deur] te vloek, te skel [en] te praat oor seks”) (Eric).

But how did these varied views of positive and negative features about a public gay male identity, influence the perceived importance and nature of the gay students' private personas?

(b) ***The private persona of the gay male student***

Pertaining to questions on the private sphere of the gay male students, two questions enjoyed most of the emphasis, these being the importance of **safety** within this sphere and the possible influence of its **design** on creating a safer milieu. The private settings identified were threefold – the students' own apartments, student housing or the homes of their parents.

Two students lived with their parents at the time of the interview. They regarded their family home as safer context. Paul and Trevor ascribed this to the fact that their parents' acceptance makes it easier not to care about the judgement or perceptions of others. The only participant to live in student housing, Jason, does not regard the joint living arrangement as necessarily safer, since he is accepted everywhere. He did however note that the bisexual orientation of his roommate makes it somewhat easier to relate to another who may share similar obstacles based on one's sexual orientation.

The remaining men indicated that they lived in their own apartments. Their views on the safety of these environments and its design were however different. Jay and Russell did not believe that their homes afford them more safety. Although Jay's home provides more of an “...open space” (“...oop ruimte”) filled with an array of colours and “...scented candles”, he noted that he does not find it difficult to live out his sexual orientation in different arenas. Others expressed a sense of increased safety courtesy of their private apartments. Dallas, in accordance with Jay,

also cited the importance of design, particularly in terms of colour and art, in creating a sense of safety and security. He clarified his reasoning as follows:

...[I'm] a lover of simplistic layout. The concept of 'less is more'. I'm a lover of arts,...mixing neutral colours with a dash of flavour by adding a bright wall or bright artwork to break from the ordinary...stylish and creative.

By creating such an artistic space, he argues that his apartment is a "...safe haven" which separates him and his boyfriend from the remainder of society. Here they can be "...affectionate, and be ourselves – here we can be who we want to be without feeling judged". Jack also reflected on the "...safe and unjudged" nature of his home, where he is able to express himself in a natural and "...spontaneous" manner. He supports Dallas' thoughts on the importance of this "...safe haven" without "...fear of judgement". Both Dallas and Jack echoed Ridge's (the social science scholar) link between the modern and postmodern, with Jack's similar reference to his love of antique and vintage furniture and modern pieces, a combination of old and new. Roger added to these in-depth artistic descriptions with his account of his apartment. In addition to its open layout, his bedroom is "...totally me [and includes] [s]unglasses, small portraits and other objects decorating the window sill". His bed is comprised of a flower duvet, knitted throw and colourful pillows. All of these elements, according to him, make his residential setting "...an escape" from potential homophobia in the city where he lives. Eric's apartment also grants him the opportunity to decorate it with his favourite colours and flowers because of his "...open sexuality". Although his private sphere and the university campus are both relatively safe, his parents' house makes it very difficult to express his sexual orientation.

Quincy also believed his "...very hygienic" apartment to be safer, since he does not have to be as "...alert" for potential homophobic acts. Morgan shared this view due to the fact that he "...does not easily leave his comfort zone" (his home) and he need not "...make eye contact" with others who are in a position to judge him. Finally, Dale contended that although his private one-room apartment may be more financially expensive, a hostel or student house living-arrangement would have compromised his relationships, studies and personality. As such, he echoed earlier emphases on material design as redeeming factor, by noting, "...Gay people want to be private, so they may spend money on things to make them feel safe".

The preceding section on establishing an individualised or communal gay male configuration, presented varied views. Those students, who advocated on behalf of a collectivist orientation, did so for several reasons. They cited as important the security, sense of belonging, support structures, education and role modelling that a gay male segregated setting provides. The students who expressed caution in uncritically embracing such subcultures, referred to problems engendered by a “gay sensibility” (cf. Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a), provided several reasons. These included the exacerbation of the binary logic, a reinforcement of stereotypical labelling and the potential for gay men to become easy targets for homophobia. To potentially redress such obstacles, other students reflected on the safety their private settings provide. In addition to the students’ experiences in a private or more public context, questions were also posed on the potential sources for stereotypes which may inform the (de)construction of their gay male identity within these two spheres.

5.3.3 The gay male stereotype: Internal versus external scripting

Two questions framed the focus on stereotypes associated with homosexuality – **whether** the students conformed to specific stereotypes, as well as the **sources**.

(a) *The gay male stereotype as blueprint for gay sensibility*

As with the previous focus on gay male stereotypes in the section which dealt with the views of gay academics, the students commented on the three stereotypes provided as part of the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire (**body consciousness, diva-worship and friendships with women**). In addition to their divergent perspectives on these, they also cited other probable stereotypes. A number of students **refuted** any attempt at conforming to stereotypes. In terms of **body consciousness**, Kevin thought himself to have a “...deep voice” rather than a more effeminate one, whilst Dalton found it unnecessary to wear certain clothes, because of his homosexuality. Those who expressed a **preoccupation with their body** provided varied reasons. Roger underlined his obsession with fashion as well as his appearance. In order to justify this potential obsession, he referred to his hairstyle, self-tanning, a stylish dress code, his mannerisms as effeminate (given the context) and his way of speaking. The importance of being “...neatly groomed” (Jared) was evident in the feedback from several of the students. Dallas, for example, commented that he is “...extremely conscious about my appearance and especially my hairstyle...as a gay man I feel the need to conform or reach

specific goals such as exercise and dress code". Realising these goals, as reflected during Eric's interview, is imperative. Since, without a beautiful body, one may in fact not be able to find love. Jack noted that "...by being gay", he is in fact pre-empted to ascribe a great deal of importance to external aesthetics, a view mirrored in the contributions of Dale's reference to "...hair, clothing, accessories" and Henry, Neville and Quincy's accentuation of fashion trends, including clothing which is "...colourful, tight fitting". Other students underscored their adherence to the stereotypical depiction of gay men as effeminate, including Adam, Kevin, Pat and Quincy. Pat noted that he was prone to be "...overtly emotional", whereas the other three exerted their effeminacy through the use of particular gestures and mannerisms, mostly associated with women. Paul did not regard himself as being overtly "...apparent" in terms of his mannerisms, whilst he does believe that his friends may venture a different opinion. Trevor afforded very little attention to the importance of physical appearance, although he noted that he would go to some trouble to do so, if he were going out. Russell, on the other hand, described himself as "...androgynous...and I have never been super butch". Because of his personal tastes in terms of clothing, the mannerisms he "...happen[s] to have", a personal choice to go to the gym for health purposes, being a vegan or using alternative medicines, outsiders may be prone to typify him as being gay. These aspects, according to him, are merely personal preferences and not attempts at conforming to a stereotypical image of a gay man.

In terms of **diva worship**, Dale and Jack **disassociated** themselves from only listening to the music of primarily female artists, and agreed with Dallas' emphasis on "...true talent", rather than the singers' sex, gender or sexual orientation. Several female entertainers including Beyoncé, Britney Spears, Celine Dion, Cher, Christina Aguilera, Lady Gaga and Madonna, were however mentioned by others as icons of the gay community. Pat noted that he prefers and "...idealises" female to male artists in part, because, as also highlighted by Eric, they had to (and continue to) work hard to persevere in a heteronormative and patriarchal society. Five participants also contested accounts which seek to emphasise the close-knit bond between **heterosexual women and gay men**, citing shared interests (Morgan) and a preference for male friends (Jason and Trevor) as reasons. Only one student, Russell, distanced himself from the association between gay men and sexual promiscuity. But, due to the fact that women "...seem to understand me better without judgement", the love for divas is complemented by some gay men's appreciation and preference for friendships with women. Roger mentioned, for example, that he has ten close female friends and one very close fag hag, whereas Quincy attributes this strong bond to the fact that he is afforded the opportunity to talk about "...anything" with his

lesbian friend. Jay and Raymond also commented on the comfort they experience within such a friendship which, according to Eric, is absent from interactions with heterosexual men, because the latter's unease with gay men. Although Paul did not refute having many female friends, but expressed his disdain with being introduced as someone's "...gay friend" or having to have a fag hag, since he considers both as demeaning labels. Additionally, numerous **other examples of supposed stereotypes** to which the students conform, were also identified. These included a "...love and obsession" and "...excessive indulgence" (Russell) with classical and theatrical musical productions or television series, amongst others *Chicago*, *Evita* and *Wicked* (Russell, Roger, Victor), being flirtatious (Jared), displaying a creative side (Russell), being obsessed with material wealth (Russell) or being very outspoken (Martin). Promiscuity and a love for "...booze and partying" were also mentioned as labels to which Henry, Pat and Quincy conform.

Whether the participants embraced an adherence to body consciousness, or refuted an excessive preoccupation with female friends or divas, they cited several primary sources for these stereotypical understandings of gay men as homogeneous group.

(b) **Sources of the gay male stereotype**

Five students cited the **family** and the role of primary socialisation as influential factors in perpetuating a certain image of gay men. Eric recalled a homophobic remark from one of his family members during a dinner, "...Yes, gays should rather just die so that they can burn in hell" ("*...Ja, gays moet eerder doodgaan sodat hulle kan brand in die hel*"). Morgan and Quincy provided more positive reflections, since both had a gay cousin in their respective families, who provided much needed encouragement and support during their coming-out period. A second institution which influenced their perspectives on being gay was **religion**. Four students, Jared, Morgan, Paul and Trevor underscored their commitment to particularly, their Christian beliefs and the difficulty of "...church laws" and attempts by parents to "...reform" them through interventions by their church ministers.

Discussions on the third influential factor centred primarily on the role of the **media**. Fashion blogs, films, magazines (*Gay Pages*), pornography and television series (*Glee* and *Will & Grace*) were noted as definitive sources on being gay. Although participants such as Morgan disapproved of the "...thin, frail, emotive, screaming queens" which make a mockery of gay men, Quincy credited pornographic films as being "...informative" in terms of "...what to do" during

sexual intercourse. But, according to Eric, these depictions are far too homogeneous and posit gay men as “...copies” of each other in their everyday life. Raymond alluded to the role of Facebook and Twitter which both inform men on gay matters through constant correspondence on a daily basis. Here the role of **peer groups** also comes into play. Introduction to the so-called ‘gay scene’ (bars and clubs, amongst others), providing advice on dress codes and sexual intercourse, were considered as sources of secondary socialisation (or primary, in gay terms) into the gay lifestyle.

A final source for gay stereotypes was **shopping**. Although neither Jack nor Roger could recall a specific source for their love of shopping, the latter noted that he spends an “...unhealthy amount of time picking out outfits, trying to come up with new looks or styles that says something about” him. In buying “...lots of clothes, accessories and decorative home ware”, he is able to fully project his sexual orientation. Consider his reference to the fact that he only “...recently discovered floral print skinnies” to wear. The role of fashionable clothing was also highlighted by Jack, who added the preference to use cosmetic products, a love for arts and even shower gel, as factors which he considers as gay interests or traits.

Based on these divergent perceptions which either favour the assimilation into or transgression of the noted stereotypes, it is to be expected that heterogeneous views on either the beneficial or rigid nature of the closet may characterise the participants’ feedback.

5.3.4 The symbolism of the closet in practice: (Hiding) the gay male student

Several descriptions of ‘the closet’ were provided by the gay students. Words and phrases included “...living a lie”, “...fear”, “...confusion”, “...extremely exhausting”, “...a very dark place”, “...denial”, “...my unhappiest place”, “...hiding” and “...lost, entangled” (“...*verlore, verstrengel*”). By remaining in the closet, Dallas believes that you live a life “...where you don’t realise that if God wanted you different, he would have created you different”. In lacking such a realisation you engage in a process of constant dishonesty which, in effect, creates frustration on the part of the gay male, according to Jack. Morgan argues that ‘the closet’ basically refers to that stage or place in one’s life where you have not embraced the “routine” (“...*gewoonte*”) of being honest with yourself, based on a fear of how others will react to your disclosure (Jason). Eric also shares the view of the closet as stage in one’s life where change should occur, but some may

“...stagnate” (“...*stagneer*”), since they are “...seedlings without water” (“...*saadjies sonder water*”).

Due to the fact that individuals may experience their ‘coming out’ in different ways, Paul argued that meeting other gay men, for example, may not necessarily be helpful to transcend the boundaries of closet. This view was clear in the arguments of Russell who equated the closet and ‘coming out of the closet’ with a “...personal choice”, rather than opting to publically proclaim your sexual orientation to others. As such, one is closeted when it is difficult to accept yourself and act on it in a “...fulfilling way...Put simply...it is about not being completely out to yourself”. By remaining in the closet and denying who you are, Jay believes that you are inhibited from reaching your full potential and hide from others and yourself for several years, as was the case for Roger.

Although two separate sections in the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire dealt with the role of the closet in the private and professional (student) lives of the participants, respectively, several chose to combine the two in their feedback. As such, I regarded it as appropriate to include the discussion on the closet on university campuses, in this section. Ten participants affirmed that they had **willingly remained in the closet** during different stages of their lives. Dallas recalled that as head boy of his high school, the thought of telling his peers that they had a gay head boy was “...terrifying”, and because of this furthered the facade by dating girls. As education student, Morgan still remains closeted within the university context, since he knows that his lecturers would not tolerate a proclamation of his homosexuality within a sphere associated with educating children. The close-knit relationship with their parents and other family members, also added to the choice of participants to remain in the closet. Dale justified his short period in the closet to the fact that he first had to disclose his sexual orientation to his parents, before coming out to others. Jay also cited his strong relational bond with his family as central reason for attempting to ‘act’ straight amongst others, before coming out to them. Since “...you are being denied being human”, Paul was fearful of the potential rejection from family and friends, and regardless of the fact that his parents are reasonable and well educated, Roger considered their strict Christian upbringing as potential hindrance. Since he was (and still is) financially dependent on them, he was afraid that they would “...cut me off”. Trevor, on the other hand, remains closeted because of his “...very straight looking” appearance. He does not regard it as necessary to disclose his homosexuality, since the

assumptions of others, grant him the opportunity to take on the role of a straight man, without any questions.

Those who noted that they **did not remain closeted** in their private lives attributed their choice to the fact that everyone always knew that they were gay, and if people had to know and talk about it, then that was their choice (Jason). Eric recalled an overt confrontation between himself and a nurse during a practical class at a hospital. She inquired, "...Are you a fag or drug user?" ("*...Is jy 'n moffie of dagga roker?*"), to which he decided to calmly refute any such association between the two. Based on this confrontation, he decided to never again deny his sexual orientation.

As was the case with the feedback of the gay lecturers, contextual factors also influenced the students' decision to disclose or foreclose their homosexuality. Depending on their decision, the students opted to construct several **selves** to navigate their existence within and outside of the parameters of the closet. Of significance here, was that students were very forthcoming in identifying these different configurations, whether these were oneself, with diverse components, or even seven selves, as was evident from Jay's feedback.

The first of these configurations identified by participants was the so-called **home self**. Jay believed this to be his more "...responsible" self, since he is afforded the opportunity to quietly, independently and introspectively reflect on his emotions and possible hardships. Such hardships also characterised what Roger termed his 'public self' within his private familial context. This milieu is not conducive to freely performing his own unique understanding of his homosexuality, since the suburb in which his parents reside is very homophobic, in spite of his parents' support.

In addition to the home self, twelve of the students referred to the **family self**. Eric conceptualised this self as a loving and nurturing towards all of the members of his immediate family. Adam's perception echoed this demarcation when he described himself as "...humble, quiet, introverted", whilst Neville's familial context makes it "...easier" to be gay, and as a result he is "...free". Less liberating views were provided by several others. Although they have disclosed their homosexuality to their parents, Roger and Quincy still "...limit" ("*...beperk*") references to being gay and keep behaviour deemed homosexual "...to a minimum". Although he regards his behaviour as "...pathetic", Morgan works hard at being his parents' "...good boy

who is straight, goes to church”, since he has not spoken to them about his sexuality. Despite the support of his parents, Dale also clearly separates his “...personal gay life” from his interactions within his family, since family members are not necessarily “...aware or comfortable with my life”, something Martin regards as a “...responsibility towards them”. This responsibility also resonated in Dalton’ reference to the fact that he has “...enough respect [for his parents] to not touch or kiss my partner in front of them”. In doing this, Sam notes that it may become very difficult to be a perfect son who constantly attempts to create a lovely family structure. Henry and Idris commented on this difficulty by conflating their sexual orientation with a gendered character. By exuding more of an “...angelic” persona, the latter attempts at impressing his parents, whereas a more masculine demeanour is required when interacting with his brother since, as evident in Henry’s feedback, this could afford gay men with the opportunity to appear more “...protective and aggressive”, behaviour valued within their African culture.

The **friend self** was also considered an important role performed by eight of the students. Eric stated that this overlaps with every component of his homosexuality, since it is “...always there” (“...*altyd daar*”). It affords him the opportunity to express the “...exuberant, free version” of himself if the context allows it. Dale, Pat and Trevor also referred to the role of the freedom, “...fun without seriousness”, “...all embracing” and open-minded interactions their friendships provide them. His best female friend grants Quincy the opportunity to “...be myself, not hide anything or change anything” (“...*myself te wees, niks weg te steek of niks te verander nie*”). Context-specific and appropriate behaviour, were however mentioned as important factors to consider in determining whether to disclose or relate information about their sexual orientation to their heterosexual friends. Here the **straight self** may be exhibited. This is where Eric is required to put in a great deal of “...effort in being gay or hiding it” (“...*‘effort’ om gay te wees of om dit weg te steek*”), something which he “...doesn’t enjoy, the more quiet self” (“...*geniet dit nie, die stiller self*”). This part of his sexual self, necessitates Dallas “...to be more conscious to not act flamboyant”, as was evident in his choice to play rugby and acting as masculine as possible during his high school years.

The **work self** also requires a great deal of reflexivity on the part of the gay student, since it is here where Eric for example decided to be more “...professional, serious and hardworking” as male nurse, whereas Jay literally performs his sexuality through entertainment, dancing, chatting and mainly “...going crazy” (“...*gaan mal*”) in his part-time occupation as bartender. Sam, on the other hand, attempts at working extremely hard to prove himself and make a name

in his area of specialisation. Within this professional realm, the **student** or **class self** also plays a significant role in the lives of students. Here Jay provides a completely different account of his social and sexual self. In classes he keeps to himself, “I’m on my own, introverted”, and refrains from disclosing his sexual orientation to his fellow students, based on fear of negative retaliation. This is also the case for Eric who acts in a “...very serious” (“...baie ernstige”) manner, akin to his work self. Dale reiterated this argument since he does not “...mix my personal with my private life” whilst Morgan attempts at being true to himself, yet remains cautious about negating too much of boundaries between his privacy and role as student. Sam also expressed worries about disclosing his sexual orientation in the context of the university and thus attempts to “...pass” as heterosexual. Idris believes that an individual’s gender and sexual orientation should not even play a role in his academic life. Emphasis, according to him, should rather be placed on being “...focused and driven...” in your studies in order to attain success. Others, however, conflate their more private and public lives as part of the student/class self. Quincy argues that he does not care what others think and Dalton always remains one hundred per cent true to himself. This thought was exemplified in Adam and Roger’s accounts. The latter noted that he is “...very openly gay. I can say and do anything without the fear of being judged or outted”, with Adam exclaiming that he is “...loud, proud, flamboyant and uncensored!”

The **activist** or **enforcer self** was cited by seven participants as definite component of their sexual identity. As head of his local LGBTQ-student organisation, Jay equated this part of his self to that of a leader, a view shared by Kevin, Neville, Sam and Trevor. Kevin argued that as a leader, he needs to act in a “...politically correct” manner in order to safeguard all students regardless of their gender or sexual orientation, but also noted that he might be able to “manipulate” others in a strategic manner to attain benefits for sexual minorities. Sam believed this role to require a more “...masculine and focused” individual who is well-read and could serve as advocate and mentor for those struggling with issues related to their homosexuality, a thought mirrored in Martin’s questionnaire responses. This could prove to be very challenging for gay men in a presumed patriarchal society, for as Neville states, “This society [and per implication role to be portrayed] expects me to be strong and not show any form of fear, therefore it makes my life a bit complicated sometimes”, since he feels most at ease in contexts where safety is more of a guarantee. His reference to strength was echoed by Adam and Trevor who believed a leader to be “...strong, determined, professional, driven” and “...strong, reliable”, respectively.

A strongly gendered arrangement also formed part of the participants' reflections on their **boyfriend selves**. On the one side of the continuum, effeminate and female characteristics were at the centre of Dale, Henry, Jared and Martin's views. They referred to the principles of caring, closeness, intimacy, loving, mutual sharing, nurturing, openness and support as part of what Kevin deemed, a more "...submissive" role in the gay relationship. Adam thought it more appropriate to exhibit "...masculine, centred" behaviour, whereas Sam expressed his anxiety about "...finding the perfect man".

Other selves included the **African, flamboyant, religious** and **sport selves**. The **African self**, according to Pat, who is originally from Zimbabwe and who is studying law, was equated with an individual who is "...money hungry" and a "...practical thinker". He also reflected on his **religious self** as someone who remains "...celibate, single and devout". Trevor explained that this part of his self "...project[ed] a very masculine and normal image" within mainstream heterosexual congregations, whereas his visits to gay churches allows him the opportunity to be "...myself and not pretend". The **flamboyant self** merely reflected, as noted by Dallas, an unexplainable heightened need for flamboyance in certain contexts, with Jack providing a polar opposite expectation based on his involvement in **sport**. Here he feels that he needs to behave more "...straight" around his team players, in order for him to protect himself against exclusion and rejection.

It should be quite apparent that one should not mistakenly view these varied forms of the self as mutually exclusive or exhaustive categories. Although each is typified as a supposed 'separate' self, they constantly interact and overlap with each other based on the reflexivity of the student. The dominance of one or the other, akin to Mead's (1962) reference to the use of memory in explaining the interaction between the 'I' and 'me', depends on the particular social context within which the student finds himself (cf. Goffman, 1971; Jackson & Scott, 2010). There were, however, participants who refuted the existence of a number of selves, and opted to maintain only **one sexual self**. Jason attributed this to the fact that he does not want to live a double life and, in accordance with Paul, dismisses the infantile or discriminatory behaviour of others as "...their problem", not his. Victor argued that he is "...open to everyone in his life. My personality is consistent", whilst Raymond cited his hate for pretentiousness as reason for only having one sexual self. Russell also stated that he does not wish to portray these kinds of roles, he is "...consistent in presentation to...people".

Students identified more selves than the lecturers did since they seemed more prone to 'performance' (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993), rationalised categorisation (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010) and reflexivity (cf. Mead, 1962) in order to potentially conform to subcategories within what Epstein (1998) terms the "...ethnic model" and Seidman (2002a) a "...gay sensibility". This thought is espoused in the next subsection.

5.3.5 Phases associated with the construction of the gay male identity

In keeping with the themes discussed in Chapter Two and the previous section on the identity construction of gay male academics, the same five themes will be used to elaborate on the experiences of the students – **acknowledging same-sex attraction, confusion and shame, tolerance through marginal involvement, acceptance and authentication** and finally, **identity pride and synthesis**.

(a) *Acknowledging same-sex attraction*

Ten of the twenty four (24) participants noted that they had "...always" known from a very early age that they were "...different". This difference was also phrased as feeling "...strange" ("*...vreemd*") and even "deceitful" ("*...skelm*"). The latter account came courtesy of Jason who recalled that he had his first boyfriend as early as grade one, but always sought to hide this attraction throughout primary school by having girlfriends. Several of the participants recounted Jackson and Scott's (2010) reference to the irrational side of sexuality. Dallas noted that he was unable to "...know what the feelings meant" and Jack argued that he had "...strange feelings around boys...I thought it was normal", a feeling echoed by Eric, Jared and Paul. Eric remembers that he "...did not have a name for it, I thought it was normal" ("*...nie 'n naam daarvoor gehad nie, ek het gedink dis normaal*"). Russell ascribed his first acknowledgement of difference to the age of six. He noted that from the moment he had enough cognition, he knew he was equally different from boys and girls. Paul recalled that he "...always knew...But it didn't bother me...I enjoyed it because it gave me the opportunity to experience things such as thoughts and feelings others did not".

These feelings were not associated with shame or anxiety but "...just different...couldn't describe it then". Idris also noted that he was "...too young" to understand his attraction to men, an

experience shared with Henry and Victor. Roger, on the other hand, argued that the first moment of confusion came near the end of grade nine when he was fifteen, he "...saw a topless male matric student and was really shocked that I found his body attractive, but hid my feelings, fear and shame up to the end of first year of university". He, in accordance with Kevin, found boys "...extremely attractive" but, just as Neville "...did not know that I was seen as a taboo, for a whole year I had to live in fear of being beaten into being straight". This fear also resonated in Raymond's experiences of "self-doubt" and Martin's anxiety associated with labels from others social actors. Trevor, on the other hand, also expressed fear of being alienated from his religious beliefs, since he knew that his feelings would not change, but was fearful that it would "kill" his faith.

Such anxiety and fear may exacerbate possible experiences of confusion and shame, after initial acknowledgement.

(b) ***Confusion and shame***

Of interest here, was the conflation of gender and sexual orientation, as was evident in the responses of five students. Dallas, Jack and Roger recalled the necessity to establish a facade of dating girls during their high school years. Dallas felt "...forced" into these relationships, whereas Jack and Roger believed that they could suppress their homosexuality through these unions and that the stage would eventually pass – "Epic fail!" (Roger). To alleviate possible homophobia Jason opted for performing as "...straight" in his everyday interaction with his fellow high school peers. Dale and Dallas both underscored the role of masculinity to mask their fear and shame of being gay. The latter joined his school rugby team to refrain from any external homosexual identification which was initially "...horrible", but he later started to enjoy the sport. Dale basically attempted (and still attempts) to pretend at being "...straight".

Akin to these responses which underlined the attempts at managing feelings of confusion and shame, other experiences also manifested such ambiguity and fear. Upon asking whether he ever felt shame, Morgan exclaimed, "...Of course!" ("*...Natuurlik!*"). Since he did not necessarily know whether his same-sex attraction could be regarded as "...normal" ("*...normaal*"), one specific experience reinforced his attempts at hiding his sexual orientation. During a dinner with his family at a well-known restaurant in his hometown, a family member noted that "Yes, gays should rather just die so that they can burn in hell", after seeing a gay couple having dinner in

the same establishment. This added to his own dismay on matters related to his potential homosexuality, including a fear of gay bashing, illnesses associated with sex and gay sexual intercourse in particular. Regarding the latter, Morgan still struggles with the idea of having sex with another man since "...the idea is just too much!" ("*...die idee is net te veel!*").

Other accounts included that of Quincy who, although not experiencing confusion, did recall feelings of shame during his years in high school. This period was also very indicative of shame and confusion for Eric, Henry, Idris, Jay, Kevin, Martin, Pat and Victor. Eric, for example, thought it "...weird to have a crush on another guy" and thinking of other men whilst masturbating. Such feelings, for Idris, "...scared the shit out of me when I first experienced it", for in many respects, as noted by Trevor, gay men's biggest fear was associated with fear of disappointing loved ones and engaging "...furiously" in drinking and promiscuity (which he did). Kevin on the other hand, sought out informative literature to curtail ambiguity associated with sexual orientation. Russell elaborated more extensively on Kevin's need to be informed, "Not a day has gone by that I was not aware of my sexual orientation." Although not confused about his same-sex attraction, he does however concede that he did not know how to deal with it since he, like others, secretly hoped that it was only a passing phase:

...I privately expressed and engaged with it, but I did conceal it as best as I could in the ...public domain, where it was subject to judgement from both the church and my family or friends. I was somewhat ashamed of it for a long time, for sure. And very guilt ridden...When puberty hit, I knew it was not a stage..."

Upon realising that this "...was not a stage", gay men may want to meet others like them to possibly tolerate their supposed difference.

(c) ***Tolerance through marginal involvement***

Seven students cited their high school years as the period during which they first started attending gay events or places where the patronage was predominantly homosexual. Dale noted that he started going to gay clubs at the age of sixteen and met his first boyfriend. When they started appearing in public together, people "...began to talk" which fuelled an initial closeted orientation. Idris also had his first boyfriend at this age, whereas Henry and Victor

followed suit at the age of eighteen. Eric recalled that his tolerance mostly surfaced at the age of fourteen during the same period in which his cousin came out. This provided a much needed support system to gradually come out to his friends, brothers and sisters and finally his parents. Morgan typified this period as something which would lead to a so-called “...slut phase” (“...*sletfase*”). His first public acknowledgement of his homosexuality occurred during high school which was followed by intervals of sexual intercourse with several male peers. According to him, he never opted for a stable relationship, but rather enjoyed “...being naughty” (“...*was stout gewees*”). He only entered into a month-long relationship with a man he met at a gay bar during his first year of university. Nine other men also became more marginally involved in what they considered to be a gay lifestyle during their initial years in university. Gay clubs and bars were mostly cited as the place in which participants such as Dallas, Jared, Kevin, Paul, Quincy, Raymond and Trevor would go to meet other gay men. Quincy described the other patrons and the setting as “...my type of people, I don’t have to deny my ‘being gay’, I felt at home” (“...*my tipe mense, hoef nie my ‘gay wees’ weg te steek nie, ek het tuis gevoel*”), with Rubin equating gay clubs with spaces of freedom. Trevor believed these settings, including an exclusive gay church in his particular case, as means to gain more clarity on his sexual orientation. Paul however argued that he always knew he was gay and attended such contexts in order to socialise with other gay men.

Jack only noted that “...eventually” he came to the realisation that “...this is who I am and always will be”. Russell found it very difficult to reconcile his more secret gay fantasies and thoughts with the public (whether hetero- or homosexually defined) label assigned to what gay actually meant. He could not comprehend the necessity of the judgement and subsequent internalised homophobia he experienced as result of experiencing “...something so natural...” as “...flawed and wrong” based on the views of others. He distinguished between two ‘parts’ which played a role during this phase. The first, being “...different part”, was there from the start, whereas the “...I am gay part” emerged at a very early age of eleven years, and escalated into an exclusive attraction to men at the age of thirteen. In his opinion, he was far too young to attend clubs or other gay social settings, to act on these realisations, and only did so at the age of nineteen. At the age of seventeen, he first acknowledged his sexual orientation as homosexual, rather than gay:

...The realisation just came as soon as I could give a name to the feelings I had all along: homosexual. I distinctly remember sharing the thought with

someone for the first time when I was 17. I even remember explaining to her that it was a twelve letter word I just couldn't get myself to say...*Homoseksueel* [homosexual]. She took forever to guess it! I eventually said it, and she said 'gay?', I said: 'Well, I suppose so'.

In moving from "I *may* be gay" towards "I probably *am* gay" (cf. Cass, 1990), varied degrees of acceptance and authentication were noted in the perceptions of the gay male students.

(d) ***Accepting and authenticating the gay male identity***

Several of the students highlighted the importance of coming out as central factor in accepting their gay sexual orientation. Two different groups played a significant role in such a disclosure – the family and peer group. The latter was deemed important since it served the dual purpose of sharing a joint experience if both the student and his friend were to be gay, and secondly, a supportive context was afforded if the family was not accepting. Eric reflected on the initial ease of coming out alongside his gay friend in high school, he was "...a guy like me, we matured easily in terms of our sexuality" ("*...’n ou soos ek, ons het maklik gegroei in terme van ons seksualiteit*"). Since he had this support, he progressed easily towards a name for his sense of differentness, and upon labelling himself in an assertive way, he transcended an experience of denial, something not necessarily afforded to others who are alone. In also avoiding denial, Victor's justification for choosing to come out to his friends at university, primarily centred on their joint commitment to gay and lesbian rights, as part of their student organisation. Support and a sense of identification also underscored the narratives of Dallas, Henry, Kevin and Raymond. Dallas for example noted that by coming out during his first year of university to close friends, afforded him the opportunity to "...truly [begin living] out my identity".

Jack also chose to first come out to his close friends and a cousin before talking to his family, something he symbolised as "...climbing a ladder", where his disclosure to his family was "...the last step". His choice to do so, as he himself argued, was rather contradictory, since "...it should actually be the other way around". This thought was emphasised by Dale who believed that in telling his parents, it would become easier to reveal his sexual orientation, since he did not care about what other people would think or say. Such acceptance by the parents was also central in the views of Jason and Quincy. His parents' support provided Jason with the necessary confidence to attend a faculty dinner with his boyfriend at his university, whereas Quincy

recalled the reciprocation of patience and understanding between him and his parents. After his mother discovered gay pornography in his room which he had hidden from her, she confronted him. He however denied being gay, but she insisted that she always knew and would accept him. In doing this, she assisted him in telling his father who took about three months to fully accept his son.

Others had varied experiences which facilitated a gradual acceptance of their sexual orientation. Idris was forced to come out to his family after being "...exposed" by a fellow learner at his high school, whereas Jay exhibited a greater degree of confidence at nineteen years of age when he asked out a fellow gay student on a date. His confidence was (and is still) also visible throughout this period based on a carefree attitude pertaining to an "...open display of 'making out'" ("*...om in die openbaar te vry*") in social settings and on the university campus. Roger displayed a gradual progression towards accepting his sexual orientation. His initial consideration to do so was encouraged by another gay man he met at a party. "At this point...", he knew that he had to be gay since he had no interest in girls. He took about one month of private introspection to "...come to terms" with his sexuality, followed by another of coming out to his closest friends. Coming out, for Russell, was very important, since it was the only way for allowing a "...successful adjustment and long-term happiness". To attain this, he first came out to his friends followed by his family in 2002, when he was 19 years of age. Although he never questioned his family's unconditional support, he still experienced some regret for the probable "...disappointment" on the part of his parents. In order for him to fully reconcile and contextualise "...a good emotional, sexual adjustment...with my sexual orientation", he engaged in in-depth psychological sessions over a period of six months and read "...vast amounts of literature". One of the biggest fears associated with accepting himself fully, was the link between his faith and sexuality, a thought echoed by Trevor. The latter for example came out "...piece by piece" and experienced a "...backsliding" of sorts, in order for him to establish an amalgam between religion and homosexuality. Only after taking these steps, both of the men afforded themselves the opportunity to start networking with others akin to them.

In attaining this level of acceptance, students were also requested to reflect on Cass' (1990) process of identity pride and synthesis.

(e) ***Gay male identity pride and synthesis***

Of particular interest in the responses from students with regard to exhibiting these two processes and/or features, was the importance ascribed to activism and confrontation to safeguard the rights of particularly gay and lesbian individuals.

Dallas recalled that after a girl "...showed signs of homophobia, [I] gave her a piece of my mind". His advocacy was rewarded with the same girl later expressing her gratitude towards him, for opening her eyes to the challenges faced by sexual minorities. Three others, Dale, Jack and Morgan shared Dallas' commitment to activism. Dale expressed his pride in being gay and that he would defend it by standing up for what he believes in, whereas Jack attempted to "...tactfully" confront and alter the possible homophobic views and behaviour of others. Although Morgan did not view his sexual orientation as reason for "...celebration", he is committed to deal with anti-homosexual inclinations within particular social contexts. His views, in some ways, depicted an incongruence, since it exhibited principles associated with assimilation and essentialism, concerning his reference to the importance of his "...normality", based in part on his "anti-stereotypical" attitude on heterosexist understandings of homosexuality. Several of the other gay students also recalled "...being bitten by the activism bug" (Pat) when they joined their respective LGBTQ-student organisations, including Henry, Idris, Jared, Kevin, Martin, Raymond, Trevor and Victor. Evident from their particularly homogeneous views on identity pride and synthesis, is the fact that the noted students clearly equated pride with activism through a confrontation of homophobia.

Russell, a social science student, provided, however, a clearly distinct perspective from these younger pro-activist and pro-pride students:

...I have as much a desire to celebrate my sexual orientation as I have the desire to celebrate the appointment of a new member to parliament. I have no 'pride' in it. I don't deem it necessary to be proud of my sexual orientation, because it is not strange, unique or new. I didn't earn it, and didn't work for it, and God knows, I didn't ask for it. People have been gay/engaged in homosexual sex (the former are, by the way, two very different things) for centuries. Pride in, and comfort with sexual orientation, are two very different

things. Again, I don't feel the need to defend my "rights" to love whom I choose to love.

Activism and gay pride, according to Russell, emerge as means to work towards or establish social change in mainstream society. Regardless of its constructive objective, such attempts may rather only further reinforce marginalisation of sexual minorities because of an exacerbation of polarisation between heterosexually and self-identified gay individuals. This occurs because social change may involve an enforcement of certain beliefs and views on other individuals, who may not necessarily be ready or inclined to be receptive of messages associated with gay equality. Activism, according to him, rather attempts at persuading others to buy into a particular point of view, without a successful effort to establish understanding. He continues:

...We have no right, as gay people, to want to convince anyone of our subjective truth. Just as, in the same way, no straight person or entity has the right of judging our subjective truths as wrong. It is, after all, inconceivable to the mind of a wholly homosexual man to be fully romantically attracted to a woman. Where do we suppose a straight man should begin to understand the 'naturalness' of our romantic attraction to another man? That is the pitfall of activism. It wants to force an understanding. It fights for or fights against – but it's always a fight, which implies a loser (that just doesn't get it). And no one likes being a loser, or not getting it.

He recommends advocacy on behalf of sexual minorities, rather than activism. This may in fact support a "...let be' [view]...since it places less emphasis on arguments of persuasion, but instead, provides room for expression and protection by law (lobbying)...It's less alienating, less forceful and keeps its head out of the futile exercise of moral debate, or proving others wrong or short sighted. Advocacy does a better job in communicating gay rights than activism". Through initiatives such as the annual Pride Parades worldwide, homosexuality is in fact posited as "...infantile and conceptually immature", since it undermines attempts at "...naturalising" homosexuality as one of several sexual variants, but rather highlights its distinct and novel stereotypes. Such stereotypes may in fact, particularly for closeted or inexperienced gay men, provide a "...false and somewhat predisposed sense of identity". Russell's view was shared by Roger, a twenty-one-year-old (21) student in architecture, who does not believe that he has in

fact reached this stage in his life. He does, however, want to advocate acceptance of sexually dissident groups in contexts such as schools.

In keeping with the similar section on the feedback from academics, it was evident that the students also related information which recalled the theoretical contributions on the potential linear construction of the gay male academic. In addition to these themes in their personal lives, the subsection to follow will focus on the manner in which the foregoing experiences intersect with the respondents' lives on the respective university campuses.

5.3.6 The gay male student in the tertiary educational context

The themes used to guide the discussion to follow are all based on the theoretical bases provided in Chapters Two and Three. These include the **role of discrimination, the university context as safe environment, peer-groups as gendered, curricula content and safe spaces**.

(a) *Discrimination as overt or covert*

Eight of the participants **acknowledged** that they have been the victims of discrimination on their respective campuses. These included Adam who cited the conservative nature of a subject chair in the Humanities and Social Science faculty of his particular university, as source for her discriminatory attitude towards him. Quincy also recalled one of his lecturers directly asking him "...Are you [gay]?" ("...Is jy [gay]?") and "Why?" ("Hoekom?"). Although he is not able to prove it, such questions and her attitude, were reflected in the marks awarded for several of his assessments.

The feedback from the other participants mainly centred on examples of **direct and subtle discrimination** from **fellow students**. Sam, noted that he is "...always" aware of subtle attempts at discrimination from various groups in academia, but specifically students. He attributed this to the "...heteronormative nature of society. I always get verbally abused, even from total strangers". As an activist, Neville has been challenged by many heterosexual individuals who seem to believe that he attempts to "...promote homosexuality" through his advocacy efforts. He, along with Dale and Morgan, also referred to numerous times when they were the targets for verbal abuse, whether directly or in a subtle way. Morgan stated that, "I just

let go of...” subtle homophobic remarks courtesy of heterosexual men who for example say, “...Look at that fucking fag!” (“...Kyk na daardie fokken moffie!”). He even recalled one of his fellow students and friends saying that, if he had known Morgan was gay before meeting him, he would not have been his friend. Dale deemed himself the more “mature” individual, based on the infantile attempts of ignorant students to isolate and marginalise him during his first and second years of study. These individuals would usually instruct others, “...Don’t sit there, he’s gay”.

Russell’s narrative of direct discrimination underscored the manner in which homophobia could inhibit a gay student’s tertiary studies. When he came out in 2002, he was still living in a men’s residence at a well-known South African university. Although he only disclosed his sexual orientation to a select few, his homosexuality became “...common knowledge” in only a matter of days. Not all of the residents were accepting of this. Upon returning in 2003, he had lost several of his friends who refused to associate with him and had to listen to several derogatory gay jokes and comments during residency meetings. The resident reverend never sought to discuss Russell’s struggles with him, but “...openly disapproved of my ‘choices’”. All of this eventually led to him being physically assaulted later that year by some of his cohabitants. This impacted negatively on his studies and academic performance and forced him to not immediately enter into his MA-programme after attaining his honours degree. He only later returned to tertiary education at a different university, where he committed himself to successfully complete and devote his life to providing therapeutic support to others in similar circumstances.

Dallas was the only participant to provide a more contradictory response to the question on discrimination. He justified his answer in noting that he has never experienced discrimination “...directly...I...feel that most gay men are already sensitive to being judged, scary form of ‘strange’ interaction or eye contact would feel as if (would be interpreted) you were being judged”. But, according to him, he does not afford as much attention to such behaviour, since those who matter in his life, are accepting and provide the necessary support and validation.

Scant elaboration was evident from the remaining fifteen students who have **never** experienced either overt or covert forms of discrimination. This could, as discussed in Chapter Four, be attributed to the fact that several of these individuals chose to complete a self-administered questionnaire, rather than participating in an in-depth interview. Those who provided shorter

reasons included Eric, Jared, Jay and Roger. Eric attributed his answer to a sense of obliviousness of discriminatory efforts directed towards him, based in part on his self-confidence as gay man. Jared argued that his university “...upholds diversity and LGBTI individuals feel welcome”, with Roger commenting on subtle and “...disapproving looks and stares”, but no overt gay bashing. Jay posited subtle and direct homophobia in contexts which are external to the university campus. These attacks happen, according to him, because of the insecurities of the perpetrators of their own sexual identity, rather than that of the victim.

In considering these responses to possible experiences of discrimination, variance again characterised the views of students on the **potential safety** afforded by the respective campuses.

(b) ***The tertiary academic context as safe space***

Based on the fact that Russell’s previous reflection was mostly dependent on his experiences at a campus residency and contact-based tertiary institution, he currently regards his part-time studies through a distant-learning university, in a more positive light. He noted that in both this and his work environment, discussions about his sexual orientation are “...really quite normal”, because of his colleagues’ liberal attitudes. Jared ascribed his view of the **university campus as safe** to the fact that there are currently several gay and lesbian lecturers at his university. This provides both the gay students and lecturers the opportunity to live “...openly about their sexuality without fear of discrimination”. The presence of these self-identified gay lecturers was also mentioned by Dallas and Jason. After a lecture on HIV/AIDS in one of his modules, Jason was the target of malicious comments on the link between gay men and the dreaded disease, but his lecturer defended him. Dallas also reflected on the “...informed and open-minded” social science faculty as sources for “...comfort and safety” to critically interrogate hegemonic and patriarchal understandings of gender and sexuality.

Although an earlier homophobic incident involving him and one of his lecturers made him fearful to attend classes, Quincy currently views his campus as gay friendly. Jay and Kevin commented on the role of certain policies which are in place to protect sexual minorities. Jay referred to the protection provided by his university’s security offices during their annual Pride Parade on campus. Kevin, however, alluded to the lack of sufficient formal student organisations on his campus, whereas Martin and Victor provided more constructive accounts of these institutions.

Martin credited his homosexuality as constructive factor in helping him to “...get where he wants to go more than anything else”, including his role as advocate of gay rights as part of his university’s LGBTQ student organisation. Victor, in accordance with Martin, also praised the efforts of the “...great Transformation Office and open gay community” at his university. Raymond also denied ever being at the receiving end of discrimination, mostly due to his close-knit friendships with heterosexual male and female students who accept him – “...They would not allow anything to happen to me”.

In stark opposition to Raymond’s words, Trevor’s critiqued the lacklustre role of his university’s managerial corps in safeguarding sexual minorities. Although management expects the LGBTQ student organisation, of which he is a member, to promote the rights of sexual minorities, they do very little to circulate the message throughout the university. This results in several faculties, departments and residences being rife with homophobia and being very openly gay is a definite “...No. No!” As result, gay men are forced to either remain closeted or engage in stereotypical behaviour, which supports the ignorant and preconceived ideas of the members of these departments. Dale, on the other hand, believes that his university does provide the necessary mechanisms to safeguard gay students, but this is not necessarily evident amongst the “...childish” student population who direct verbal abuse towards sexual minorities. Because of this, Jack believes the gay student community to be “...hidden”. This, according to Neville and Pat, is why universities needs to be challenged more in terms of their underlying beliefs and policies, in order to alter both these and specific procedures in order to aid gay and lesbian students.

The lack of these initiatives is at the centre of the responses of the remaining six students who **do not** regard their campuses as safe environments. Eric and Morgan refuted Dallas and Quincy’s references to their proactive lecturers, since he argues that it is his own responsibility to stand up for himself, “...since lecturers do not stand up for you when you are confronted” (“...want dosente staan nie noodwendig op vir jou wanneer jy gekonfronteer word nie”) (Eric). Gay students, as noted by Dalton and Sam, are isolated from and by the general student population, with no clarity on the manner in which homophobia will be dealt with by the institutional management. This, for Adam, signals the reinforcement of a strict conservative university environment, which, as experienced by Idris, leaves more people uneducated and ignorant based on abstract and general commitment to human rights provided in the Constitution.

Throughout the preceding discussion, several references were made to the influence of the participants' fellow students pertaining to the formers' sexual orientation. The subsection to follow will now consider their views on whether the 'gendered'-character of the heterosexual students, plays a significant role in their day-to-day interactions on campus.

(c) ***Gender performance as indicator for peer-relationship***

Russell and Trevor indicated that they prefer relationships with **male**, rather than their female peers on campus. The former's preference is centred within heterosexual friendships, whilst Trevor indicated that he has limited interaction with others on campus but, if he had to choose, it would be men.

Six other students, however, favoured the company and friendship of **heterosexual women**. In addition to the fact that heterosexual men's interests differ from his, Roger argued that his "...homosexual mannerisms [are] very close to that of a girl's mannerisms" and that interaction with female students are easier, since they are not fearful to also become gay – a trait he associates with heterosexual men. Due to the fact that such fears may lead to further avoidance, as also noted by Quincy, Dale noted that the latter group views gay men as a "...threat" to their sexuality. For this reason, interaction with female students is regarded as more comfortable and easy. Since most of his classmates are girls, Eric echoed this noted comfort with female students, as did Dale and Dallas. The latter regarded women as more "...open-minded about gay life" which, as noted by him, establishes a strong bond which manifests a relationship in which he is expected to provide advice on "...guys and fashion", a thought echoed by Dale. With "...honesty [playing] a vital role" in friendships, Jack fancies a bond with women, because you are allowed to be yourself "...from the start" and share views and opinions on dating men, amongst others.

Three men displayed a preference to establish private or professional relationships with **both men and women**. This was attributed to the fact that friendships with other men, within certain contexts, might be labelled as homosexual in nature, regardless of the sexual orientation of the two men (Jay). Jason and Morgan favoured the importance of an individual's personality and corresponding comfort and ease with each other, as more important than biological sex or gender preference.

In addition to the influence of social interaction with academics and peers, consideration will next be given to the potential influence that the students' academic areas of specialisation may have on their views concerning homosexuality. This is complemented by a discussion on their views of the probability of including homosexually-themed courses and themes in mainstream university curricula or exclusive LGBTQ courses.

(d) ***Assimilating homosexuality into South African academia***

The subsection will firstly focus on the possible influence of the students' academic fields on their sexual orientation. This will be followed by their views on having a gay lecturer and the inclusion of LGBTQ-themes in university modules and programmes.

(i) *The influence of academic specialisation on being gay*

Evident in this particular subsection, is the fact that most of the students, who answered **yes** to the question on whether their area of specialisation influenced their views on being gay, formed part of the **arts, law** and **social science** fields. Through studying social science, Russell responded, "...Undoubtedly yes...I have a natural interest in human behaviour". He further attributed his tendency to be introverted about his own sexual orientation, as reason why his formal education provided even more momentum to his interest in human sexuality. In addition, he also believed that this field (social science) is regularly chosen by other gay men as well, since it is a context in which one may freely investigate and express your sexual orientation. Roger, who studies engineering, said that the creative component of his course, "...has enabled me to be more at ease, to experiment with style and fashion...just provide an outlet". Victor argued that in his "...very liberal" drama course, sensitivity and flamboyance are prerequisites for being a good actor and, as such, he believes that this context is conducive for being openly homosexual.

Those studying law and social sciences, credited the analytical and critical inclinations these courses necessitate, as main reason why they effortlessly establish a link between the personal and academic lives. Pat's introduction to family law, "...drove" him to further investigate the rights and provisions the South African legal system affords gay and lesbian individuals. Adam, Dallas and Raymond mentioned the "...huge role" of social science in encouraging them to

“...thoroughly” reflect on issues concerning their sexual orientation, in order to identify possible solutions from struggles faced by themselves and others akin to them. Dallas believed that his particular field of study taught him to not conform to specific stereotypes or heteronormative expectations, since he is expected to question everything, “...an aspect I enjoy”.

Others, however, did not link their personal life to their respective courses, regardless of the fact that many of these individuals studied communication, psychology, sociology or exclusive courses which dealt with LGBT-issues. Reasons ranged from being “...set in my ways and opinions” courtesy of Paul, and Dale’s already “...established...personality and lifestyle. I won’t change”. He also commented on the fact that his current course in engineering, is by far “...too straight”, since no attention is afforded to the topic of sexual orientation and very few gay men choose to study it. Several of the other students also mentioned this as their main reason, because business ethics, business informatics, economics and engineering provide no content on the subject matter.

In addition to their mainstream courses, I also asked the students to consider the potential role a **gay male academic** could play in their classes.

(ii) *The role of the gay male in academia*

The students, who believed that having a gay lecturer would be **beneficial**, provided several reasons. These included the importance of facilitating accurate, influential, sensitive and constructive debates on homosexuality, as well as serving as role models for sexual minority students.

Roger considered the potential role lecturers could play in supporting gay students who may be “...struggling” with no one to come out to. By having a gay lecturer to “...freely go” to, the students’ burden may be lessened. Sam supported this statement by underlining the ease of being able to identify with someone like you, whilst Jack and Raymond referred to the “...sense of protection from the lecturer’s side” and “...comfort”, because of a shared sexual orientation, as per Goffman’s (1963) “with relationship”. Dallas underlined all of these contributions when he stated:

...Having a gay...lecturer makes me feel so much more relaxed in terms of being myself. I also feel comfortable to talk to him about my views on homosexuality. A certain sense of comfort and 'loyalty' is created because I know we are in the same battle of a difficult life.

The other participants commented on the influential role such an individual could play in sensitising both heterosexual and homosexual individuals through, amongst others, lived experience, on the one hand, but also explicit lecturing on the other. Idris and Neville believed that gay lecturers would be more prone to provide accurate and non-offensive insights into issues related to gender and sexual orientation, as opposed to those who are not homosexual. The gay lecturer could, as argued by Dalton, create an atmosphere conducive for confidence on the part of the gay student. In so doing he may, according to Eric, provide a "...different", novel and unique perspective on social issues, which heterosexual lecturers, might overlook. By having someone like this in a more senior position, Adam foresees that students, regardless of their sexual orientation, could be influenced positively in an implicit or explicit way.

Other participants considered both the **benefits and potential obstacles** associated with having an openly gay lecturer. Paul indicated that he was "...unsure...it would depend on the lecturer's personality". Both Martin and Quincy contemplated the advantage of having a gay lecturer since, as the latter commented, "...in a way, subconsciously, it makes it easier to attend class" ("*...op 'n manier, 'subconsciously', maak dit, dit makliker om klas by te woon*"). But, since neither of them interacted with gay lecturers in- or outside of class, they found it difficult to relate reasons based on their personal experiences.

The remaining students **did not associate any benefits in having a gay lecturer**. Consider Jason's question, "...What is the difference?" ("*...Wat is die verskil?*"), a reflection shared with Morgan and Jay. Jay, as well as Dale, ascribed more importance to knowledge, skills and the objectivity of the lecturer. If one were to have such a lecturer, Jay believed that it would rather be detrimental to the students if he were to attempt to conceal his sexual orientation from everyone. It would perpetuate the message to gay students who are struggling to come out, to remain closeted and place a definite 'dent' in their self-confidence. In addition, the content of the course, for example Kevin's engineering modules, would not necessarily warrant an emphasis on someone's sexual orientation.

Finally, students were also requested to consider the role of **LGBTQ-content in tertiary curricula**.

(iii) *The necessity for including homosexual themes in tertiary curricula*

Two standpoints characterised the feedback from participants – those who thought such courses to be “...**crucial**” based on the number of gay and lesbian people in society (Jared), and two students who did not deem it necessary. In order for anyone to determine whether such a course would be beneficial, Russell believes that the particular originator, presenter or institution needs to identify the specific objective of such a course. In other words, its aim – does it serve to “...familiarise those unfamiliar” with the subject matter? Or is it of relevance for the presenter and other involved parties’ future careers or merely serve as “...general enlightenment” for interested parties? He recommended that such a course should “...obviously” be a specific or exclusive course for which students, who are studying other disciplines such as psychology and sociology, should be able to register. It should not be made compulsory, since such a move could result in further polarisation of the heterosexual and homosexual communities.

In contrast to Russell’s views, Roger advocated for a compulsory course on the topic. This should be done to help students to understand issues faced by both sides of the continuum. In doing this, one should be able to establish a sense of understanding, support and compassion. Heterosexual men could, for example, be taught that not all gay men are necessarily interested in them or will make advances towards them. According to Dalton, such a course may dispel stereotypes about gay men, which are perpetuated in families or friendship circles. Paul noted that it would provide individuals with insights on how others view homosexuality. This, according to Idris, Martin and Morgan, emphasises why heterosexual individuals should also be implored to take the course, in order for them to increase their knowledge about the LGBTQ-community. Several other participants also underlined the educational value of such a course. This could include a focus on the theory which informs activism as well as an accurate and in-depth debate which, as noted by Pat, seeks to “...dispel, compel and strengthen ideas or activism”.

In addition to their general views of the probable benefits of the course, several participants also recommended the inclusion of various **sections** in such a course. These included a focus on the **history** of sexual minorities across the centuries and within different societies. Here, as noted by Russell, the biographies of influential gay or lesbian activists or historical figures could

be included. Embedded within such a historical overview, could be an emphasis on the so-called **'causes' of homosexuality**, where Dale thinks academic literature could refute earlier accounts of its pathological nature. **Gender and sexual diversity** was also cited as important inclusions in subsections of a course. Of value could be discourse on the "...various expressions of sexuality, defining it, demystifying it", according to Russell. In so doing, a critical discussion of Kinsey's sexual continuum could be facilitated. Debates on such diversity could also resonate in foci on the **personal experiences of gay men** as well as the **differences within the gay community**. A focus on the first of the two could include an overview of how gay men experience life and persevere through adversity (Jason), what their lifestyles entail (Dalton), issues and struggles faced on a daily basis (Idris), recommendations to alleviate this (Jay), and diversity within the gay community (Eric, Roger and Trevor). In keeping with the South African Constitution, several of the men also highlighted the necessity to interrogate debates on **activism** to abolish **hate crimes based on sexual orientation** (Morgan, Pat and Quincy), through recommendations to establish increased interaction between heterosexual and homosexual individuals (Quincy), support (Roger) and acceptance and tolerance (Henry). Additional sections could also deal with **education on same-sex sexual behaviour and intercourse**, since there are no prescribed rituals or socialisation processes in place for gay men (Adam, Eric), **homosexuality and religion** (Sam, Trevor), **homosexuality and the workplace** (Neville), **African perspectives** (Sam) and **queer theory** (Idris, Pat, Paul and Victor).

The two students, who **did not assign any importance** to a course on LGBTQ-issues, were Dale and Jack. The former argued that when people are "...confronted" with such topics, they are or will become more resistant to embrace difference. This, according to him, will do more harm than good, because they will leave the course or information sessions more "...negatively inclined". Jack focused on the lack of influence such a course would have on him personally when he said that he is "...well aware of my own sexuality and those I hold dear", and as such, does not regard it beneficial.

The particular degrees and courses of participants clearly influenced their perceptions on whether to (visibly) incorporate homosexual themes and individuals into South African academic life. This argument is explored critically in the chapter to follow. Throughout Chapter Five then, the role of the university's subject groups, faculties as well as institutional management, has enjoyed emphasis in the feedback of students. In order to address the issues faced by sexual

minorities in higher education, the final subsection now highlights **recommendations** provided by the participants.

(e) ***The university as safe(r) space in South Africa***

As noted, this subsection will firstly centre on the important role institutional management and its various components should play in advocating for same-sex protection, and then conclude with a consideration of the potential influence of safe spaces (or safe zones).

(i) ***The university as central role player in advocating sexual fluidity***

Fifteen recommendations were provided by the students. Universities should firstly emphasise the importance associated with **advocacy** on behalf of sexual minorities who form part of their student constituency. Secondly, specific individuals should be tasked to undertake **activism** on behalf of gay and lesbian students on the respective South African campuses, through intensive campaigning to safeguard basic human rights. Thirdly, universities should meet **lobbyists** (whether gay rights activists, students or lecturers) “...half way” in order to jointly initiate programmes to address the needs of gay and lesbian students. This could, fourthly, be done through **financial support** to improve the quality of **marketing initiatives** concerning gay rights, gay events or support services. Roger, in particular, referred to the negative images of gays and lesbians perpetuated as always suffering. This should be replaced with positive images and messages. Marketing and visibly supporting **Gay Pride Parades** on campus was noted as fifth recommendation. Reflecting on his participation in his university’s annual Pride Parade and the absence of all members of the campus and institutional management, Quincy stated, “It could and should have happened”. In the sixth place, providing logistical and financial support for creating and maintaining a **LGBTQ-student organisation** on campuses was also cited. Specific recommendations included the provision of office space (Jason), marketing of the organisation (Kevin), visible support by the campus rectors and vice chancellors (Morgan) as well as the student councils (Jay, Quincy). A seventh recommendation centred on the provision of **financial support** in order to market **safe spaces or events** for both lecturers and students.

The remaining eight recommendations included the following. **Seminars, courses** and/or **panel discussions** may also prove invaluable in providing both heterosexual and homosexual individuals with accurate and informed academic research on LGBTQ-issues. **Compulsory**

courses for staff members should be instituted as means to sensitise them. The provision of funding to **purchase LGBTQ-literature** for the university library should be a key consideration for budgetary committees. **Collaboration between different universities** and their respective **units** should also be established. **Gay counselling and support groups** should be availed to address the needs of sexual minorities on campuses, whether **inclusively religious or psychological** in nature. The creation and consistent support of **transformation offices** dealing with issues related to gender and sexual diversity would also prove valuable. Clear **gay rights policies and procedures** should be in place. Here emphasis has to be placed on the consequences faced by those guilty of homophobic acts (whether on campus in general, or as cited by Dale, in hostels). Finally, and in short – **accepting that sexual minorities exist** (Dalton).

In addition to these general recommendations, students were also requested to consider the role of so-called safe(r) spaces on university campuses.

(ii) *The role of the safe(r) space in academia: Assimilation versus transgression*

Several participants considered safe spaces as **beneficial**. **Support** was cited as the main reason for establishing and maintaining these spaces on South African university campuses. Eric, Morgan and Quincy for example, noted that it would provide a context where gay students could talk to someone about their struggles concerning coming out or dealing with homophobia. Rather than merely viewing these spaces as tangible offices with personnel, Jay cited the benefits of a **24-hour Helpline**-service which students could call in times of need. Roger also believed that sexual minorities could be more willing to talk to someone they already know, and particularly if they know who to talk to and where to go. He does however argue that counsellors should be very well trained in order to deal with the needs of these students. A less formal approach may also manifest in the form of a supportive lecturer (whether heterosexual or homosexual) who might be willing to listen to students who "...just need[s] to sit down and open up to that one person that you know will listen and try to help".

Those students, who deemed safe spaces as **non-beneficial**, provided an array of reasons. These included Jack's support of Roger's 'less formal' approach, in so far as he considers a visible safe space as something which could facilitate more discrimination. A personal, one-on-one relationship with a lecturer will be better, since it is not necessarily labelled. In opting for

such an approach, a so-called “I know about you – you know about me-relationship” is established and is far more beneficial. Dallas echoed this argument and stated, “...By putting a label on something that has to be natural would be stupid”, and more discriminatory based on the visibility of both the student and safe space ally. Dale even went as far as to declare, “...Stop ‘throwing’ the ‘I’m gay’-statement in everyone’s faces”. By creating such an exclusive context, he foresees reverse discrimination as potential consequence, because people become very irritated by an overemphasis on gay rights. According to him, it comes down to the primary socialisation of children within their family contexts. If parents were to teach their children from an early age, that it is “...okay to be gay...heterosexuality and homosexuality will be equal”.

Russell also elaborated on the inherent dualism these spaces present. On the one hand, it may make students more “...vulnerable”, but on the other, the fact that the question is posed as to whether spaces should be created, underscores the likely need for it. A safe space does very little to provide “...unenlightened individuals some neutral exposure to gay sexuality. It removes it from a naturally, mixed setting where it is most needed”. In so doing, the sexual minority individual is further “...isolated” from mainstream society and it discourages courageousness on the part of the sexual minority, to stand up for their rights. Only being surrounded by other gay people is “...far too comfortable” and “...no challenge for your growth”. He poses a final question which provides an appropriate conclusion to the chapter, particularly concerning the role of assimilation versus transgression in (de)constructing the heterosexual/homosexual binary. He asks:

...What is safe? What would a safe zone allow a gay lecturer or student to say or do that they couldn’t otherwise do in an ‘unsafe’ zone? Hold their partner’s hand perhaps?

These divergent views on safety emphasised the manner in which a supposed similarity in terms of views amongst the students, was not as forelong a conclusion as one may have expected. The foregoing discussion underlined the fact that regardless of their shared social status as gay male students, their subjective experiences resulted in a plethora of perspectives concerning their sexual orientation in their private and academic lives. Although each of the twenty four (24) participants affirmed their identity as gay men, they did not necessarily agree on the manner in which they rationalised or reflected on their social and/or sexual identities. One need only to consider their narratives concerning the importance ascribed to a communal

or individualised gay male orientation, whether they conformed to particular stereotypes or whether they sought to consciously construct and differentiate several forms of their social or sexual selves. In Chapter Six, I critically interrogate their contributions in order to explore how the central concepts entrenched in the general and specific research objectives, inform their day-to-day lives.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The chapter provided an in-depth account of the information gay male academics and students related as part of the study. Their views were accrued from their participation in in-depth interviews and the completion of self-administered questionnaires. The discussion was grouped into two sections, of which the first focused exclusively on the experiences of gay male academics in their personal and professional lives. The second provided a similar route with a comprehensive overview of the contributions of gay male university students. The discussion in both comprised several themes embedded in Chapters Two and Three, which informed the compilation of the interview schedule and questionnaire. These themes ranged from the conceptualisation of a gay male identity, the association or disassociation with a communal or private gay persona to gay stereotypes, and the phases or themes associated with gay male identity construction. In addition, the lived experiences of these participants in their professional context of academia in South Africa, were also relayed in a thorough overview of issues related to safety on the university campus to the inclusion of gay-themed material in tertiary curricula.

Of interest, is the fact that regardless of differences one may have expected between academics and students as two distinct groups in general, such variances also manifested within the respective groups themselves. Consider for example how Russell, as one of the older students, was the only member of this group to share a queer critique with academics such as James, Rick and Ridge. The other students were more inclined to uncritically embed themselves in an assimilationist understanding of homosexuality, as per Altman (1982) and Seidman's (2002a) "gay sensibility". Notwithstanding such a similarity, there were specific differences between the two groups. Although both groups of participants implicitly referred to Jackson and Scott's (2010) **rationalisation** of sexual orientation based on their reflections on what constitutes a gay identity, students were more prone to cling to a clearly categorised definition of homosexuality. The latter also typified their identity construction as dependent on particular phases or stages, whereas academics also highlighted an intersectional "...process"

quality in this regard. Epstein's (1998) "ethnic model" also resurfaced in the narratives of academics and students on whether they conformed to specific gay stereotypes. In terms of stereotypes, students were more prone to acknowledge their excessive preoccupation with bodily appearance, whilst some academics underlined the importance of healthy living as consideration in their lives. Both refrained from an extreme obsession with so-called 'divas' or 'fag hags', but highlighted a plethora of additional stereotypes to which they conform or, with which they are labelled.

In terms of **reflexivity**, subthemes including views on 'the closet', several social and/or sexual 'selves' and their overall safety on campus, amongst others, also presented interesting findings. Regardless of some potential benefits 'the closet' may offer sexual minorities, both groups provided negative accounts of its overall influence, but expressed their desire to remain closeted on their respective campuses in order to avoid potential overt or subtle forms of homophobia, whether personally or professionally. In order to possibly 'protect' themselves, their narratives included an emphasis on their conscious performance of a myriad of social selves in different contexts. Students recounted more of these than their academic counterparts. These included the home, family, friend, straight, work, student, activist, boyfriend, African, flamboyant, religious and sport selves, whilst academics referred to their lecturer, social, political, network or strategic, family and relationship selves. The necessity for safe zones was also highlighted. Some of the academics, who typified their campuses to be safe, did so by reinforcing the binary logic in advocating against being too open outside one's academic department and to also avoid an overemphasis of issues pertaining to homosexuality, in order to not create too much discomfort for heterosexual individuals. Students expressed differential views on safety, with some underlining the negativity of conservatism and ignorance, and others crediting their university's managerial team for advocating inclusiveness and safety. Safe zones were cited for its potential support to sexual minority students as well as its role in perpetuating a minoritised, ghettoised and subordinate image of homosexuality within a more central heteronormative context. In relation to the safety afforded by these spaces, the participants also commented on their views of having an openly self-identified sexual minority lecturer on campus. The presence of such an individual could facilitate support as well as a sense of safety for students. Others, however, cited its potential to further tokenise gay men or reinforce shame, if the lecturer were to project such an image in his everyday behaviour.

Chapter Five, as such, provides the basis for the final two chapters to follow. Here I will critically discuss the noted themes in the preceding chapters in order to critically explicate the experiences of gay male academics and students in South African academia. The three general research objectives which centre on the broader typologies of **rationalisation** and **reflexivity** concerning sexual orientation, inform the exploration of whether (and how) these lend themselves to a construction or deconstruction of the heterosexual/homosexual binary in general, as well as a **professionalisation** or **deprofessionalisation of the gay male identity in academia**.

CHAPTER SIX

THE (DE)PROFESSIONALISATION MODEL OF THE GAY MALE ACADEMIC IDENTITY: REINFORCING THE HETEROSEXUAL/HOMOSEXUAL BINARY

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of Chapter Five, Ridge, a social science scholar, commented on the implicit centrality of heterosexist ideals and principles, of which heterosexuals are (comfortably) unaware:

...Heterosexuals don't realise that they are constantly flaunting their sexuality – them being married, their kids...it's so hegemonic. So dominant that people have stopped seeing it, so it's good for me to be openly non-heterosexual, brings sexuality into public sphere...If I were not open about my sexuality, I believe I would be doing a great disservice to the next generation of [social scientists]. It's a thoroughly political act.

Chapter Six provides a critical analysis of this “engendered paradox” (cf. Namaste, 1996) associated with “doing gay” or doing straight (or “doing gender”) (cf. Dowsett et al., 2008; West & Zimmerman, 2002). This is brought about through a thorough integration of academic research cited in Chapters One to Chapter Four, as well as a comparative overview of the differences and similarities between the views of academics and students. This is done to underline the influence of **rationalisation** and **self-reflexivity** as mutually reinforcing processes which may either retain or transcend arguments in favour of the heterosexual/homosexual binary.

The discussion reaffirms the general and specific objectives stated in Chapter One. These include an **exploration of the influences associated with rationalisation and self-reflexivity** on the experiences of gay men in the South African university context, which may consequently **professionalise or deprofessionalise** their identities.

The first section centres on the **rationalisation of the gay male identity** which encompasses the focus on the phases, stages and/or themes associated with homosexual identity

construction. This is followed by a consideration of how “doing” and using gay (cf. Dowsett et al., 2008) may in fact essentialise the gay male identity through further assimilation into a heterosexual culture. The views on **self-reflexivity** are then explicated based on a discussion of the role of ‘the closet’ as means to ascribe to an individualist or communal “gay sensibility” (cf. Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a). Finally, I discuss the manner in which these two processes figure in **the model** on whether to **professionalise** or **deprofessionalise the gay male academic identity**.

6.2 RATIONALISING THE GAY MALE IDENTITY

This subsection comprises two parts, both of which clearly underscore the first subset of **specific research objectives** stated in Chapter One, and which are directly associated with the empirical focus on **rationalisation**. Firstly, a discussion of the **linear phases or stages and/or intersectional themes associated with the identity construction** of the gay male, and secondly, a consideration of how “**doing**” and **using** gay may result from the conscious process of rationalisation (cf. Dowsett et al., 2008; Jackson & Scott, 2010), will be provided.

6.2.1 Rationalisation as part of the phases, stages and themes of gay male identity construction

In-depth accounts of the theoretical and empirical nature of the phases, stages and/or themes associated with the identity construction of homosexual individuals in general, and gay men in particular, comprised Chapters Two and Five. To avoid unnecessary repetition, but granting an in-depth critical reflection on these phases, **four subthemes** are discussed in order to emphasise the importance of the rationalisation of the gay male identity through identity construction. These include the **sequential and intersectional progression** during identity construction, consulting **role models** during identity construction, **anxiety, fear and confusion**, and the constant **incongruence between a need to conform to a gay sensibility** versus a **queer transgression** (Butler, 1990; 1991).

Although my questions on the subject matter centred around the five phases or stages as themes, rather than linear and universal steps, participants either knowingly or unknowingly posited their feedback along the lines of sequential steps **and** themes associated with their identity construction (Cass, 1979; Coleman, 1982; Connell, 1992; Dank, 1979; Downs, 2006; Miller, 1998a; Plummer, 1975; 1996; Troiden, 1998; Worthington et al., 2002). Concerning the

views of the two groups of participants, the accounts of particularly the **students** were enmeshed in a **sequential progression** of the various phases of gay male identity construction, which highlights the potential role of **age** as significant biographical variable.

The narratives of the students interlarded within references to a “...passing phase” or “...stage” as per Plummer’s (1975) homosexual *disavowal*, being “...in process”, “...climbing a ladder” and a movement “...piece by piece” with “...backsliding” based on an internal conflict (cf. Troiden, 1998). By “...climbing a ladder”, one of the students chose to first disclose his homosexuality to his friends followed by his parents, but acknowledged that “...it should actually be the other way around”, whereas another first told his parents in order to gain the necessary confidence to later tell others. Two students, in particular, initially thought that their same-sex attraction was merely a phase which would eventually end, which in fact it did not. One of the older social science students, and the only one to study part-time, provided an even more rationalised account by citing four respective stages which manifested his identity construction. These included knowledge of being different at an early age, followed by his initial identification as gay at age eleven, an exclusive attraction to men at age thirteen, and categorising himself as homosexual when he reached seventeen. Here an additional period of six months afforded him the chance to gain a “...good emotional, sexual adjustment” with his homosexuality, which entailed a reading of mainstream and academic literature on the topic. This gave him the opportunity to clearly rationalise (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010) his identity as homosexual, *not* gay. According to his own critical sexually orientated assessment (cf. West & Zimmerman, 2002), being gay presupposes far too much of a homogeneous prescription associated with a stereotypical lifestyle with which he could not identify. Three others, aged twenty (20), twenty one (21) and twenty two (22), also cited specific ages as referents in constructing their identity. Additional periods which underlined the sequential progression of students included references to their high school years and the first year of their university studies. Another engaged in his so-called “...slut phase” between fourteen and sixteen, whereas nine other participants’ interaction with other gay men during their noted undergraduate periods, made them feel safe and secure, since they were surrounded by other gay men (cf. Warren 1998).

Although evidently sequential, the intersectional manner in which Smuts (2011) used Cass’ (1984; 1990) model, figured in one of the participants’ references to his continuous movement between the various phases or thematic interludes because of the incongruence between his sexual orientation and religious affiliation, which he thought would alienate him from his faith. He

later transcended these feelings by joining an inclusive gay Christian church congregation. Sequential *and* intersectional accounts also appeared in the feedback of particularly the **academics**. Consider the fact that they identified their early 20s and later 20s to 30s, as pre-eminent periods of accepting and authenticating their homosexuality (cf. Downs, 2006). Six academics did, however, also underline the “...process” quality in their identity construction which presupposes a differential developmental trajectory based on their continuous introduction to new contexts and individuals which necessitated a constant disclosure, explanation and reaffirmation of their sexual orientation (cf. Ohnstad, 2009; Savin-Williams, 2005; Smuts, 2011), in contrast to linear models proposed by Cass (1979), Coleman (1982), Dank (1979), Downs (2006), Miller (1998b), Plummer (1975; 1996), Troiden (1998) and Worthington et al. (2002). Given the lack of clear homosexual norms and role models (cf. Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011:332), one academic in the educational studies faculty, prolonged his efforts of conceptualising his sexuality. Another, in the same academic field, continued to do the same, since he refused to be labelled or categorised according to a particular subset of expectations associated with gay male sexuality. One of the scholars in arts also cited his continuous search for an elusive “...image” of what gay should mean, something which may not necessarily exist. Interesting in this regard, and a theme which I elaborate on later in the chapter, is the fact that two of these academics, regardless of the differences in their age, have either read extensively or attended lectures on the subject matter of sexual orientation. This, in turn, affords them the opportunity to be more critically inclined on academic themes related to their sex, gender and sexual orientation; an academic disposition reflected in the work of several scholars (Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Maxey, 1999; McNaron, 1991; Munt, 1997; Pillay, 1996; Renn, 2000; Slagle, 2007; Waldo, 1998; Warren, 1974).

The second subtheme centres on **role modelling**, and recalls the foregoing reference to the lack of clear socialisation cues as to what it means to be gay. A dualism arose in this regard, since certain participants sought to conform to a **hegemonic ideal of masculinity** in order to retain the impression of being heterosexual (cf. Connell, 1987; 2005), whilst others consulted sources, including literature, television series (cf. Battles & Hilton-Morrow, 2002; Cooper, 2003; Quimby, 2005), pornography (cf. Bech, 1997; Escoffier, 2003; 2009; Kammeyer, 2008; Kendall, 2004; Thomas, 2010), bars, clubs and their homosexual siblings (cf. Bech, 1997:111; Downs, 2006:94; Du Plessis, 1999:70; Gevisser, 1995:28; McClean & Ngcobo, 1995:158) on what it meant to be gay. Through identity construction, then, gay men ‘did straight’ and ‘did gay’, in order to understand their sexual orientation. In terms of the latter, role modelling was cited by

both groups as central source for what it meant to be a gay man (cf. Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011:332). One academic contended that very few of these role models exist. As such, heterosexist tyranny succeeds in its attempt at vilifying homosexuality, since an inability to reach a point of identity pride and synthesis ensues because he has “...no means of understanding who or what [he is] sexually...” as he is, according to one of the social science scholars, “...subsumed into the fabric of heteronormative culture as a minority” (cf. Warner, 1991). Identity synthesis becomes all the more improbable for the gay male academic, because of anxiety and fear to elicit pro-gay statements in a perceived heterosexual setting (cf. Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962). It is worth quoting one of the academics’ arguments on the fact that his immediate academic department is “...tolerant” which, in turn may facilitate “...pursuits of creativity...”, but he still argues that “...[i]t is wrong to push the gay agenda. People are too sensitive for it”. As such, gay men further consult popular or academic literature (such as Handel, 2000) on being or dealing with being gay, as was evident in the views of a lecturer in the faculty of arts and an engineering student (cf. Troiden, 1998:269). In addition, examples were also provided of family members who served as secondary socialisation (cf. Parsons, 1959) agents, including a lesbian sibling and gay cousin. The indelible role of public gay spaces such as bars and clubs also resonated in the narratives of both academics and students. The work of Achilles (1998), Levine (1998) and Warren (1998) again comes to mind here, since all of them cited the educational opportunities these contexts may provide. The noted socialisation role of the university context, also figured in the feedback from a lecturer in the faculty of arts. He recalled the indelible role of his gay professors, who taught him the “...ins and outs of being a fag...”, as such a clear example of “doing gay” through rationalisation (also see Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002; Lambert et al., 2006; Waldo, 1997; 1998; Worthen, 2011).

One of the participants did however contend that much of the role modelling through visits to gay bars and clubs centred on the hedonistic quality of the gay male identity. His perspective directly recalls Jackson and Scott’s (2010) examples of rationalisation concerning sexual behaviour and Achilles (1998:177) and Warren’s (1998:184) emphasis on the controlled, permissive and even relatively respectable context bars and clubs afford gay men who wish to engage in sex. In the absence of primary gay male socialisation through clear rules or rituals (cf. Ingraham, 2002; Newman, 2007:261; West & Zimmerman, 2002) pertaining to gay male behaviour, gay men may be required to establish a sense of belonging and connectivity through sexual physicality. Although probably confluent (cf. Bech, 1997), this could arguably facilitate a

further objective in providing secondary socialisation (cf. Altman, 1982:21; Warren, 1998:185) into the proscriptive expectations of male homosexuality. In so doing, the stage is set to reinforce stereotypical understandings of homosexuality as solely promiscuous (Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bech, 1997) by those who seek to reinforce heterosexist primary gender role socialisation practices (cf. Blumstein & Schwartz, 1990; Oakley, 1974; Parsons, 1959) through, amongst others, verbal appellations and canalisation of gendered activity. Seven other participants also cited the importance of physical attraction and sexual behaviour as means to understand their sexual orientation. One academic could for example not “...explain” his physical attraction to another man during his acknowledgement phase, whereas other participants posited their sexual proclivity towards men as part of the phase or theme of marginal involvement and identity tolerance (cf. Cass, 1979; 1984). Here a social science lecturer, noted that his sexual experimentation went hand-in-hand with a concurrent “...excitement” and “...fear, anxiety”, since he did not “...want it to happen, but it did”. As evident from subsection 5.3.1 in Chapter Five, thirteen students emphasised the centrality of sexual behaviour with statements which included “...I think boys are hot”, “...I like guys”, “...I know I like men because that’s who I think of when I masturbate” and “...I enjoy sleeping with men”. Regardless, an academic provided a less liberating reflection of his years as high school student. He typified his first sexual encounter with a fellow high school student as “...being raped”, as was the case for a respondent in research by Connell (1992). Although degrading, painful and traumatic, he allowed it to happen in order to give way to his desire for intimacy with the other boy. This coincided with his attempt at hiding or even changing his sexual orientation through a conscious decision to conflate his gender with his sexual attraction, since he believed that if he had been more muscular or attractive, he would have been heterosexual (cf. Meem et al., 2010; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). Sexual intercourse then, becomes a pre-eminent source for understanding one’s homosexuality.

In doing straight (or “doing gender”), three academics in the faculties of arts and social science, provided examples of how they either failed to adhere to heteronormative prescriptions of masculinity, or sought to ‘perform’ their sexual orientation in such a manner as to conform to the proscriptive **cisgender model**, which assumes a direct link between one’s sex, gender and sexual orientation (cf. Meem et al., 2010; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009). Heterosexual gender role socialisation according to specific gender stereotypes, exacerbated some of the participants’ inability to attempt at linking their sexual attraction to their rational and emotive connectivity to men. This was attributed to their first introduction to homosexuality as overtly (and overly)

effeminate (cf. Tamagne, 2010), as well as their intense identification with the female figures in their lives, which had them emulate the “emphasised” (cf. Bradley, 2007; Connell, 1987) female characteristics associated with women. One of the academics recalled being “...different” (cf. Plummer, 1975:135-136; Plummer, 1996:71) and “...taunted” for, amongst others, wearing female clothing as a young boy and experiencing confusion because of his inability to act in a masculine manner. His argument was reinforced by the ‘queerly’ inclined arguments of another social science academic, who commented on his transgendered performance, rather than gay or homosexual views of himself as being “...in the wrong body”. On the other side of the gender spectrum, traditional masculine ideals (cf. Connell, 1987; 2005; Segal, 2007) characterised the narratives of three of the academics. These included a desire to attain a muscled physique, physical strength or masculinised performance to hypothetically overcompensate for not being a hegemonic male (cf. Downs, 2006; Drummond, 2005:292; Halkitis et al., 2004; Schnoebelen, 2001:31; Wood, 2004:153). Much of this reiterated Downs’ (2006:42) argument that “...most – if not all – gay men start at [the] place of being overwhelmed with the shame of being gay in a world that worships masculine power”. These notions also characterised the feedback from the gay male **students** who likened their attempts at “...performing straight” to a “...facade” they were “...forced” to conform to (cf. Butler, 1990; Ingraham, 1996; 2002), something a chemical engineering student continues to do in his day-to-day interaction with others on campus.

In projecting this “cynical” (Goffman, 1971) performance, the participants basically sought to alleviate the second of the subset of themes associated with identity construction, these being **anxiety**, **fear** and **confusion**. Much of the attempts at “doing gay” were secretive, undisclosed and hidden, because of the noted heterosexist prescriptions for gender and sexual orientation (cf. Cohen & Savin-Williams, 1996:115; Downs, 2006:44-45; Du Plessis, 1999; Gonsiorek, 1995:24; Plummer, 1975:144-145; Troiden, 1998:268). Both academics and students reaffirmed this point. Recollections of, amongst others, the role of a conservative Afrikaner upbringing, instilled a “...fear, anxiety and confusion” as well as “...massive guilt” in one of the academics. Four academics explicitly verbalised their fear, anxiety, confusion and shame, all of which have been documented in the work of Bozett (1989:140), Grotevant (1992, cited in Konik & Stewart, 2004:821) and Lindquist and Hirabayashi (1979:88), on the phases of homosexual identity construction. Their narratives recall Halperin (2012) and Sanlo’s (1999) definitions of “internalised homophobia”, as dependent on external labelling and negative sanctions. Others were also less inclined to embrace anxiety and fear during these initial stages of identity

construction, since they were more “...in touch” with their sexuality or one of the older academic’s “...strong sense” of who he was (and is).

Ten **students** expressed their sense of “...always” knowing that they were “...different”. This did however also translate into further expressions of being “...weird”, experiencing “...fear”, “...anxiety”, “...self-doubt”, “...shock” at a physical attraction to men and fear of alienation from the rest of a heterosexual society. The influence of external labels, from proponents of heterosexuality as norm, exacerbated attempts at hiding one’s sexual orientation through disavowal, as was evident in the progressive work of D’Augelli (1989:320), Hershberger and D’Augelli (2000) and the troubling statistics courtesy of the GLSEN (2011) and UNESCO (2012)-reports on homophobia. One of the older students exemplified this point, since he initially only expressed his sexual orientation “...privately” (cf. Plummer, 1975; Troiden, 1998). He did so in an attempt to consciously “...conceal it as best as [he] could in the ...public domain”, in order to avoid judgement.

Such shame underlined a distinction between those participants who expressed a need for **communal identification**, on the one hand, and those who sought a **queer transgression** (cf. Butler, 1990) of gay male identification on the other hand. Cass’ (1984; 1990) phase of identity pride and synthesis, Connell’s (1992) identity consolidation, Downs’ (2006) authentication and Miller’s (1998b) open endorsement, underlie the experiences of academics and students alike. Their sense of identity pride was mostly associated with a need to engage in activism, whether in their private lives or academically. Enmeshed in a mostly social constructivist account of homosexuality, two **academics** believed that one would never be able to fully master identity pride and synthesis based on the constant barrage of external influences and divergent meanings associated with what it means to be gay (cf. Weeks, 1986:15). This clearly supported Smuts’ (2011) South African study on the intersectional and non-linear nature of lesbian identity construction. Proof of identity pride and synthesis mainly reside in everyday attempts of individuals to curtail homophobia based on a particular context. This underlines Plummer’s (1998a; 2003) advocacy to acknowledge the “...messiness” associated with inherent plurality which characterises the lived experiences of gay men (cf. Nardi, 2002; Roseneil, 2002) within the existing category of ‘gay’ (cf. Weeks, 1985). An attempt at ‘queering’ same-sex attraction and eradicating the heterosexual/homosexual binary does however become near impossible. Consider the argument of a social science lecturer in this regard. He argues that an academic/activist-orientation retains the ‘us versus them’-polarisation (cf. Herdt, 1997), since

“...as long as you fight the oppressor, you are caught in the struggle”. Ten **students** expressed their commitment to this struggle. These included references to confronting homophobic statements and, as nine students did, join their respective LGBTQ-student organisations after “...being bitten by the activism bug”. Identity pride and synthesis, for them, as noted in subsection 5.3.5 (e), are to be equated with activism (cf. Halperin, 1995). This recalled the formation of Queer Nation in 1990 in New York. Its originators, a number of sexual minority students, wanted to create an organisation which would highlight a “politics of difference”, rather than homogeneity (Jagose, 1996:77), but resulted in an “oxymoronic formulation”, because it linked queer transgression’s call for plurality with an essentialist ‘ethnic’ character, with their references to nationality as part of the title (Phillips, 1994:17). The participants of this study basically do the same. I attribute this to the fact that, anti-homosexual behaviour may be confronted in a conducive social context such as their university’s annual Pride Parade (a queer inclination one could argue), and the academics and students still assimilate into a heteronormative culture in order to avoid either overt or covert discrimination which could threaten their personal and professional lives. As such, a queer transgression is abandoned in favour of what is deemed normal akin to an assimilationist and essentialist conceptualisation of gender and sexual orientation (cf. Jagose, 1996; Warren, 1998).

Regardless, a social scientist asserted that his academic focus on sexuality studies as part of his research and lecturing, affords him the opportunity to queerly transgress gay activism in order to teach about the seemingly controversial topic of human sexuality. This for him provides him the necessary pride in being ‘queer’ (cf. Ackerly & True, 2010; Brøgger & Eikeland, 2009; Grace & Benson, 2000; Honeychurch, 1996; Jones & Calafell, 2012; Williams, 1993). In this regard, I deem it as imperative to again quote his personal narrative on this specific issue. He noted that he was “...increasingly moving out of the ‘box’, [since he] find[s] sexuality identity categories problematic, when it comes to capturing the complexities of sexuality and desire...[he] would rather identify as queer because [his] own work, [is] informed by queer theory, [and he] cannot separate” his public and private contexts. Butler (2008), Halperin (1995) and Sedgwick (2013) would refute this, because a queer identity is a contradiction in terms. ‘Queer’ denotes a ‘re-signification’ and ‘re-invention’ of perceptions which centre on the category of identity or identities (Conley, 2009:34). This is done, as noted in Chapter Two, to critique the perceived taken-for-granted dominance and stability associated with heterosexuality and its polarised binary relationship towards homosexuality (cf. Ault, 1996; Brontsema, 2004; Butler, 1993; Epstein, 1996; Fuss, 1991; Halperin, 1995; Ingraham, 2002; Jackson & Scott,

2010; Namaste, 1996; Rich, 1993; Roseneil, 2002; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 2008; Stein & Plummer, 1996; Warner, 1991).

A similar contradiction arose in the account of one of the older students who had been the victim of physical assault during his undergraduate years of study at the hands of homophobic male students in his then university residence. He has no "...desire to celebrate [his] sexual orientation...[he has] no 'pride' in it...it's not strange, unique or new...[he] doesn't feel the need to defend [his] 'rights' to love whom [he] choose[s] to love". By taking on such an approach, he clearly refutes a definition of his gay identity as an 'expressive' human condition through which he is given the opportunity to champion the gay lifestyle (cf. Troiden, 1998:273). His critique of gay activism supports that of other academics who argued that a constant struggle between the oppressor and those who are supposedly subordinate will always result in someone winning and another losing (cf. Warner, 1991). He advocates his so-called "...let be' [view]...since it places less emphasis on arguments of persuasion" and, in effect, may be less confrontational and alienating. In so doing, the education on the importance of gay rights may be more salient than gregarious attempts at activism (cf. Cock, 2003; Croucher, 2002). This, according to him, could transcend the "...infantile and conceptually immature" attempts at stereotyping gay men according to a specific "...lifestyle...behaviours, opinions, views and culture...ascribed to...because [he is] romantically attracted to a person of the same sex". He rather opts to "...naturalis[e]" homosexuality as one of several sexual variants (Plummer, 1998b). Although his point of view provides an example of a 'queer' distance from defending communal gay rights, his insistence on being 'homosexual' and not 'gay', surely reinforces, as he himself conceded, not only an ethnically based model of gay subcultures (cf. Epstein, 1998; Forth, 2008), but also a pathological and medical conceptualisation of homosexuality (cf. Foucault, 1978; Tamagne, 2010; Weeks, 2000).

His arguments are, however, laudable. It firstly lingers close to the original understanding of homosexuality as uncategorised same-sex behaviour and emotion (cf. Dlamini, 2006; Patanè, 2010; Wallace, 2010) based on his reference to "...naturalising" it, and secondly, that his critique of gay activism underlines De Lauretis' (1991) provision of equal leverage to heterosexuality and homosexuality as similarly dependent one each other (neither dominating the other). The problem, however, is his personal label of 'homosexual' which he ascribes to, since it underpins a categorical positioning of his sexual orientation which presupposes further labels, characteristics and possibly stereotypes, regardless of his supposed disdain for being called

'gay'. He, alongside a black gay student, sought to embrace an approach which values same-sex attraction; which encapsulates an emotional, physical and romantic attraction. The latter's view, may in fact implicitly support Dlamini's (2006) argument that same-sex desire (behaviour and emotion) is not as alien to African culture as several political, religious and traditional leaders assume (cf. Cock, 2003; Croucher, 2002; Mkhize, 2008; Wallace, 2010). Regardless, homosexuality then, as advocated by Russell, may also manifest certain rules, regulations and sexual scripts (cf. Gagnon & Simon, 1973) gay men may use to rationalise their homosexual attraction. As such, "the homosexual"-label (cf. Foucault, 1978) remains intact, in opposition or relation to 'the heterosexual' within an existing heterosexist context (cf. Herdt, 1997). This recalls Katz's (1997) work. He attributed such categorisation to a need for control (cf. Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962), and per implication individuals are "...classified as one or the other" (Seidman, 2008:243). Thus, whether one ascribes to the gay or homosexual classification, both engender similar possibilities, struggles and rational expectations as social and sexual arrangements in a heterosexist society in terms of this 'either-or' approach (cf. Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1971; McIntosh, 1968; Mead, 1962; Namaste, 1996; Roseneil, 2002; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008).

In so doing, gay men may be "racialised" (cf. Forth, 2008; Reddy, 2010) along the lines of the "ethnic model". Much of this was evident in the apparent rationalisation of the **academics'** identification or non-identification as gay. One of the men's conflation of his gay male identity with being considered as normal or another one's notion that 'gay' is, as noted by an educationalist, the "...one label which makes most sense". In ascribing to such views, one is left to interpret homosexuality (or gay) as sexual variant imbedded in the current taken-for-granted heteronormative and patriarchal sexual and gender arrangements, respectively. This argument is supported with the more non-definitional or non-rational explanations academics provided for being gay. These included "...that's just how it is" "...it's just *what* I am" and "...it's the way in which I experience life". All but one of the twenty four (24) **students** thought themselves to be gay⁴⁹, and correspondingly provided similar accounts as their academic peers. Those academics who distanced themselves from an overt identification with the 'gay' label did so, not to ascribe to queer transgressive possibilities, but rather to either avoid homophobia or because of the ease with which they assimilated into the existent heterosexual context.

⁴⁹ This one student, Russell, initially affirmed that he was 'gay' in answering the first question. He did, however, later qualify his answer and distinguished 'gay' from 'homosexual'.

The influence of the noted subthemes on the process of rationalisation, including the sequential and/or linear phases associated with identity construction, a search for role models and the experiences of fear, shame and confusion, underlie both the academics' and students' implicit or explicit attempts at **doing** and **using** their sexual orientation. These performances, critically explicated in the subsection to follow, manifested as either 'sensibly gay' or 'sensibly heterosexual' and again emphasise the specific research objective of the study which sought to **explore the influence of "doing" or using gay in the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the gay male academic and student.**

6.2.2 **"Doing gay" and using gay: Assimilation and essentialism in practice**

This subsection provides a critical integration of the participants' views on communal and/or individual gay male identification. I ascribe to West and Zimmerman's (2002) definition of "doing gender" and Dowsett et al.'s (2008) application in "doing gay". In keeping with this, I thought it appropriate to also focus on Epstein's (1998) reference to the "ethnic model" as primary example of the manner in which gay men may rationalise their sexual orientation in a homogeneous manner via a "gay sensibility" (Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a). Epstein's (1998) application of an 'ethnic' approach to gay and lesbian identity seeks to underscore the initial resurgence of a "...future-orientated" movement which sought to reaffirm the rights of sexual minorities during the 1970s and 1980s in the USA. It mirrors similar attempts during the late 1980s and early 1990s in South Africa where, as discussed in Chapter Two, lobbyists were strategically placed in the midst of African National Congress (ANC) committees, in order to attain legal protection for the gay and lesbian community (Croucher, 2002; Tatchell, 2005). Epstein's model underscores political provocation to retain links to its historical roots and organise itself around a specified geographical context. Regardless, Altman (1982:150) also cites "...parody, theatricality, an emphasis on style" and "...a particular insight into emotions and human relations" as distinct qualities which have come to underline a homogeneous image of gay male sexuality (cf. Halperin, 2012; Sontag, 1964). Originating from, what he considers as a shared sense of sublimation (cf. McCormick, 2009:154), Altman (1982:149) critiques what is commonly referred to as the noted 'sensibility' which presumes that gay men may conform to certain characteristics based on their homosexuality.

Although such an approach may assume retaliation against oppressive heterosexist prescriptions, it also fosters the probability of assimilation and essentialism on the part of the

gay male, into the existing heterosexist culture (Jagose, 1996:3). I will argue that by “doing gay” and doing straight, one underlines an uncritical sublimation of gay men on a macro level, whilst the supposed negotiation-quality of “using gender” and using gay, affords just as limited leeway for transgression, since the provided “emotional energy” on a micro level (cf. Johnson, 2009) does little in questioning heterosexist assumptions at large. Much of this is aligned with McIntosh’s (1968) work on the “homosexual role”. Despite the fact that her work signalled a break from essentialism and afforded attention to the ‘socially constructed’ performance (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Goffman, 1971) of gay men, it still contended that homosexuality was “...a separate...role” from that of its heterosexual counterparts (McIntosh, 1968:184). Additional expectations (and per implication socially expected rituals) (cf. Ingraham, 2002) associated with this socially constructed role, included effeminacy, sexual seduction of minors and uncontrollable sexual urges (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000; Gagnon & Simon, 1967a:60) on the part of the homosexual male. The critical interrogation of all these themes as part of the process of rationalising the gay male academic and student’s identity, includes a focus on the “ethnic model” through and explication of each of these topics. These include the potential of affirming a **communal** gay male identification within academia, as well as ascribing to a particular gay male **stereotype**.

(a) *Affirming a communal gay male identity in a private and social sphere*

Seven of the gay male **academics** provided **positive affirmations** of a communal identification as per Epstein’s (1998) explication of the “ethnic model”. Being part of a group of gay men was considered advantageous based on the “...emotional regeneration” (cf. Johnson, 2009), “...fun” and “...nice” (cf. Achilles, 1998; Warren, 1998) opportunities provided. The provision of an environment which values inclusion, role modelling, and support in coming out and protection (cf. Achilles, 1998) against potential homophobia in a world “...rife with discrimination”, the academics who opted to value public gay male identification, underlined the need to establish a “...united front” and “...band of brothers” (cf. Abraham, 2009; Achilles, 1998; Altman, 1982; Castells, 1983; D’Emilio, 1983; Levine, 1998; Murray, 1998; Valentine, 2002; Warren, 1998, Weeks, 1986). In so doing, an education scholar, recalled Rubin’s (1993) reference to the distinction between the heterosexually-exclusive “charmed circle” as opposed to the peripherally situated homosexual dissidents, when he noted that regardless of one’s position, “...margins or its centre, both are an example of belonging” (cf. McIntosh, 1968). It should be noted that much of these views were associated with their reflections of their experiences during their teenage

and adolescent years, since it may posit membership of such a seemingly exclusive community as a “...nice to have” at later stages of the older academics’ lives, and not necessarily as a ‘must-have’ priority (cf. Brontsema, 2004; Gamson, 1995). Only whilst struggling to make sense of who you are, and where you belong when younger, such stereotypical bonds may be considered a necessity. Two academics, in particular, referenced the “...pleasurable...free” nature of exclusive bars and clubs in this regard, since it may not only educate the young gay man, but also provide validation in the form of “...attention, acknowledgement, [and] boosting one’s self-esteem”. One of the older **students**, for example, also regarded such spaces as beneficial in the short term, but not necessary over a longer period, since it should only provide an initial introductory, socialisation and supportive function for individuals who have recently come out of the closet (cf. Abraham, 2009; Altman, 1982; Bray, 1995; Hekma, 2010; Warren, 1998).

The importance of a shared geographical location as part of the “ethnic model” was also evident in the feedback of the men. Of interest, is the fact that regardless of their advocacy or disdain for public settings where gay men comprise most of the patronage, assimilation into a mainstream heteronormative culture, was always pre-eminent. Take for example the fact that bars and clubs were cited as one of the most preferred public settings for communal identification with other gay men, as per Abraham (2009), Altman (1982), Gevisser (1995), Levine (1998) and Warren’s (1998) work. It affords men the necessary anonymity and acknowledgment of their sexual orientation without heterosexual judgement (cf. Warren, 1998). This was of particular importance to academics who, regardless of their critically orientated academic area of specialisation (within the field of social science), continue to fear further isolation if they were to be recognised by others in their respective cities or towns (cf. Abraham, 2009; Gray, 2009; Valentine, 2002). Altman’s (1982:21) earlier reference to gay bars as secondary socialisation agent which serves as potential ‘coax’ to those who seek to understand what homosexuality entails, was also recalled in the reference to gay patrons as “...alternative family”, in the absence of such a primary group. The views of three **academics** underlined the feedback of seventeen gay students who answered ‘yes’ on whether they viewed a communal geographical location as advantageous. Here **students** cited gay bars and clubs as sources for role modelling, security, social support, safe-sex advice and a provision of information and knowledge on gay culture (Altman, 1982; Warren, 1998). An adherence to Jackson and Scott’s (2010) process of rationalisation was evident in words such as to “...teach” someone to be gay during a particular stage in their life, as denoted in the preceding paragraph, and one of the

student's equation of gay bars and clubs with a so-called "...gay school" where you are taught to "...read social cues in terms of being gay". Informal support networks and contexts outside a potentially prejudiced homophobic society, was again reiterated as imperative by the students, for as one student recalled, "...I discovered my identity, values and purpose in life" (cf. Abraham, 2009; Achilles, 1998; Castells, 1983; Warren, 1998). This clearly underlines a 'singular' appropriation of 'being' to a particular gay culture in an 'ethnic' form (cf. Epstein, 1998). As such, these informally organised gay groups could provide the necessary platform for education on, what Ingraham (2002) would term, specific "rituals" associated with gay life.

Six academics, regardless of their individual age, displayed more of a *laissez-faire*-attitude towards such an overt identification. Rink (2008) and Visser's (2007) reference to mostly heterosexual spaces as inclusive contexts for gay and lesbian individuals, was also evident in this regard. They thought such 'mixed' settings as "...relaxed" and "...with an interesting blend of people...who leave one another alone" (interviews quoted in Visser, 2007:221). This leads to the "...gaying' of straight space, as potential positive step...towards achieving the homonormalisation of leisure space" (Visser, 2007:226). Although Hekma (2010) and Warren (1998) associated the 'mixed bars' with female impersonators on stage as potential source of introduction of heterosexual individuals to gay lifestyle, a reverse example of this typified the feedback of the academics. They described The Mystic Boer bar as "...gay friendly" because of its "...bohemian style" and potential to accept and include homosexuals in the noted 'mixed' setting. For, as one of the social scientists in the sample cautioned, one should avoid to be "...too much...[by] forcing" one's homosexuality "...down the throats" of heterosexuals (cf. Goffman, 1971). He ascribes this to the fact that the "...line of tolerance is already very thin as it is" and avoids gay bars and clubs "...like the plague". Gay men may, in fact, 'do straight' in an attempt to retain the acceptance and tolerance of their heterosexual counterparts and also avoid the overtly promiscuous and homogeneous gay settings. Although an introduction to gay men is provided, it happens in a heterosexual context, where gay men may even attempt at 'passing' or enact their homosexuality more covertly, to avoid prejudice or stigmatisation.

Even those who expressed their disdain for gay spaces, opted to socialise in similar "...gay friendly coffee shops". References to "...gay friendly" or not wanting to enforce homosexuality onto heterosexuals, recall Butler's (1990) assertion that individuals are born into an existent cultural framework with predetermined expectations, rituals and scripts for a gendered and sexual 'performance' – this being the "blessed" inner realm of heterosexuality (Rubin, 1993).

The theme of assimilation again underlines and presupposes that the gay male academic and student are always constrained by what Namaste (1996) referred to as the “engendered paradox” of the closet, since they are expected to conform to a heterosexual, heteronormative and heterosexist assessment of expected behaviour. These academics thus assimilate into this mainstream milieu and in effect, reaffirm an ‘ethnic’ and essentialist formula of societal arrangements concerning sexual orientation in general, and homosexuality in particular. Thus, heterosexuality **is** the norm and homosexuality **is (and will remain)** the subordinate and dependable sexual variant (cf. De Lauretis, 1991; Stein & Plummer, 1996).

Subtlety was ironically the most apparent example of **queer transgression** in the **private spaces** of particularly three academics. Although their homes provide a safe haven, as evident in the trouble they go to in terms of their design choices, it refuted one of the academics’ continued references to the importance of economic success and sustainability as sources for identification with other men, which recalled the overcompensating gay male (cf. Downs, 2006:76). References to eccentricity, coherence, as well as the importance of minimalism and ‘mixed’ design choices, underlined a subtle symbolic transgressive quality. Ridge clearly ascribed to a queer interpretation (and critique) of homogeneous gay groups, since he finds “...any notion of community...problematic, because it presupposes some common thread that runs through all the members of community”. These examples of minimalism underscore the propensity for the postmodern queer paradigm to move beyond the creation, maintenance and reinforcement of “...coherent” categories along the lines of a polarised binary logic (cf. Warren, 1998:188). Its proponents rather seek to abolish such configurations and displace (and replace) it with a diverse, plural and ‘mixed’ intersectional understanding of social agents as autonomous beings (cf. Tong, 2008). One academic and student, respectively, underscored the contributions of Abraham (2009), Castells (1983) and D’Emilio (1983), in ascribing to an economic objective as main reason to identify with their gay and heterosexual peers. The earlier reference to a gay man’s conscious decision to impress his visitors with a stereotypically gay environment, as per the **‘WOW’-factor**, underlined four of the academics’ emphasis on the importance of art, furniture and specific design choices as factors in establishing a ‘gentrified’ (cf. Castells, 1983) sense of comfort, intimacy and privacy, separate from a heterosexual world, as noted in Warren’s (1998:188) emphasis on the precision associated with gay men’s homes.

Based on a lack of financial affluence and/or independence, students, on the other hand, sought to establish a link between their design choices and their need for safety. Echoing Ridge’s queer

references to minimalism and 'mixed' home design choices, a social science student cited his love for simplicity for "...'less is more' [and]...mixing neutral colours with a dash of flavour by adding a bright wall or bright artwork to break from the ordinary". Although his words underlie an implicit reference to queer theory's objective of simplicity and transgression, his reflections, as well as those of an architecture student, also acknowledge the centrality of heterosexuality. This could be attributed to one of the social science students likening his home to a "...safe haven" where he is free to be "...affectionate" with his significant other, a thought also evident in the views of two other students. This reiterates Warren's (1998) work on, contradictorily, older gay men's affinity for private rather than public spaces. The chemical engineering student reaffirmed this inherent contradiction between a 'plural liberation' (queer and gay conflated, if you will) and need for safety based on marginality (a clearly modern heterosexist construct) (cf. Achilles, 1998) when he states, "...Gay people want to be **private**, so they may **spend money** on things to make them **feel safe**"⁵⁰ (cf. Castells, 1983; Downs, 2006; Warren, 1998).

On the other hand, those academics who provided more **negative accounts** concerning communal identification, attributed their views to the stereotypical effeminate and "...sexualised" views which are constantly perpetuated based on obliviousness regarding matters concerning homosexuality (cf. Bech, 1997; Escoffier, 2003; 2009; Kammeyer, 2008; Kendall, 2004). Such ignorance may further fuel homophobia and most likely impede the courageous behaviour of openly gay men in favour of careful self-reflexivity which involves a recollection of the past and "...intense anticipations" (Mead, 1962:137) for the future, in order to avoid overt or subtle discrimination. Much of this underlies attempts at "doing gender" or "doing gay". The most apparent negative inclination participants displayed towards a homogeneous group of gay men, evoked Altman's (1982) critique of a "gay sensibility" which further encourages a binary logic. This arrangement may exacerbate the 'us-versus-them'-stereotype (cf. Herdt, 1997), minoritisation (cf. Warner, 1991) and ghettoisation (cf. Levine, 1998; Valentine, 2002; Warren, 1998) through which gay men stifle any attempt at challenging heteronormativity through exclusivity rather than inclusiveness. They rather retain their "...shamed group" (cf. Goffman, 1963:23) status. Five students reaffirmed this point by citing the superficial and homogeneous subculture a communal gay group may ascribe to. It is because of this, that Russell is "...slowly shifting away from the label and standing as a **human**"⁵¹ who is attracted to members of the same sex", a thought which contradicts those academics and students who commented on their

⁵⁰ Emphasis added.

⁵¹ Emphasis added.

supposed comfort with the 'gay' label. This, in contrast to the possible advantageous contributions role modelling could provide, may pressurise younger (and ignorant) gay men to conform to a limited and rigid account of what gay male sexuality entails (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bech, 1997). Of interest in the feedback of three academics, was the fact that a communal identification with other gay men does not necessarily manifest such a degrading and homogeneous image. Diversity and plurality (cf. Nardi, 2002; Plummer, 1998a; 2003; Roseneil, 2002) could just as easily be evident within the category of gay male, and as such, signal the role of negotiation or 'use of gay' within an already scripted category (cf. Johnson, 2009) through an acknowledgement of "...different forms of gayness" (cf. Roseneil, 2002).

Students, however, did not comment on the potential of diversification within a larger communal group, but rather spoke about the effects of homogenisation. They were more focused on the potential problems associated with a communal identification, particularly related to external and internal divisions. The latter could arise, based on jealousy, rudeness, pretention and discomfort, which may manifest in public spaces such as gay bars and clubs (cf. Rumens, 2008). An interesting dualism arose in this regard. As part of his reflection on gay bars and clubs, one student commented on the superficially 'individualised' orientation gay men ascribe to within a setting which could assume a communal identification with others, but which instead results in an internal competition of sorts. This argument is supported by another's belief that "...gay people always want to look better, younger and more desirable than the people surrounding them". Their contributions again emphasise the fickle (Achilles, 1998) and over-compensatory (Downs, 2006) image of gay men as attempts at transcending their 'subordinate' or "...traitors to the cause"-labels in relation to hegemonic heterosexual ideals (cf. Segal, 2007). This manifests Collins' (1991, cited in Renn, 2000:131) "...outsider within"-experience within a gay group, since no attempt at communal mobilisation is afforded in these contexts. These internal divisions may also see men embracing stereotypes which recall Bech's (1997) explication of Dannecker and Reiche's (1974) demarcation of gay public spaces. Four students commented on the manner in which they were or may be used as instruments as means to an end through a process of sexual experimentation. This could reify the gay male as disposable through irresponsible and confluent sexual relationships which, in the end, reaffirms the importance of the "...gay reputation of sleeping around" (cf. Bech, 2007).

Even those spaces which necessitate more of a "...prim' and 'proper'" demeanour, presented a dualism. Gay churches, were described as being peculiar, for it forces one to socialise with a

homogenous group of men, rather a mixed contingent of heterosexual and gay people. One of the students recalled that his visits to gay congregations again reaffirmed the promiscuous image of gay sexuality, since the *Exit*-newspaper with its sex classifieds, was available for purchase during a church gathering (cf. Exit, 2012). The cautionary remarks of academics about further marginalisation of homosexuality were also noted by students. Examples, in this regard, included the perpetuation of stereotypes through the assignment of labels which could subsequently incite homophobia and a further polarisation between heterosexual and homosexual individuals (cf. Derrida, 1998; Fuss, 1991; Namaste, 1996). This difference, contrary to the arguments of the academics, equates and conflates the actions of the individual gay male, with that of the larger gay group or community, which could comprise drunkenness and promiscuity (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bech, 1997).

Associated with these attempts at either “**doing**” or **using** their sexual orientation publically or privately, Collins’ (1991, cited in Renn, 2000:131) “outsider within”-debate also resonated in the participants’ choice to either associate with or distance themselves from what they perceived as **gay male stereotypes**, as evident in their efforts at “**doing gay**” or not.

(b) *A (dis)association with gay male stereotypes*

In addition to the communal gay contexts such as bars, clubs or churches as potential sources for rationalisation, participants also considered whether they conformed to particular stereotypes associated with gay sexuality. The participants also cited their **preoccupation with female artists (or diva worship)**. The majority of academics and two students cited their appreciation for the artistry associated with the work of Billy Holiday, Bette Midler, Barbra Streisand and Cher, amongst others, rather than the fact that these were female artists. As such, both academics and students may not necessarily describe themselves as diva-devotees, but understand the infatuation gay men may have with these women, since the latter were also victims of a heterosexist and patriarchal society, as was evident in the work of Castro-Convers et al. (2005:49), Maitland (2003:19), Moon (1995:488), Rumens (2008) and Shepperd et al., (2010:206). These artists were described as “...cult figures” who provided the gay academics with the necessary “...escape” and “...happy places” from their “...dull” day-to-day existence (cf. Altman, 1982:149-150; Freeman, 2011; Morrison, 2011) without being sexually attracted to the women. A social science scholar echoed Altman (1982), Freeman (2011) and Morrison’s (2011) contributions to the manner in which certain contexts, including music, film and literature,

provide a redemptive 'flight' for gay men away from a heteronormative community. In addition, another social scientist likened gay men to female entertainers, since both are entertainers who seek to express their unique and diverse nature through a 'performance'. The gay clone, in effect, has given way to this gay 'clown'-caricature (Alvarez, 2009; Rothmann, 2013c), which is accepted and tolerated since it does not challenge or threaten the normality or stability of heterosexuality, but rather reinforces a stereotypical understanding of homosexuality (cf. Battles & Hilton-Morrow, 2002; Cooper, 2003).

Related to this, is the possible importance of having **heterosexual female friends** or a so-called **fag hag relationship**, as opposed to heterosexual or gay male friends in their private and professional lives. Six of the academics and one of the students were very adamant that their friendships are mostly based on shared interests with the other person, and not the latter's biological sex, which clearly contradicted several studies which have underlined the necessity for such relationships (Rumens, 2008; Shepperd et al., 2010). An educationalist affirmed Rumens' (2008) reference to the choice to establish stronger collegial bonds with men in the context of the university, a choice one may interpret as option to 'pass' as 'straight' in order to avoid patriarchal or heterosexist prejudice. Goffman's (1963) "with relationship" also arose during Ian's interview, when he underlined James' view of gay male-heterosexual male friendship or collegial bonds as relatively problematic, since heterosexual men may fear stigmatisation or gay labelling if they were to associate with gay men, based on their general unease with gay men (cf. D'Augelli & Rose, 1990:490; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002:79; Newman, 2007:262; Oberle et al., 2011:447; Rhoads, 1995:319; Waldo, 1998:767). This relationship was ironically also evident in a student's unease with some of his female friends' tendency to 'tokenise' him as the "...gay friend", which assumes a certain expectation and label in relation to the women. One of the faculty of arts scholars reiterated Freeman (2011) and Morrison's (2011) work on an escape to a more vibrant and less conventional bond with individuals, with his references to an affinity for women who display "...extravagance" and have "...big hair". This sense of a unity between gay men and heterosexual women also arose in the feedback of one of the younger academics, who use this reciprocally beneficial relationship to alleviate some of the "outsider-within" (Collins, 1991, cited in Renn, 2000:131) status within patriarchal academic settings (Rumens, 2008). Students also commented on the closeness to their 'fag hags', the ease to talk about varied topics and comfort afforded with heterosexual women rather than heterosexual men (Castro-Convers et al., 2005:49; Maitland, 2003:19; Moon, 1995:488; Rumens, 2008; Shepperd et al., 2010:206). Such a connection was also

mentioned by an academic who regarded friendships between gay men as a "...safer" option within academia, based on their supposed "...shared experiences and...common bond", a thought which was different from Rumens' (2008) reference to the possible animosity which may permeate these collegial links.

A further stereotypical 'performance' associated with gay men which resonates in the work of Alvarez (2009), Drummond (2005), Halkitis et al. (2004), Pope et al. (2000), Schnoebelen (2001) and Wood (2004), centres on their preoccupation with their **bodily appearance**. Interesting in this regard was the definite contested perceptions gay male academics communicated on body consciousness. In terms of physical appearance (including a toned physique, hairstyle, clothing), one of the academics thought exercise and facial products important (cf. Alvarez, 2009; Pope et al., 2000), whereas another's self-reflexivity lead him to disassociate himself with any such stereotypes. Although he acknowledged that others have labelled him as "...camp" because of his "...in your face...over-usage of wittiness" which manifests a "...darker...and vacuous" quality in his tone of voice, this is based on a "...hyper-critical" attitude about certain issues, in spite of, according to him, his sexual orientation. This recalls both Slagle (2007) and my own "in your face"-attitudes when neither of us were perceived to be "...private' enough about issues that challenge the system and, per implication, [the fact that our] research, obviously, makes some people very uncomfortable" (Slagle, 2007:320).

Differences also arose in the views of others. Consider one scholar's emphasis on a "...specific style" and another in social science's reference to the importance of his bodily appearance and choice of clothing, but as he, himself contended, these things become less important with age, as he favours a healthy lifestyle rather than a muscular body. This was a view shared by five other **academics** (cf. Gamson, 1995). Rick explicitly challenged Alvarez (2009), Meem et al. (2010), Pope et al. (2000) and Segal's (2007) research on the significant relationship between men's sexual orientation and their affinity for excessive exercise as per the latter's reference to "...the gay male aesthetic ideal", when he declared that he is "...absolutely against" it. James' earlier reference to gay men's use of physicality as means to communally identify with others akin to them, is recalled as possible reason why they might be more prone to be inclined towards physical beauty, since they have few sources for a secondary socialisation of sorts.

The feedback from **students** strongly emphasised James' argument as well as the importance associated with a shared cultural aesthetic, as per the "ethnic model" and a "gay sensibility". Several of them referred to being cognisant of their dress code as stylish, fashionable, vibrant and fitted. The significance of hairstyle, self-tanning and having a beautiful body as means to finding a boyfriend, were also noted. This preoccupation with a "...neatly groomed" appearance, is commented on best in one of the sociology students' "...extreme" consciousness "...about [his]...hairstyle...as a gay man [since he] feel[s] the need to conform or reach specific goals such as exercise and dress code" (cf. Alvarez, 2009; Pope et al., 2000). Effeminacy also figured in the daily mannerisms and tone of voice of three students, during interactive encounters with others, whereas another adamantly admitted to being "...overtly emotional" (cf. Tamagne, 2010). Although relatively effeminate, Russell described himself as "...androgynous" rather than "...super butch", a reflection which evokes Derrida's (1998) concept of "supplementarity", since it stresses his awareness of that or whom he is different from – the "...homophobic male". Two others supported Russell's views in attributing their mannerisms and dress code to personal preferences or tendencies, rather than attempts at conforming to an overarching gay male ideal.

In addition to these three stereotypes included as part of the interview schedule and self-administered questionnaire, both academics and students provided additional examples of behaviour which could be interpreted as stereotypically gay. The students' references to their "...life and obsession" and "...excessive indulgence" in classical and theatrical musicals and film productions and creativity, again recalled Altman (1982), Freeman (2011) and Morrison's (2011) work on gay men's search for an elusive freedom and "elsewhere" (cf. Johnston et al., 2000:771), separate from an oppressive heteronormative context. In addition, Christopher noted that his "...tolerant" department affords him the opportunity to escape from a potential heterosexist environment "...through the pursuits of creativity". Two scholars in the faculty of arts alluded to their roles as gay male academics who, in ascribing to a queer inclination, exude a hyper-critical, hyper-analytical and opinionated 'performance' or "writing of the queer self" (cf. Grace, 2006) through their lecturing and research (cf. De Lauretis, 1991; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008; Warner, 1991). Both attributed importance to the reclamation of concepts such as 'fag' in order to zealously mock the routine-like configurations of heterosexist social institutions and rituals (cf. Brontsema, 2004; McCormick, 2009; Stein & Plummer, 1996).

But, regardless of their identification, gay men provided examples of "**doing gay**" (conforming to gay stereotypes and/or expectations) and **doing straight** ('passing' in an attempt to conceal

their homosexuality). In “**doing gay**”, the participants in fact conformed to stereotypes heterosexual individuals may associate with gay men, and as such, conflate their efforts at “doing gay” with doing straight. A select few, including the preceding paragraphs’ discussion of academics who projected the potential of engaging in a postmodern performance of sorts, projected the probability of **using queer**. **Doing queer** would imply a passive adherence to a subset of rigid expectations and prescriptions associated with a categorised identity which, as Butler (2008) would assert, is incongruent with the concept ‘queer’. In **using** the diverse, plural and otherness, Johnson (2009) would argue that fluidity may only be attained on a micro level, rather than a macro level, through a negotiation between the sexual actors who are able to critically assess the underlying contradictions and fragility of heterosexuality, heterosexism and heteronormativity (cf. Butler, 1993; De Lauretis, 1991), because of their academic knowledge which heralds the potential for such reflexivity. As such, the foregoing critical comparison between the perspectives of gay male academics and students, clearly denote an explicit and/or unknowing adherence to the rationalisation of sexual orientation through “doing gay” *and* doing straight.

But how did these more ‘personal’ accounts transpire in their attempts at conforming to or refuting processes of rationalisation and/or professionalising their gay male identity in their academic contexts through **self-reflexivity**? The following section speaks to this matter.

6.3 **A REFLEXIVE PROJECT AS MEANS TO AN END: THE INTERPLAY AMONG THE INTERDEPENDENT AGENTS OF THE GAY MALE’S SEXUALLY ORIENTATED SELF**

As part of the second set of empirical objectives, the research foci also included an **exploration of the nature of self-reflexivity in terms of the identity construction and/or deconstruction of the South African gay male academic and student**. My primary emphasis centres on ‘**the closet**’ as reflexive product and its eventual influence on a choice to individualise or communalise the gay male identity in academia. This focus is also informed by the potential influence of ‘the closet’ on the decision of academics and students to (de)construct several configurations of ‘**the self**’.

6.3.1 The closeted and openly gay male: Safety as “...fettered” ideal

Several gay male academics chose to remain closeted in their work contexts. Justifications varied from career-orientated reasons, a disdain to proclaim one's sexuality publicly because of, amongst others, the fact that heterosexuals are not expected to do the same (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:37), or fears of potential job losses or career sabotage, regardless of whether their immediate colleagues are aware of their homosexuality (cf. D'Emilio, 1992; Evans, 2002; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Sanlo, 1999; Slagle, 2007). One respondent cited an intense self-reflexivity on his part, depending on the particular context in which he finds himself as main reason to foreclose on proclaiming to be gay. This thought was reminiscent of one of the academics' statement that he requires more energy in masking his homosexuality in certain milieus, if necessary, as per Mead's (1962:138) reference to gay men taking on an objective perception of themselves in order to anticipate the expectations and possible attitudes and reactions because of the “generalised other”, as to decide whether their ‘I’ or ‘me’ will take on the dominant role.

Additional reasons underlay the choice on the part of academics to **remain closeted** in their work environment. These included those who refuted previous references to conflating effeminate behaviour with homosexuality. This resulted in the adoption of principles associated with “impression management” (cf. Goffman, 1971) in order to refrain from acting “...flamboyant”, or “...flapping” and “...splashing” (cf. Mead, 1962; Tamagne, 2010) their sexual orientation. A second reason reaffirmed the potential of homosexuality to be subsumed into a heterosexist academic fabric as to avoid “...embarrassment” for heterosexuals, who need to acknowledge and react towards gay men. The two faculty of arts scholars' conscious attempts at critiquing heterosexist rhetoric through ‘queering’ their classes and disclosing their sexual orientation (cf. Butler et al., 2003:20), underscore the work of several researchers who have associated such disclosure with a more positive relationship between the lecturer and his/her students (cf. Cotton-Huston & Waite, 2000:130; Francis & Msibi, 2011:167; Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002:78; Lambert et al., 2006:20; Waldo, 1997:92; Waldo, 1998:770; Worthen, 2011:369). Two others, however, do not disclose their sexuality or enter into debates on the subject matter, since they have become too pacified in contrast to heterosexual lecturers who would not necessarily even consider talking about their sexual orientation to their students. Those who do reveal their sexual orientation, only do so after a careful self-reflexive process rather than a rushed attempt in order to “...gradually” sensitise heterosexuals, in order to avoid

unnecessary alienation from, what Brown (2000:7) defines as “...some wider (more important, more immediate, more central) room”, within which “...*accessibility* and *interaction*” are limited through a rushed attempt. I consider it worth quoting Steve, a social scientist, in this regard, since he does this in order to “...build a rapport and then come out. It’s much more effective and challenges their perceptions”. In doing this, they affirm Fuss’ (1991) argument on how the “...philosophical opposition between ‘heterosexual’ and ‘homosexual,’...”, has always been constructed on the foundations of related opposition: the couple ‘inside’ and ‘outside’” (Fuss, 1991:1). As such, the gay male academic strives to limit any attempt at challenging the heterosexist ideologies of his academic environment (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008:35-38; Chang, 2005:172; Waldo, 1998:767).

Others, however, provided less positive reasons for remaining closeted. Four of the **academics** did so in order to avoid sabotaging their jobs or careers which relates to my references to potential participants who decided to distance themselves from this study in Chapter Four (cf. D’Augelli & Rose, 1990:490; D’Emilio, 1992:132; Evans, 2002:533; Francis & Msibi, 2011:169; Schneider & Dimito, 2010:1366; Slagle, 2007:319). They commented, for example, on the “...cautious” way in which they act towards students since, this relationship may, according to one of the social scientists, foster a dangerous power-based game. This presumes that either the academic or student, as evident in previous studies by Dews and Leste Law (1998) and Sanlo (1999), amongst others, may manipulate the other party and use their shared sexual orientation to his advantage. Ten **students** echoed these attempts at remaining invisible as gay on campus, based on its underlying heterosexist fabric. Reasons included intolerant lecturers (Biegel, 2010:112; McNaron, 1991:21; Sears, 1991:39; UNESCO, 2012:18-19, Waldo, 1998:768-769), fear of alienation from family and friends (cf. UNESCO, 2012), and yielding to assumptions of being heterosexual. Their attempts at self-reflexivity were apparent in their clear delineation of their so-called family and student selves. Both configurations saw the ‘me’ taking precedence, since they decided on refraining from any (or very few) gay references. This reaffirms their likeliness to conform to the expectations of the heterosexual “generalised other” (cf. Goffman, 1971).

The views of academics and students on the potential safety afforded by their university contexts, corresponded with their answers on whether they have chosen or continue to choose to remain closeted. An inherent irony and underlying contradiction typified the feedback of **six academics** who regarded their university as a safe environment. As noted earlier, Christopher

for example, stated that he regarded his home department as safe, but he continued to censor himself amongst his colleagues. By doing this, he further reinforces not only the sexually orientated binary through a deliberate attempt at secrecy (cf. Mead, 1962), but also engenders an “internalised homophobia” (cf. Cox et al., 2011:122; Elia, 1993:179; Halperin, 2012:430; Sanlo, 1999:xix) based on fear of transgressing the supposed safety afforded by the closet (cf. Sedgwick 1993:46; Weeks, 1977:3). Although one could see him as a victim of unwarranted homophobia, he however contradicts previous arguments in favour of interrogating heteronormativity, when he states, “...it is wrong to push the gay agenda. People are too sensitive for it”. His views recall those of Steve who advocated a gradual disclosure or discussion of issues related to one’s homosexual orientation, Robin who refrains from “...flaunting” his sexuality, Greg who favours “...testing the waters” before disclosure, and Colin who values discretion on the part of the gay male academic in proclaiming that he is gay.

The latter justified his position, since he believes that being “...explicitly out”, would impact his professional context negatively. Even those who explicitly stated their ‘queer’ inclination, are rendered passive because of their initial nervousness upon meeting first-year students for the first time which, according to one of the social scientists, may necessitate gay men acting in a “...careful” manner in order to avoid potential prejudice. This pre-empts gay men to create a disjuncture between their ‘true’ selves and the selves their immediate context necessitates (cf. Goffman, 1971:30). Such a careful demeanour underlay the statements of others who thought their campuses safe. One needs only to consider references to safety provided on adapting to their respective academic departments, through secrecy and remaining closeted in their immediate environments as examples of care taken, which manifest a “tyranny of silence” (Atkinson, 2002:123-125) on the part of the gay male. These examples also serve to reiterate Pharr’s (1997:16) reference to the manner in which men, including the participants, have clearly been indoctrinated into believing that the “...world is and must be heterosexual”, as evident in the work of others including Butler (1990; 1993), Francis and Msibi (2011:159), Jayakumar (2009:675), Macgillivray (2000:304), Namaste (1996), Sedgwick (1993; 2008), Stein and Plummer (1996) and Warner (1991). These men then ascribe to a definite set of “...personalities” (Ritzer, 2012:364) as per Mead’s (1962) game stage, during which they take on the “...attitudes of an organized social group” and thus attain “...a complete self or possess the sort of complete self” their “generalised other” requires (cf. Mead, 1962:155).

The examples of implicit attempts at avoiding prejudice, exemplified the contributions of those who recalled examples of subtle or explicit institutional homophobia, based on the underlying ideological values of their institutions (cf. Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:238; Silverschanz et al. 2008:180). Although one could interpret examples of subtle discrimination, each in fact demonstrates explicitly how heteronormativity is retained in South African academia. Institutional homophobia, according to James, is evident in his particular university's institutional managerial corps (cf. Downs, 2006:76; Rumens, 2008:89; Sanlo, 1999:xix). The absence of managers or assigned representatives from discussions, commissioned by management, "...spoke volumes" about the importance the latter assign to issues faced by sexual minorities. Their behaviour basically reaffirms a view of homosexuality as an unimportant component of academic debate (cf. Burn et al., 2002; UNESCO, 2012) and even implicitly lambasts those, including him, who seek to make a constructive contribution in this regard, as "...acting out" through a non-heterosexist performance of sorts. These academics (or other proactive parties) are "...left...to [their] own devices", if they were to initiate academic discourse which contradicts the underlying ideologies of the 'powers that be'. The congruence of previous references to gay bars and clubs as sources for secondary socialisation is left intact. Consider the fact that, because of the absence of gay male socialisation rituals or agents, physicality becomes the initial and, in some cases, subsequent point-of-reference in constructing a gay male identity through sexual intimacy or intercourse.

Universities may in fact occupy this void through a critically informed process of academic socialisation on homosexuality, a potential responsibility it abdicates, as evident in James and particularly Stanley's arguments (cf. Honeychurch, 1996). The latter recalled the 'subtle' and supposed academic justifications provided by his colleagues in his academic department, to discontinue his course, which dealt with issues related gender and sexuality, amongst others. According to him, the course was deemed "...peripheral, non-essential, eccentric and non-sensible for mainstream" audiences. Such decisions, may have gay men, who are not afforded the luxury to be socialised into the seemingly exclusivity of heteronormative ritualisation, to follow other avenues. As alluded to under the themes of identity construction, gay men's first and possibly 'defining' introduction to homosexuality is physical in nature, through particularly sexual intercourse (cf. Barret & Robinson, 2000; Bech, 1997). Their subsequent connection to other men is defined by much of this, since gay individuals are mainly introduced to heterosexual rituals, including the sexualisation of heterosexuality in mainstream media (Jackson & Scott, 2010) or through constant interaction with heterosexuals, and not the degree

to which such a 'sexualisation' (cf. Seidman, 2002b) in fact facilitates a connection between men and women. Considering the fact that gay men may have no clear role models, gay socialisation rituals or clearly delineated rules and regulations pertaining to emotional and sexual connectivity, sexual intercourse (and per implication) the hypersexualisation (cf. Kammeyer, 2008) of homosexuality, become their main mode of adjustment. Hedonistic pleasure, then, affords the gay male the opportunity to transcend his atomised and isolated existence and "...normalise⁵² his homosexuality".

But, one needs to consider the meaning of 'normalisation' in this regard. In doing this, I cannot help but recall Ian's contemplation as to whether it is "...difference which makes you gay, or is it the gay that made you different?" Both questions assume the centrality of a binary logic in constructing your identity. Derrida's (1998:244) understanding of "supplementarity" posits the gay male in opposition "...to that which he is not" (Namaste, 1996:196), a heterosexual man. In so doing, certain unique characteristics or features define the category of 'gay' or 'homosexual', which only further exacerbates the 'normalisation' of the rigid boundaries between heterosexuality and homosexuality. To be normal, one needs to occupy the "blessed" inner quadrant of the "charmed circle" (cf. Rubin, 1993:13), which basically subscribes to a hegemonic heterosexual ideal of "doing gender", and per implication, doing straight, through the previously noted predetermined ritualised performance. As such, on the one hand, normalisation is achieved through apathy, assimilation, secrecy and foreclosure on the part of the gay male. On the other hand, these men need to do something, 'act out' to have their voices heard, educate or sensitise particular individuals, or to mobilise others who may want to address heterosexism, akin to Robinson and Ferfolja's (2008:849) recommendation to unsettle individuals in terms of "...their location within dominant, 'common sense' understandings of the world". And, somewhere in the middle, this normalisation may also result from potentially self-imposed homosexually segregated contexts (cf. Plummer, 1998b).

Based on the preceding views, this 'normalisation' according to **heteronormativity** may render stereotypical views or understandings of homosexuality, as a "hypersexualised" (cf. Bech, 1997; Escoffier, 2003; 2009; Kammeyer, 2008; Kendall, 2004) image of these men, clearly intact as peripheral in relation to heterosexuality (cf. Rubin, 1993). One could thus be left to interpret the (possibly conscious and deliberate) apathy of university management, as an effort to retain the unquestioned 'normality' of the heterosexual/homosexual-binary, either through the mentioned

⁵² Emphasis added.

invisibility or stereotypically visible nature of gay academics. Regardless, this may reinforce Namaste's (1996) "engendered paradox" of the closet which assumes a continued effort at either hiding one's sexual orientation in certain contexts, or comparing oneself to what is deemed normal or normative in mainstream society (cf. Derrida, 1998; Fuss, 1991).

Three academics highlighted normalisation of homosexuality through segregation. These included positive accounts of the university as safe. Such views were mostly based on the fact that there are other gay men in their particular departments, which creates a sense of "...comfort". Another cited the "...relaxation" afforded by contexts with predominantly gay men, whereas a social science lecturer noted that most of his colleagues are in fact gay or lesbian. This, according to him, provides a "...touch of okayness" to being gay. Three potential consequences may arise in this regard. Firstly, through a **homonormativity** (Cooper, 2004:31; Visser, 2007:226) of sorts, heterosexuality is positioned as the 'dependent' sexual variant in relation to homosexuality (cf. De Lauretis, 1991; Stein & Plummer, 1996), since he noted that several of his colleagues are in fact homosexual. Secondly, such segregation may reaffirm the importance associated with the homogenising principles akin to the "ethnic model" and a "gay sensibility". As such, thirdly, the supposed safety afforded by the university campus in general, is in fact based on a separate gay milieu, rather than a heterogeneous community comprised of varied and diverse sexual orientations. This may prove problematic because, by being surrounded by mostly gay individuals, you may be provided with too much of a comfort zone and very little critical reflection on one's position as supposed sexual dissident. Proponents of such a collective orientation, uncritically assimilate into a heterosexist academic culture (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:92; Sanlo, 1999:107).

In keeping with this, of the seventeen gay male **academics** only two regarded their position as openly gay academics, as unsafe. Regardless of the fact that research on homosexuality may be "...encouraged", a clear delineation between his public and private personas have been called to order, in so far as one academic noted that he needs to proceed cautiously in establishing an overlap between his professional and "...default position in [his] personal life". James underlines this notion when he speculates that any attempt at providing the gay male academic with safety, may be regarded as a "...fraught idea" (cf. Fox, 2007; Fox & Ore, 2010), since one's existence is mostly always rendered meaningless and peripheral in relation to heterosexuality. Only six of the **students** displayed a similar trepidation in terms of their reflection on the supposed safety of academic contexts. They underscored the academics'

critique of the university's managerial corps' perceived lack of constructive support in addressing the struggles faced by sexual minorities. Students need to remain closeted or, as noted by an economics major, "...hidden", to retain a relative degree of safety which, only reinforces ignorance on the part of the uninformed heterosexual student community. The gay male students were also critical of the supposed safety South African university campuses offer for sexual dissidents. The more cynical of the students cited the conservatism (cf. Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:73; Hames, 2007:56; Jayakumar, 2009:678; Newman et al., 2002:280; Waldo, 1998), ignorance (cf. Sears, 2002:14) as well as the potential for explicit verbal or potential physical abuse (cf. Cohen, 1999:27; GLSEN, 2011; Rankin, 2005; Rankin et al., 2010; Savage & Miller, 2011; UNESCO, 2012) as primary examples of the marginalisation of gay men in tertiary education. A student was, for example, forced to discontinue his studies after not only losing former friends and disapproval of his residence's reverend, but based on a physical beating (Blackburn & McCready, 2009:225; Butler et al., 2003:12). The students, who provided a more positive view, did so mainly because of their obliviousness to the homophobia present on campuses. One academic and four students considered themselves relatively self-confident and, one could argue, less self-reflexive with regard to either "doing gay" or doing straight.

Their views corresponded with three fellow students as well as one academic. They credited their security services, a transformation office and openly gay-identified student community, respectively, as factors which promote the rights of sexual dissidents on campuses. Such openness also extended towards the potential role of openly gay male academics who may on their part, manifest a more educated tertiary context, which further facilitates a degree of ease for gay students. Those who did not view their respective universities as discriminatory or unsafe, ironically, provided implicit examples of being victims of homophobia and prejudice. This, in part, could be attributed to their unquestionable assimilation into a heteronormative context. This is evident in references such as being part of the "...team", being tolerated, embedding themselves in gay segregated academic milieus which afford "...comfort", and experiencing and adapting to a "...gay friendly" heterosexual environment. They inadvertently echoed Goffman's (1971:183) argument that individuals "...must act with expressive responsibility, since many minor, inadvertent acts happen to be well designed to convey impressions inappropriate at the time".

In determining whether their performances are appropriate given the specific place and time, academics and students tread a very fine line to reflexively devise a way in which they may

affirm their identity on campus. Here a multitude of 'selves' arose in the narratives of the participants.

6.3.2 You are "...never alone with [your] self"⁵³: A case of Dr Jekyll or Mr 'Hide'

One cannot help but recall Plummer's (1975:17) argument that a social actor's construction of his social and sexual self is always dependent on the particular context within which he finds himself. The narratives of both the academics and students provide ample evidence to support his assertion, since it underlines Blumer's (1969:68) process of "self indication", Goffman's (1971:183) "impression management" and Mead's (1962:157) self-reflexive interplay between the 'I' and 'me' through memory. In order to "...impress" (Goffman, 1971:183) the "...generalised other" (Mead, 1962; Ritzer, 2012:364), several of the gay male academics and students consciously adjusted or transformed (Blumer, 1969:68) their projected performances in such a way as to retain the heteronormative status quo. Their "cynical" performances subjected them to Namaste's (1996) "engendered paradox" associated with the closet, since they are deprived of a free and "...sincere" (cf. Goffman, 1971:15) projection of their homosexual identities through "doing gender" and "doing gay" based on predetermined gendered and sexually orientated cultural prescriptions.

Both groups provided abundant examples of these varied 'selves'. Seven different configurations characterised the accounts of the academics, whereas there were thirteen 'selves' for the students. Regardless of different names given to each of these selves, seven similar typologies were evident. These included the **lecturer** or **student self**, **openly gay self**, **social** or **friend self**, **political** or **activist self**, **family** or **home self**, **relationship** or **boyfriend self** and the **one self**-typologies. Notwithstanding these seemingly divergent and separate selves, and in keeping with the research objectives of the study, one needs to consider the apparent and conscious rationalisation of the gay male identity as per conscious self-reflexivity. This pre-empted the gay male academic and student to either "**do**" or "**use**" their sexual orientation and gender given the expectations embedded in a particular ideological framework, as it emerges during their communicative encounters with their "generalised other" (Mead, 1962).

⁵³ Plummer (1975)

In opting to either “do gay” or “use gay”, the narratives of both groups necessitated the formulation of three additional typologies of the gay male self. The **openly gay (academic) and (student) self** as well as the **political or activist self**, are examples of “using gender” and **using** gay. The reason for this centres on how the gay male identity may be used, as noted by one academic, as “...teaching tool” in order to sensitise those ignorant about matters related to sexual orientation. This echoes the work of Chang (2005:178), Lambert et al. (2006:17) and Macgillivray and Jennings (2008:184), on the role of the ‘out’ homosexual lecturer as source for accurate and unbiased information on sexual diversity. Academics in their twenties, forties and fifties emphasised the manner in which they either sought to do this, or have in fact done in their respective courses, including those in the faculties of arts and social science. In “using” their sexual orientation, homosexuality used as “tool”, afforded participants the necessary “...emotional energy” (cf. Johnson, 2009) to exert subtle influence over their students. Four students supported this argument by recalling their craziness, flamboyance and openness on their university campuses. The openly gay self, was complemented by the **political or activist self**. The potential realisation of Cass’ (1990) phase or theme of identity synthesis, recalls Abraham (2009), Altman (1982), Cock (2003), Croucher (2002), D’Emilio (1983), Gevisser (1995) and Jagose’s (1996) work on homophile and liberationist movements internationally and in South Africa. Students, in particular, equated their identity synthesis with their attempts at advocacy or activism on behalf of themselves and other sexual minorities. Five students echoed the commitment of academics, including Steve (a social scientist), to the “...strategic” use of one’s homosexuality in order to sensitise and enforce the importance of acknowledging equality and protection of the rights of sexual minorities. In so doing, these participants merge their network and strategic selves in order to project an assertive, driven, focused, strong and reliable ‘self’.

The narratives of the participants also signalled the near-to-impossible feat to clearly delineate between **either doing or using** their sexual orientation. This was evident in the demarcation of the so-called **relationship or boyfriend self** and **one self**-categories. This self (or selves), signalled the potential negotiation of the gay self as both inhibited or free. In terms of the **one self**, five students and three academics believed themselves to be products comprised of a coherent, “...consistent” and authentically integrated self. Regardless of the fact that such a self may, at face value, refute an association with either **doing** or **using** gender or gay, it still implies a self-reflexive attempt at defining, though not necessarily categorising, oneself. Although it may in fact imply a queer inclination of just being yourself outside the confines of a specific identity

category, it is necessary to contemplate who identified themselves as such. One needs only to consider that all, but one, of the twenty four (24) students, Russell, identified themselves as 'gay'. Russell, on the other hand, clearly differentiated between a gay and homosexual categorisation and, as a result, opted for the naturalness associated with the latter. All of these are thus, as noted, definite categorisations comprised of varied features related to either a heterosexual, homosexual or gay identity. The three (3) academics who reflected on their one 'self', reaffirmed the integrated nature of the different components of the gay self which depends on the given social context. They, per implication, did not necessarily refute their identification as gay, but rather emphasised the possibility of establishing an amalgam between the 'I' and 'me', as influenced by the potential of either "**doing**" and/or "**using**" gender or gay, instead of only choosing one (cf. Mead, 1962; Ritzer, 2012; Simon, 1996).

The narratives of the other participants recalled Freeman (2011) and Morrison's (2011) reference to gay men's continued search for an "...elsewhere", a Utopia away from the restrictions of the "...dull" and dreary heterosexist society. Although this self affords them the opportunity to be more creative and expressive (academics), intimate, and free or uninhibited (students) as it relates to their boyfriends through **using gay**, it also emphasises the centrality of heteronormativity and, as noted by Namaste (1996), the "...engendered paradox" of 'the closet' through "**doing gay**". Thus, by being more visible within their 'gentrified' (cf. Castells, 1983) private spheres, they disappear from public gaze; a criterion Gray (2009) identified as imperative in constructing and reclaiming one's sexual queerness. Interesting in this regard, was the fact that regardless of their differences in age, students in their early twenties, echoed the accounts of academics in their forties, fifties and sixties, on the redemptive features afforded by a private milieu. This both supports but, **also** refutes Achilles (1998), Levine (1998) and Warren's (1998) pre-eminent association of privacy with mostly older gay men. The traits associated with the **political** or **activist self**, were mostly contradicted in the examples gay students provided to label their relationship selves. Their narratives underlined a gendered performance, since four described themselves as more effeminate in their private contexts, whereas only one designated himself as masculine.

In accordance with the latter configuration, the remaining selves are grouped into a typology which favours attempts at "**doing gay**", as per either hegemonic prescriptions or rituals, or an ethnic, "...racialised" (cf. Forth, 2008; Reddy, 2010) or 'sensibly' gay performance. The selves which manifested here, included the **lecturer** or **work self**, **family** or **home self** and **straight**

self as based on heteronormative prescriptions (“**doing gender**”) as opposed to (or in accordance with) the **social** or **friend self** (“**doing gay**”). In terms of those whose ‘selves’ reflect an implicit or explicit attempt at emulating a heterosexually-informed gender performance, the **lecturer** and **work** (or **student**) self, resulted in interesting findings. Here, both the academics and students unknowingly stressed the importance they ascribe to the “...blessed” (cf. Rubin, 1993:13) position of heterosexuality on their respective university campuses. The fact that they recounted conscious attempts at refraining from any overtly (or overly) effeminate behaviour or controversial debates on homosexuality, serves as proof of how they assimilate into an existent heterosexist campus climate, in an attempt to avoid discrimination, prejudice or, as West and Zimmerman (2002) would term it, negative gender “...assessment”. Academics noted that they wish to first “...test the waters” in order not to offend or humiliate potentially ignorant heterosexual colleagues. In so doing, students also preferred to keep to themselves in classes and “...pass” as heterosexual, if the situation both warrants and affords them the opportunity to do so.

This inclination was also at the heart of their **home** or **family selves**. Here academics and students stated that they purposefully refrain from any discussions on their homosexuality with the members of their families since, as one noted, he did not regard it necessary to “...perform” this part of his identity. In keeping such discourse to a “...minimum”, students in particular, were vocal on their disdain associated with the potential of divulging their sexual orientation to their significant others. As such, some of them regarded their parents’ homes as not “...free”, but rather as restrictive, since they were required to be, as exclaimed by one student, to be a “...good boy who is straight” and another as “...celibate, devout”. Others thought it as their responsibility towards their parents to avoid such discussions, since they respected their mothers and fathers too much. In so doing, they exemplify Goffman’s (1971:15) argument that these performances take place in order to “...benefit...other people” by acting with “...expressive responsibility” (Goffman, 1971:183) towards them (cf. Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1962). The **straight self**, as final example of “**doing gender**”, encompassed the conscious attempt of particularly one student to project a heterosexual demeanour in order to hide his homosexuality. This ‘self’ also comprised two additional ‘selves’ mentioned by students. These were the **sport self** and **African self**, both of which evoked earlier references to masculine behaviour required by a heterosexually conceptualised attempt at “**doing gender**”. “**Doing gay**”, on the other hand, mirrored Tamagne’s (2010) references to the gay male as overly effeminate or flamboyant, “...stereotypically gay” or “...exuberant, free” and outgoing. These explications were mostly

embedded in the **social** or **friend selves** performed outside the parameters of the university campus, in the company of other gay men.

6.3.3 Affirming an 'inclusive' or 'transgressive' gay male identity on the university campus

Much of these negative accounts of a communal identification with other gay men were refuted in the feedback from particularly academics on the importance of a **visible gay male academic**; the inclusion of **exclusive** or **mainstream courses** on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer issues in tertiary education, opting for a "**queer pedagogy**" as well as a choice on establishing the principle of **safe spaces**.

Although laudable, the accounts of the academics in terms of the **visibility of openly identified gay male lecturers on campus**, were embedded in assimilationist, essentialist and heteronormative themes (cf. Jagose, 1996; Warner, 1991). Regardless of emphasis on the importance of sensitising students to sexual plurality, or, to "...grow up intellectually" with regard to issues on sexual orientation, sexual fluidity (prescribed by a queer inclination) (cf. Tong, 2008), was posited as something that needed "...normalisation". Much of their views in this regard echoed Namaste's (1996) argument on the "engendered paradox" of coming out of the closet. The visibility of a gay lecturer (or course content) in fact subsumes it into an already existent gendered and sexual cultural arrangement (cf. Butler, 1990; 1993; Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008). Others questioned the tokenisation associated with publically asserting one's homosexuality, which in part, may only serve to underline the supposed diversity of an academic institution. This underlined Kopelson's (2002:29) reference to the further marginalisation of a homosexual academic as spectacle "...to be gazed upon, interpreted, anticipated, predicted, and 'sized up'...to be speculated and gossiped about". It may also, in addition, prove to be detrimental to students, if the lecturer wishes to remain closeted and perpetuate an implicit message of shame, an argument forwarded by Grace (2006), Grace and Benson (2000), Petrovic (2002:152), Rofes (2000:411) and Sears (2009:199). Students also thought it unnecessary to have a gay male academic, citing the importance of the knowledge and skills as central factors, rather than his sexual orientation (cf. Ewing et al., 2003:577). The process of rationalisation was again mentioned, although implicitly, by several academics in their reflections on the potential benefits an openly gay lecturer could provide in the academic classroom. These included references to role modelling, since "...[n]othing beats a good role model", the potential of providing an "...incidental educational effect" as well as

“...open, more approachable and accepting” classroom cultures (cf. Grace, 2006; Maxey, 1999:206; Renn, 2000:133; Silverschanz et al., 2008).

Such “...open” cultures may also, dualistically, assume less rigidity or as a respondent argued, a “...more sensitive, attuned...nuanced and...more insightful analysis of society” (cf. Petrovic, 2002). This is emphasised in Ridge’s statement in the introduction to the chapter, that heterosexuals should be made aware of how they, seemingly unbeknownst, constantly flaunt their sexuality based on their occupancy of the taken-for-granted “charmed” realm of heterosexuality (cf. Rubin, 1993), and as such, he uses his lectures as means to manifest Grace and Benson’s (2000) “autobiographical queer life narratives” to “...unsettle common sense” (cf. Chang, 2005:173; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008:849) amongst students. Common sense may result in an “...unthinkingness” on the part of heterosexuals, since they “...have stopped seeing” the dominance of “...hegemonic” heterosexuality. As such, Ridge echoes Grace (2006), Maxey (1999) and Slagle’s (2007) call to what he terms, “...a thoroughly political act” to be open about his “...non-heterosexual” orientation. In recalling Grace’s (2006) “**writing the queer self**”, Maxey’s (1999) “**critical reflexivity**”, Petrovic’s (2002:151) “**radicalization of liberalism**” and Warren’s (1974:168) reference to “**reflective subjectivity**”, he reaffirms Sedgwick’s (2008) belief that without a critical interrogation of the organisation of gender and sexuality in society, it would “...damage” a comprehensive understanding of the underlying hegemonic forces. His ‘queer reflexiveness’ may result in Foucault’s (1978:62) affirmation that the gay male as becoming a vindicated sexual being through a public disclosure and critique of contemporary gender and sexuality. It in fact may transcend Mead’s (1962) reference to the inhibiting role reflexivity on past experiences may have for a gay male in his present circumstances (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010:130).

Through a “**queer pedagogy**” (Chang, 2005), Stanley stressed the “...acute” understanding gay academics may display for the “...anguish” experienced by sexual minority students, which could result in a more critical reflection of campus life. The **students**, who participated in the study, affirmed this. Since one may have a gay lecturer to identify with or talk to, struggles associated with coming out may be eased based on potential protection their relationships with their gay lecturers may afford, as well as the ease associated with going to class and a shared sense of experiences pertaining to struggles and adversity (cf. Munt, 1997; Oberle et al., 2011:451-452). This could, as evident in the research of Grace and Benson’s (2000) advocacy for an “autobiographical queer life narrative” approach, challenge both the academic and

student's probable internalised homophobia, based on external labels (cf. Petrovic, 2002:146; Renn, 2000:133). These men, as such, were thought of as the most qualified to accurately and non-offensively sensitise heterosexual and homosexual individuals on issues concerning gay male sexual orientation, either implicitly or explicitly. Three of the social science scholars commented on the influential role of their particular discipline on their views of sexuality. Four others, in the faculties of arts and social science, all commented on the importance of incorporating queer theoretical content into their courses, as echoed in several international studies (Case et al., 2009; Cooper, 2004; Evans, 2000; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Goldfried, 2001; Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Hussey & Bisconti, 2010; Lambert et al., 2006; Newman et al., 2002; Petrovic, 2002; Rankin, 2005; Renn, 2000; Rothblum, 2012).

This thought was also evident in the views of students who referred to their respective fields of architecture, arts and social science as conducive to "...experiment with style and fashion [which]...provides an outlet", express "...sensitivity and flamboyance", freely investigate and experiment with your sexuality, or critically analyse debates on sexuality, respectively, all of which underlay the recommendations of Evans (2002:533-534), Grace and Wells (2004), McEntarfer (2011), Sanlo et al. (2002:95), Szalacha (2004), Worthen (2011) and Yost and Gilmore (2011:1352). Those academics and students, who refuted a direct link between their academic work and views on homosexuality, credited it to the lack of focus on sexuality in their areas of expertise, including natural sciences, amongst others. Students also cited the latter reason, referring to biochemical engineering, business economics, economics and micro biology⁵⁴.

Problematic for heterosexual academics and students who ascribe to a heterosexist understanding of society, is the fact that they may feel that they are held "...captive" (Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; Dews & Leste Law, 1998:12; Dolan, 1998:44) and may "...often elide both the complicity of the teacher and the students' *resistance to resistance* in order to reduce the...classroom to a site of teacher-liberator/student-empowered" relationship (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:89; Monson & Rhodes, 2004:87). This thought was underlined by a gay male student, who believed that if people were to be "...confronted" with such content, they would display resistance based on a "...negative" inclination towards sexual diversity which may question heterosexism and potentially advocate homosexuality (cf. Ewing et al., 2003:577;

⁵⁴ The academic area of specialisation is explicated through an in-depth discussion in the next section on the (de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity. This is done to explore its underlying emphasis on the social constructivist-orientation in terms of the inherent similarities and differences between (and within) the two larger groups of academics and students.

Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008:181-182; Monson & Rhodes, 2004:89). Although Ridge acknowledges his caution in introducing himself and his course content to first-year students, he still persists in presenting controversial papers with controversial titles in order to force students out of their comfort zone. But, two strands of thought emerged from recommendations provided by both the academics and students on the potential configuration of such a queer pedagogy in higher education.

On the one side, several participants advocated an inclusion of topics on LGBTQ-issues in mainstream courses which could underline the noted “...*resistance to resistance*”-approach, whereas others opted for an exclusive course on the subject matter (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:89; Monson & Rhodes, 2004:87). Although one may risk an alienation from heterosexual students, in order to avoid a further “...ghettoised and...hidden” (cf. Levine, 1998; Valentine, 2002; Warren, 1998) as well as “...separate and exclusive exceptional course”, four academics thought a “...mainstream integration” of LGBTQ topics more appropriate for universities. In compiling such a course one should, however, carefully consider its objective and ensure that it is coordinated and lectured by someone qualified (cf. Ewing et al., 2003:577). Such courses are deemed imperative, since much of South African higher education has clearly abdicated its responsibility to provide a more substantial national debate on the subject matter, whereas gender and race, have become an integral part of the national consciousness. In order to educate and sensitise heterosexual and homosexual students, the gay male student participants also accentuated the “...crucial” need to “...familiarise those unfamiliar” with issues related to homosexuality. In addition to such a sensitisation, one of the students thought a debate which merges an educational and informative objective with activism would be conducive and should dismiss stereotypical judgements of gay men.

Both groups highlighted more general informative sections on the historical background to homosexuality, a conceptualisation and distinction between gender and sexual orientation (cf. Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993) and focus on debates on equality and similarities with heterosexuality. Others advocated a focus on intersectional considerations on the diversity which characterises gay life. Several students delineated potential content in this regard, including academic literature on personal narratives of gay men based on their everyday experiences, strategies to curtail adversity, as well as diverse configurations of gay male sexuality (cf. Nardi, 2002; Plummer, 1998a; Roseneil, 2002). Academics and students deemed it necessary to include feminist and queer theory as part of the curriculum, whereas students

also underscored the necessity for education on sexual intercourse and relationships, based on the lack of primary socialisation rituals in this regard.

The **importance ascribed to safe zones** provides a dualistic situation. On the one hand, both the academics and students emphasised the importance of safe zones as source of support to sexual minorities (cf. Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:72; Butler et al., 2003:21; Evans, 2000:522; 2002; Fox, 2007:497; Fox & Ore, 2010:630; Goldfried, 2001:982-983; Grace & Wells, 2005:240; San Diego State University, 2009:18; Savage & Miller, 2011; Silverschanz et al., 2008:180; Waldo, 1997:92-93). Such support could manifest a 24-hour helpline, informal personal meetings with lecturers (cf. Evans, 2000:81; Nel et al., 2007) or an objective, non-judgemental and non-religious context where allies would be able to “...listen and try to help” those in need. One academic argued that safe zones should be initiated through a “bottom-up”-approach, in order to gain the support from heterosexual individuals, since they need to “...buy into it...There are enough rigid people out there”. His quote obviously underlines an ascription to assimilating into a pre-existent heteronormative culture in which heterosexuality takes on the dominant role in contrast to its subordinate homosexual variant. One of the students critically mirrors the academic’s view when he states that heterosexual individuals may become overly irritated by having the “...I’m gay statement” constantly “...thrown” in their faces by LGBTQ allies or advocates.

Their arguments reflect the two main reasons forwarded by academics and students on the problems associated with advocating safe zones. The first centres on the fact that a safe zone, as argued by Alexander and Banks (2004:285), Fox (2007:507) and Petrovic (2002:149), reinforces heterosexuality as ‘normative’ and central gender and sexual category and further posits the gay male identity as master status of the individual, which encompasses every other identity component. This will only further alienate and isolate him from the real world, since it, as noted by one student, “...removes it [homosexuality] from a naturally mixed setting where it is most needed” and places it within a seemingly unified setting. Individuals, who ascribe to the principles of a safe space, come to expect that the safety afforded, will result in any other potential context outside its tangible (physical offices) or symbolic (individual allies) boundaries and, as consequence occludes “...genuine reflection, dialogue, and struggle about what might constitute safety for marginalized peoples” (Fox, 2007:503). This exacerbates the so-called “...clash...between the ideal world and the real world”, since sexual minorities become “...too comfortable” within a seemingly “...gay friendly” environment in which a “freezing of difference”

(Fox & Ore, 2010:634) ensues, since universality is implied. As result, more discrimination may ensue, since both the safe zone ally and gay male are clearly visible based on the ill-advised label assigned to both (cf. Fox, 2007:502). The first reason informs the second, which problematises the exclusivity safe zones seemingly necessitate in supporting sexual dissidents. University management may feel obligated to maintain these initiatives based on, amongst others, the provisions made in the South African Constitution. In so doing, they merely retain the 'us versus them', subordinate 'other' and, per implication, heterosexual/homosexual binary logic. As such, no provision is made for educating, as argued by one academic, "...unenlightened individuals [through] some... exposure to gay sexuality". Regardless of its implicit minoritisation, it would seem that an ascription to the binary logic may remain the only option (if not solution), in addressing challenges faced by victims of heterosexism and homophobia (cf. Butler, 2004; Fox, 2007; Fox & Ore, 2010).

The creation and/or support of these exclusive spaces, recalls the theme of safety within a separate, and per implication, segregated 'community' in particular, but not the "...tolerant" university in general. Although the content analyses done by Battles and Hilton-Morrow (2002) and Cooper (2003) of the American situation comedy *Will & Grace* were undertaken as part of a communication studies inquiry, I regard it as appropriate to apply it to the current discussion. In their work Battles and Hilton-Morrow (2002) and Cooper (2003:518-519) argue that the more flamboyant, outrageous and "...camp" (cf. Sontag, 1964) characters (Jack and Karen) in fact reinforce a stereotypical image of homosexuality which is (and should be) completely separate from the more respectable heterosexual society (Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011:332). Through their dramatic and excessive diva-like performances, a Utopian image of what a LGBT (or queer) identity should entail is created fictitiously. In applying it to my focus on safe spaces as constituent of the noted "gay sensibility", gay men are merely placed into a façade-like context which is maintained by heteronormativity to avoid a drastic change or threat to the existing status quo (cf. Battles & Hilton-Morrow, 2002; Cooper, 2003:518-519). In spite of the activist or queer-based critique within these contexts, safe spaces remain 'divorced' from the mainstream heterosexist setting which, consequently affirms and approves ignorance and managerial silence and abdication. As such, it becomes all the more difficult to merge the contested terrains (cf. Slagle, 2007) of lesbian and gay studies and queer theory, since one is left with the challenge to effectively balance the assumed visibility and invisibility of a safe space on university campuses. The fears of my gay male participants, also denoted the careful "reflexiveness" with which LGBT or queer advocates, lecturers and students, need to negotiate

the extent of their visibility or invisibility on campuses (cf. Siebehagen, 2010; Vaserfirer, 2012:624). Such reflexivity typifies sexual minorities as “reflexivity losers” (Lash, 1994), since they are not provided a sense of freedom as evident in Beck and Beck-Gernsheim’s (1995) and Giddens’ (1992) work, but rather critical self-evaluation and efforts of “impression management” (cf. Goffman, 1971:183) to ‘do gay’ or ‘do straight’ in order to conform to ritualised prescriptions and ‘impress’ his heterosexist ‘assessors’. Gay rights and queer transgression (cf. Butler, 1990), as a result, are rendered as fictitious through the advancement of gender and sexually orientated scripts (cf. Gagnon & Simon, 1973).

Much of this reflexivity on the part of the gay male academic and student was also influenced by **the role of management**. Their impressions of the university management’s role on issues related to homosexuality highlighted the latter’s supposed and perceived lacklustre and uncritical reinforcement of an academic campus climate which favours a heterosexist, heteronormative and potentially, homophobic culture, based on underlying “...paternalistic politics” of institutional management (cf. Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71). The importance of management to act in a proactive, constructive and autonomous manner to proliferate a message of support to their sexual minority constituents, was highlighted in several recommendations courtesy of gay male academics and students. This again evokes Rankin’s (2005:22) argument that institutional management of universities should address the potential discrimination and prejudice faced by sexual minorities, because “...[t]ransformative change demands committed leadership in articulating both institutional goals and policies” (cf. Honeychurch, 1996; Williams, 1993). Both groups underlined the necessity to refrain from an exclusive focus on only gender and race (and one could add, disability), as **the only** social issues worth addressing in academia. By including sexual orientation on their list of pre-eminent priorities, academics emphasised the compilation, maintenance and enactment of clear policies and procedures in terms of perceived homophobic discrimination directed towards sexual minority university staff.

Members of the institutional or campus management should not merely turn a blind eye to the struggles faced by homosexual students and hope that they will disappear (cf. Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71). It is their responsibility to act with, as stated by one academic, “...conviction and clarity”. Such action could (and should) manifest in the form of visible campaigns against hate crimes directed towards gays and lesbians, financial support to initiate and market courses, or buying relevant literature, the provision of a “...gay face” on marketing

material or the university website, in order to “...normalise” homosexuality. They should also facilitate constructive academic debates on sexual orientation. As such, management should collaborate with individuals or groups who wish to establish such discursive contexts, through joint initiatives and programmes (cf. Munt, 1997:85; Waldo, 1997:93). The latter groups should not merely be left to their own devices, since this will only further impede the responsibility of management in this regard. The vice chancellors, campus rectors, vice-rectors and deans, should acknowledge the existence of sexual minorities and create a campus environment in which gender and sexual diversity will be appreciated and valued. As such, both academics and students recommended the implementation of exclusive and/or mainstream LGBTQ courses (cf. Evans, 2000:86; Goldfried, 2001:984; Petrovic, 2002:151; Rankin, 2005:20; Renn, 2000:133) and organisations. The latter could, in turn, be influential in decisions taken on managerial level pertaining to rights afforded to sexual dissidents, if the key constituents are invited to managerial meetings on human rights.

These motivations and preceding insights in the foregoing sections, thus implore the reader to consider the critical self-reflexively rationalised attempts of the gay male academic and student to gain entrance into the supposed heteronormative context of South African academia. Such a consideration may further engender a decision as to whether to **professionalise** or **(de)professionalise the gay male identity in academia**.

6.4 **(DE)PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE GAY MALE ACADEMIC IDENTITY: RETAINING THE HETEROSEXUAL/HOMOSEXUAL BINARY IN SOUTH AFRICAN ACADEMIA**

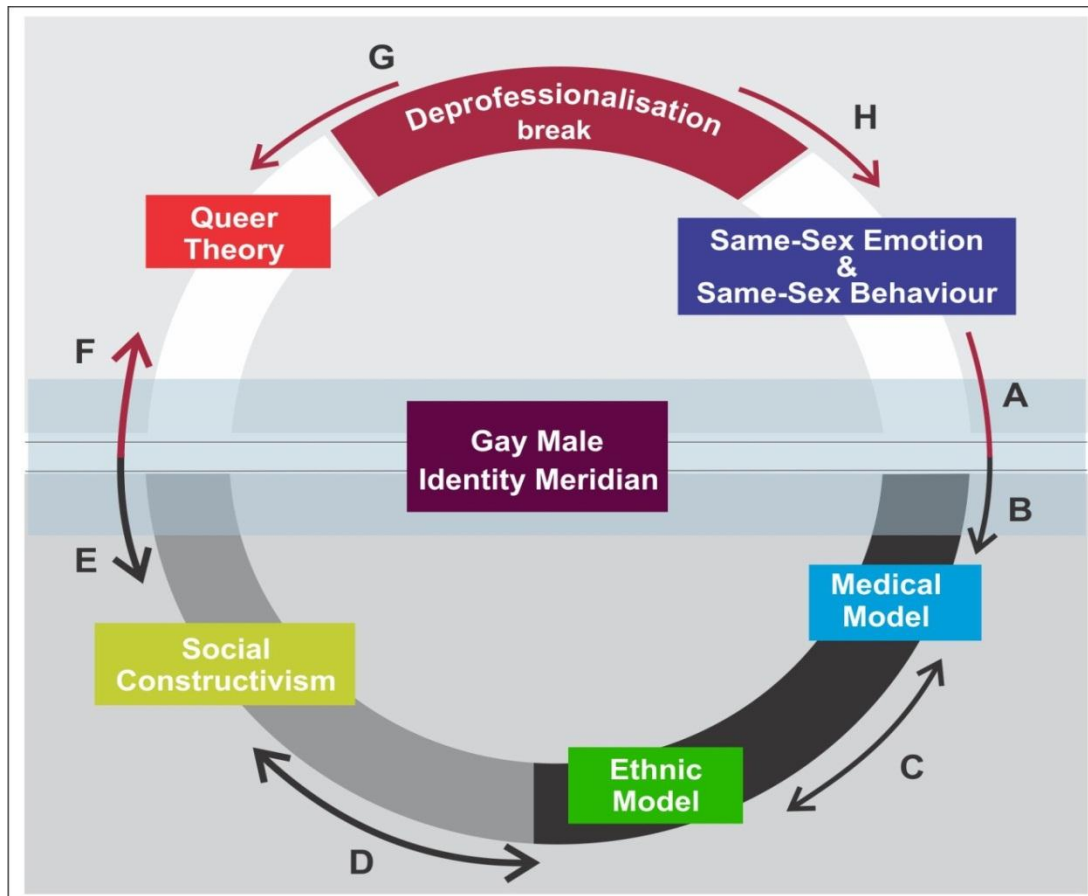
In this section I wish to again emphasise the last research objective listed in Chapter One, which sought to **explore how rationalisation and reflexivity may influence the choice of the gay male academic and student to either professionalise or (de)professionalise his gay male identity**. Although listed as the latter of the three general empirically based objectives, this combines the influences of rationalisation and reflexivity into my own inductive contribution to the field of sexuality studies.

6.4.1 **Conceptualising the (de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity**

This inquiry explores whether gay male academics and students retain or transcend the **heterosexual/homosexual binary** in South African academia. The binary, as reinforced

through “...dramatic” (Goffman, 1971) rationalised and reflexive heterosexist performances, results in the **(de)professionalisation model of gay male academic identity**.

Figure 5: The (de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity



A **deprofessionalised** identity provides the gay academic and student with the opportunity to forge a link between his personal (or private) and professional (academic) gay identity. Here, his reflexivity affords him the prospect to refrain from consciously ‘hiding’ his homosexuality through, amongst others, managing his *personal front* (cf. Goffman, 1971) as prescribed by the expectations of his “generalised other” (cf. Mead, 1962). Here he would not necessarily be expected to portray a particular homosexual role, akin to that of McIntosh’s (1968) research, but basically reconfigure his sexual orientation to that of a ‘sexual **being**’. **Being** could manifest as a noun or verb, in this regard. Thus, just exhibiting diverse and plural sexual behaviour or ‘otherness’, which is not necessarily subordinate to its heterosexual counterpart. Or, he is mainly a sexual **being**, in other words, an uncategorised individual who is sexually attracted to the same sex, the opposite sex or both, without unduly having to posit himself within specific

categories, as homosexual, heterosexual or bisexual, respectively. Based on the noted findings in Chapter Five and my critical comparisons and reflections in the preceding sections, it should seem all too clear that this may not necessarily be attainable in current societies in general, and the tertiary educational context in particular. As such, **professionalisation**, on the other hand, necessitates the construction of a border between his publically visible gay male identity in favour of a hidden persona, in order to “do gender” or ‘do straight’ on South African university campuses. This employs more the “cynical” than the “sincere” self, since the gay man adapts his *personal front* to the university *setting* into which he enters (cf. Goffman, 1971). Through this, homogenisation from *without* and *within* is facilitated. The former is based on external social expectations whilst the latter results from conforming to a “gay sensibility”.

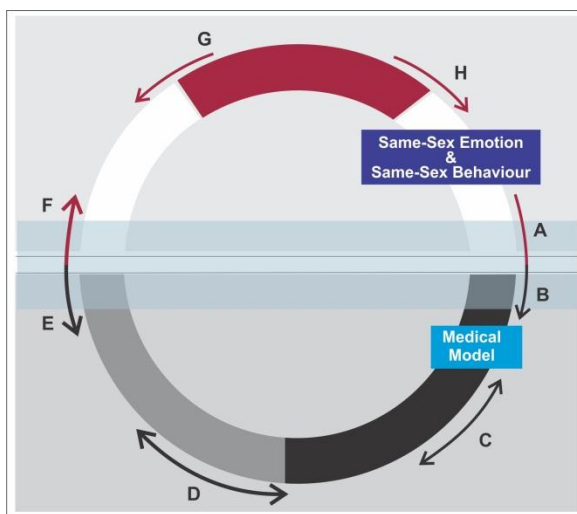
The model comprises five sequential submodels which highlight the varied understandings of “the homosexual” since before the “...species” (Foucault, 1978) emerged in 1869. These include **same sex behaviour and emotion**, the **medical model**, the **ethnic model**, **social constructivism** and **queer theory**, all of which are depicted in Figure 5. The first and last of the phases are separated from the other three by the **gay male identity meridian**, which encompasses a division between modern and postmodern or poststructuralist understandings of homosexuality in general, and the distinction between the submodels associated with the **professionalisation** (the **medical model**, **ethnic model** and **social constructivism**) and the **deprofessionalisation of the gay male identity** (**same-sex behaviour and emotion** and **queer theory**). The **(de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity** encompasses the divergent models, academic paradigms and metatheoretical approaches associated with the theorisation and empirical research on gay male sexuality. As such, the various models are arranged as to depict a cyclical movement between each of the submodels (as indicated by the arrows), either represented by a reciprocal (**black** arrows) or one-way progression (**red** and/or combined **red** and **black** arrow), depending on the inherent definitions, principles or views of each respective submodel.

Having now defined the **(de)professionalisation model**, the following subsection provides a critical application of the submodels to the empirical findings courtesy of the gay male academics and students⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ In order to adequately (re)contextualise the discussion of the findings associated with each of the respective submodels, smaller edited versions of the (de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity are provided throughout the discussion. Each represents the cyclical movements between particular submodels.

6.4.2 Applying the (de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity

The submodels commence with the initial uncategorised examples of same-sex attraction in several cultures across the various centuries. In keeping with the work of those who have provided invaluable insights into the lived experiences of men and women who performed ancient or traditional cultural practices which prescribed **same-sex behavioural and emotional** connections (Dlamini, 2006; Patanè, 2010; Wallace, 2010), this part of the model renders homosexuality (as category), non-existent. Ten students expressed their initial **experience of same-sex attraction** as something which was “...always” existent, regardless of the fact that these men could not necessarily provide a rationalised explanation for their feelings. One of the academics refuted the categorisation of his feelings as an “...exclusive identity”, since he and two others knew they did not belong within a heterosexual model of sexually orientated arrangements (cf. Plummer, 1975; 1996). This sense of difference also manifested feelings of, as noted in the preceding subsections, anxiety, fear and guilt, which established a clear link with the second phase and/or theme of gay male identity construction, confusion and shame (cf. Troiden, 1998). The **medical model** underlines the pathological principles associated with homosexuality as sexual inversion, a condition in need of remedy.

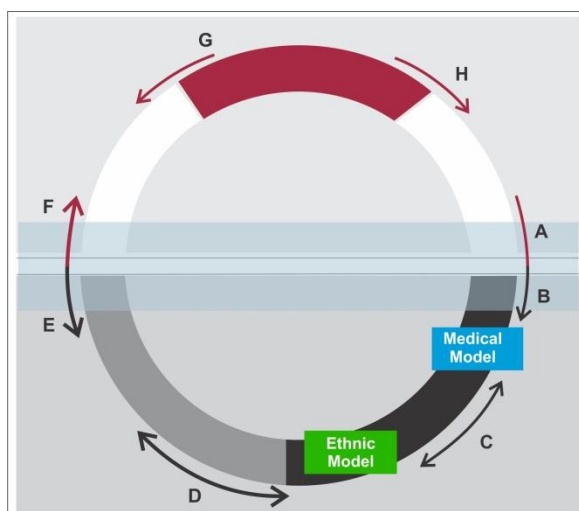


As indicated by the components of the arrow (Arrows **A** and **B**), Foucault's (1978) infamous reference to “the homosexual” as a “...species”, recalls the **medical model's** pathological recognition of homosexuality. The arrow (Arrows **A** and **B**), which signifies the movement between the two ‘models’, symbolises a one-way progression from one to the other, without an option of return. This basically assumes that our initial conceptualisation of homosexuality as uncategorised, unnamed and unfettered, is no

longer existent or possible within a contemporary late modern society in which individuals may blindly ascribe to a rationalised blueprint of what gender and sexual orientation should involve (cf. Altman, 1982; Dowsett et al., 2008; Epstein, 1998; Ingraham, 1996; 2002; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Seidman, 2002a; West & Zimmerman, 2002). Of particular interest was one of the student's unwillingness to define himself as ‘gay’, since he preferred the category of

'homosexual'. The latter, for him, encompassed more of a natural given, rather than the proscriptive expectations a gay label may imply. His narrative recalls Whitam's (1998) critique of McIntosh's (1968) conceptualisation of the "homosexual role". This role, for Whitam (1998), should result from the conscious decisions and actions of gay men, rather than create and consequently necessitate a specific gay male configuration (cf. Butler, 1991:1). As such, it differs from the pathological accounts ordained by the proponents of the medical model, and re-contextualises the category or role of "the homosexual" (cf. Foucault, 1978) as natural sexual variant and, in turn, could have potentially linked it with the previous model of same-sex behaviour and emotion, had it not been categorised.

The underlying pathological ideology which informs this model characterised several of the narratives of the participants. Four academics recalled censoring themselves as result of an ignorant heterosexist society, with one continuing to do so currently through a conscious attempt at reflecting on his tone of voice and mannerisms, when interacting with colleagues at work. Students also expressed their fears of falling victim to physical assaults as well as negative attitudes concerning their homosexuality. Attempts at masking their same-sex attraction from the judgemental labels of others, resulted in one particular student engaging in promiscuous sexual behaviour and drinking. Fear of engaging in sexual intercourse with another man, also characterised participants' initial disdain with the allure of other boys, a theme which resonated in references to gendered performances of masculinity and femininity. Academics and students referred to their attempts at "doing gender" (or straight). Their 'otherness', ensued through the conflation of gender with sexual orientation by two of the academics. Another respondent also maintained that he was very "...effeminate" and would "...flap" like a girl. In terms of a more masculine performance, male strength and a toned muscular physique were cited as important referents of what it meant to be a man, as evident in the accounts of four academics and seven students (cf. Alvarez, 2009; Connell, 1987; 2005; Pope et al., 2000; Segal, 2007). Having a girlfriend also proved members of both groups (two academics and three students) with the opportunity to 'pass' as heterosexual, in an attempt to suppress any attraction to men. The noted feelings of an uncategorised same-sex attraction as expressed by the participants emphasise the negativity which characterised much of their preliminary experiences of being "...different", which confronts the individual's "...very existence" (Benkov, 1994:29).

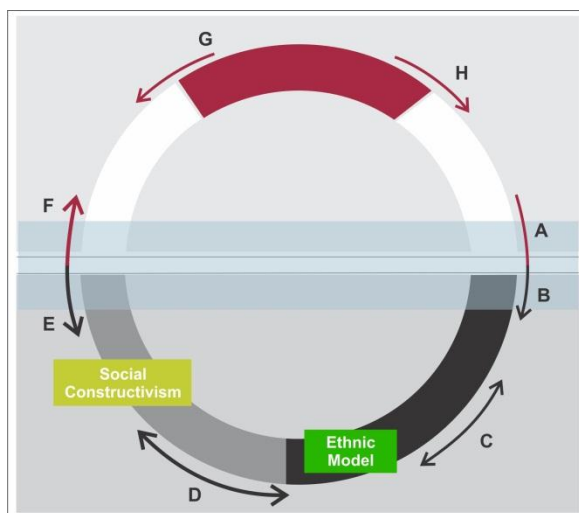


The next component of the **(de)professionalisation model**, recalls Epstein's (1998) "**ethnic model**". This movement provides the opportunity for a reciprocal interchange between the preceding medical model and its ethnic counterpart (Arrow **C**). The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, both assume a linear, universal or homogeneous characterisation of homosexuality (or gay), which further presumes a subset of features associated with male homosexuality. The reason why a movement may

be afforded or present between the two, relates to the underlying paradigmatic meanings both assign to their gay male caricature. Consider the fact that the medical model, as based on the research of Aldrich (2010), Foucault (1978), Tamagne (2010) and Weeks (1996; 2000), amongst others, mainly pathologises homosexuality as "...'sick', 'perverse', 'degenerate'" (Plummer, 1996:64), whereas the ethnic model, through a stereotypical 'role' (cf. McIntosh, 1968), underlines the importance of community (cf. Abraham, 2009; Castells, 1983; Epstein, 1998; Levine, 1998; Warren, 1998) and communal rights (cf. Altman, 1972; D'Emilio, 1983; Eaklor, 2008; Jagose, 1996) for its constituents. Secondly, my content analyses of the phases or themes associated with identity construction also signified the potential re-signification of the gay male identity either with pride, or with shame, whether influenced from within or outside the exclusive community.

Such diverse experiences, as evident from the preceding sections on rationalisation and reflexivity, may result from factors such as the **cisgender model** (Meem et al., 2010; Schilt & Westbrook, 2009; West & Zimmerman, 2002), **confusion, fear and isolation** (cf. Brontsema, 2004; Cass, 1984; 1990; Cohen & Savin-Williams, 1996; Dank, 1979; Downs, 2006; Elia, 1993; Gonsiorek, 1995; Halperin, 2012; Konik & Stewart, 2004; Plummer, 1975; 1996; Troiden, 1998; Worthington et al., 2002) as well as **stereotyping** (cf. Alvarez, 2009; Battles & Hilton-Morrow, 2002; Cooper, 2003; Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011; Rumens, 2008; 2011; Segal, 2007; Seidman, 2002a; Silverschanz et al., 2008; Troiden, 1998). These are factors which encourage the **professionalisation** of the gay male in academia, since it may reinforce assimilation, essentialism and homogenisation. An example of this includes the references of participants in their reflections on the stages or themes associated with their identity construction. Their

accounts were characterised by their adherence to a conflated understanding of their sexual orientation with the socially constructed category of gender (cf. Jayakumar, 2009:678; Newman et al., 2002:280; Rubin, 1993; Savage & Miller, 2011; Sedgwick, 1993; Waldo, 1998), whereas their noted anxiety, confusion, fear and guilt were based on the inability to conform to the expectations of an established linear link between their biological sex, gender and sexual orientation. In so doing, their perspectives underscored one of the academics' reference to individuals' propensity to be born into an "...unthinkingness" within a predetermined, prescribed and taken-for-granted heteronormative context in contemporary society. Constantly aware of being 'assessed' for their performance, they opt to refrain from a public identification as gay on the university campus, and as such seek to act "...straight". This is done, as noted by Butler (1991), to retain the dominance of heterosexuality since its proponents are constantly aware of its fragility and contestability.



Although such a scripted performance may seek to re-centre heterosexuality as part of Rubin's (1993) "charmed circle", **social constructivism** also figures in the **(de)professionalisation model** and may be interchangeably linked to the "ethnic model", as indicated by Arrow **D**. Embedded in a 'solid' grey area, it represents the inherent "...messiness" (Plummer, 1998a:612; also refer to Nardi, 2002; Weeks, 1985) and diversity critics of the "ethnic model" wished to assign to a category of homosexuality (Warren,

1998). The in-depth discussion of the findings in Chapter Five and the initial critical analysis in the preceding sections of this chapter, exemplify the inherent differences between (and within) the gay male academic and student groups, which necessitates an acknowledgement of "homosexualities" (cf. Honeychurch, 1996:350; Murray, 2002:83; Plummer, 1998a:611) rather than only *the* "homosexual". Such plurality also underlines and implicitly justifies the use of the metatheoretical ideologies associated with phenomenology as well as symbolic interactionist methodological principles (cf. Blumer, 1969; Schütz, 1932), to gather as many "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) as possible. Whereas some of the academics sought to remain silent on issues pertaining to their personal or other general views on homosexuality, others elaborated on their attempts at destabilising heterosexism through an explicit interrogation of

the supposed centrality of heteronormativity and subordination of homosexuality. The latter's attempts echo the words of Alexander and Banks (2004:285): "...to leave [the destabilisation] out of our equations as anything other than normal and oppressive means we miss a vital part of our analysis and continue to privilege the normative as normative" (cf. Alvarez & Schneider, 2008:71; Athanases & Larrabee, 2003; Chang, 2005; Grace, 2006; Sears, 2009; Silverschanz et al., 2008; Slagle, 2007; Wallace, 2002:53). A potentially intersectional critique of communal homogenisation was also apparent in one of the respondents' view of the gay label as "...misnomer" because it excludes the "...rich variety of gay people" based on their class, gender or religion (cf. Honeychurch, 1996; Plummer, 1998a). Other academics, however, justified the use of 'gay' for strategic purposes in order to mobilise against homophobia or sexism, amongst others. It does however also harbour a pitfall of sorts. Although strategic and potentially beneficial, the gay male is left to overcompensate in order to fully realise the potential benefits afforded to heterosexual men (cf. Downs, 2006:76), as evident in the accounts of an academic's emphasis on financial affluence and two others' commitment to exceed the marginalisation, isolation and prejudicial views of others in their work context. Their performances recall Goffman's (1971:15-16) reference to such individuals as expressing "...cynical" performances since they acquire "...unprofessional pleasures from [their] masquerade[s], experiencing a kind of gleeful spiritual aggression from the fact that [they] can toy at will with something [their] audience may take seriously".

Two biographical categories, including the **age** and the **academic faculty of study** of the participants, presented significant findings which inadvertently reaffirmed the constant interplay between the homogenised nature of the "ethnic model" and the heterogeneity (cf. Nardi, 2002; Plummer, 1998a; Roseneil, 2002; Weeks, 1985) afforded by a social constructivist orientation⁵⁶. As noted in the preceding subsection (6.3.2) on self-reflexivity, it was apparent, that academics and students in the **arts, architecture, educational studies** and **social science faculties** displayed more of a self-reflexivity and critical approach towards their gender and sexual orientation, as opposed to those studying economics, engineering or natural sciences, who rarely needed to engage with such debates in their curricula. One needs only to consider the contributions of the one drama student, two lecturers in arts and the one social science scholar

⁵⁶ The **biographical variable of race** did not figure in the analysis of the empirical findings. I acknowledge the fact that the study may be subjected to criticism akin to that of Halberstam (2005a) of studies which perpetuate a privileged, white, middle-class gay male bias. Based on the sensitive nature of the subject matter researched (gay male identity construction), the study was dependent on the use of the non-probability sampling methods of purposive and snowball sampling, in particular. As such, I had to depend on the recommendations and referrals of those men interviewed or who consented to the completion of a self-administered questionnaire, to other potential participants.

on the significant differences and similarities in terms of the participants' **academic area of specialisation**. The architecture and drama students cited the "...freedom" their respective fields afford them to investigate their sexual orientation. The reflections of both emphasise Altman (1982), Freeman (2011) and Morrison's (2011) work. Academics in the faculty of arts also cited the sincerity, honesty and openness their field requires and, in fact, provides, but they explicitly desisted from 'coming out' to their students and other individuals in predominantly heterosexual contexts in order to, amongst others, avoid any discomfort on the part of heterosexuals or prejudicial attitudes and behaviour.

A **social science** lecturer provided a contradictory response to the question on the role of safety on campus. Although he considered his specific campus as safe for sexual minorities, and regardless of the fact that his colleagues were aware of his sexual orientation, he regarded it as unnecessary to "...force" his own sexual orientation, in particular, or debates on homosexuality, in general, onto heterosexuals. In addition, he equated much of the provided safety to the exclusive habitus of his department, rather than the larger university campus. His arguments remind one of Dolan's (1998:44) fear of a captive audience which could only further alienate those who are negatively inclined towards homosexual persons (cf. Monson & Rhodes, 2004:87). This, per implication, posits him as a "reflexivity loser" (cf. Lash, 1994), since he chooses not to explore the further potential of his role as gay male lecturer in a more liberating teaching department, to redress ignorance which may further fuel homophobia. This could be attributed to Jackson and Scott's (2010) critique of Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995), and Giddens' (1992) embrace of the agency afforded to social (and sexual) actors in contemporary society. Certain groups, including homosexuals in a predominantly heterosexist society, may in fact not enjoy as much freedom as their heterosexual counterparts, as it relates to self-reflexivity, based on their potentially peripheral position on the sex hierarchy (cf. Rubin, 1993).

This argument also related to the fact that a **social scientist**, who underscored the consistent focus on sexual orientation in his field of interest, rather displayed less of a queer inclination and mostly gravitated towards an assimilationist tendency. This could be attributed to two reasons. Firstly, the fact that he has, in accordance with his age, moved beyond the importance ascribed to advocacy, activism or queer critique. Secondly, some of his colleagues in his current department, are in fact either gay or lesbian identified. As such, he does not regard it as necessary to concern himself all that much with the manner in which he projects a particular homosexual image and its potential consequences. Much of this may in fact underline

theoretical references to the gay male as “...ghettoized” (cf. Levine, 1998) or further marginalised (cf. Warner, 1991) within an exclusively homosexual context. This may, contrastingly, according to a social science student, create a false sense of security, since it may predicate the idea that such acceptance and safety, will be afforded in a similar manner outside the similar departments. His disdain with such an “ethnic model” (cf. Epstein, 1998) is associated with his choice of refuting his compliance with gay sensibilities, since he regards the category of ‘homosexual’ as more conducive. His argument presented a dualism. On the one hand, he was the only student to implicitly (and unknowingly) provide a queer critique of the homogenisation implied by the categorisation of gay. But, on the other hand, regardless of the fact that he does not wish to associate with this, he reverts back to the categorisation of “the homosexual” (cf. Foucault, 1978). In effect, he reinforces the importance of further categorisation which may in effect again highlight stereotypical understandings of homosexual men.

Given the critical penchant associated with certain **social scientific** fields, it was also interesting to note Matthew’s unwillingness to proclaim his sexual orientation to his colleagues, students or members of the broader society. This should however not necessarily be attributed to his social science specialisation, but rather the geographical location⁵⁷ within which he currently finds himself. In contrast, another scholar, based on the same campus and faculty as Matthew, provided a different perspective. He thought himself to be “...super comfortable” within his department and classes, as well as the broader campus context. In relation to academic expertise, his constant interrogation of queer theoretical themes in his own and other courses, may serve as an explanation for his higher level of comfort, as opposed to the specific subfield of Matthew, which does not lend itself to a predominant emphasis on themes which centre on sex, gender and sexual orientation. This could also justify the reasons as to why the remaining two social science scholars and one student expressed their interest and critical reflection on the rights and struggles associated with sexual minorities. They indicated their need to either debate potential solutions for the noted struggles, undertake extensive reading, or to critically analyse academic debates on the subject matter, respectively. Those social science students, who thought of such an exercise as redundant, ascribed their views to their already coherently established ‘sense of self’. Such foci also lend themselves to the **educational** and **social**

⁵⁷ In order to safeguard the ethical principle of confidentiality, as explained in Chapter Four, a further analysis of the geographical locations of the academics and students is not provided. It is, however, worth commenting on the fact that regardless of the particular university’s setting, whether urban or in a smaller South African town, no significant differences, other than the noted example, was evident. The biographical variables of age and area of specialisation provided the most significant findings.

science scholars' ease with themes concerning homosexuality (cf. Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000). Here Ridge expressed the "...huge influence" of his academic expertise on his personal and professional life, and Stanley attempted to transcend his "...own oppression" (cf. Grace & Benson, 2000:92) through his "...flirtation" with controversial sexually orientated topics in his courses. This influence, according to him, should further translate into purposeful attempts at challenging taken-for-granted assumptions concerning sexual orientation. As such, he echoes the progressive contributions of Chang (2005), Grace (2006), Grace and Benson (2000), Petrovic (2002) and Slagle (2007), amongst others, who have all attempted to realise this objective through their lecturing.

The students who did not cite their area of specialisation as influence in their views on homosexuality, however, expressed their commitment to advocacy and activism based on their communal identification with other sexual minorities on campus. Their respective degrees included communication, dietetics, drama, governmental studies and economics, engineering, law and sociology. Their need to establish a sense of communal identification recalls Halperin's (1995) critique of the initial steps taken by members of Queer Nation in New York who, according to him, sought to queerly address sexual inequality without formulating clearly delineated objectives and action plans. Some of them equated their participation in such endeavours as proof of their noted pride, "integration" and "consolidation" (cf. Cass, 1990; Coleman, 1982:39; Connell, 1992:744) to fearlessly advocate for the rights of sexual minorities.

In terms of **age**, it was interesting to note that students (aged between 20 and 26) were prone to follow a more sequential progression in terms of their identity construction (cf. Coleman, 1982; Dank, 1979; Downs, 2006; Troiden, 1998) as opposed to academics and one of the older students, who exhibited an intersectional and thematic approach (cf. Savin-Williams, 2005; Smuts, 2011). Phrases included "...passing phase", "...stage", "...climbing a ladder" and a movement "...piece by piece", whereas particular age brackets were also highlighted by four other students. A lack of gay role models (cf. Gomillion & Giuliano, 2011:332) has necessitated three academics, regardless of their age difference, to prolong their search for one particular idealised image of gay male sexual identity with which they could identify, and still have not found.

Additional subthemes associated with rationalisation and which emphasise the inherent diversity associated with what 'gay' should mean, centred on whether the participants conformed to

particular stereotypes through “doing gay” and doing straight. In “doing gay”, academics thought it necessary to establish a rapport with other gay men in communal public spaces in order to establish unity during one’s initial years of ‘coming out’. Regardless of the fact that a educational studies scholar thought communal identification to be imperative in establishing a sense of belonging, two other academics, both of whom, based on the preceding sections, have provided ample examples of assimilating into heteronormativity, described this communality as something which formed part of their younger years, which today, is merely a “...nice to have”. A social science scholar, recalled the novelty of receiving “...attention, acknowledgment” when he first went to a gay bar, a thought echoed in the accounts of seventeen gay students who indicated that they find such spaces beneficial, because of the information, knowledge, safety and safe-sex advice, they accrue (cf. Achilles, 1998; Altman, 1982; Levine, 1998; Warren, 1998). Since these spaces are of value to students, five of them, who contradicted Achilles (1998) and Warren’s (1998) work, commented on the superficial, homogeneous and competitive nature of bars and clubs, which underlines the “...‘doomed picture’ of a ‘doomed existence’”. This emphasises Bech (1997) and Connell’s (1992) references to the potential for a reified and instrumentalised misuse of gay men, by other gay men, in communal gay spaces such as bars and clubs.

Although a social science lecturer continues to long for the “...emotional regeneration” (cf. Johnson, 2009) provided by these settings, he opts to attain it in European cities, which affords him more anonymity and secrecy, a thought shared by another academic in a similar faculty. Similarities between academics and students arose in their reflections on their respective private spaces as examples of using gay, in so far as academics and students commented on their “...minimalist”, “...eccentric” and non-“coherent” design styles. Of interest in this regard, was the fact that both older and younger gay men commented on their need to gentrify their respective private spaces as means to “...escape” from the judgemental and potentially prejudiced heterosexist external social context (cf. Gray, 2009; Morrison, 2011), which partly refutes the work of Achilles (1998), Castells (1983), Levine (1998) and Warren (1998), who afforded this quality to particularly older gay men. The private space, as such, serves as redemptive milieu for all gay men who wish to retain a sense of freedom if their university context does not necessarily provide it⁵⁸.

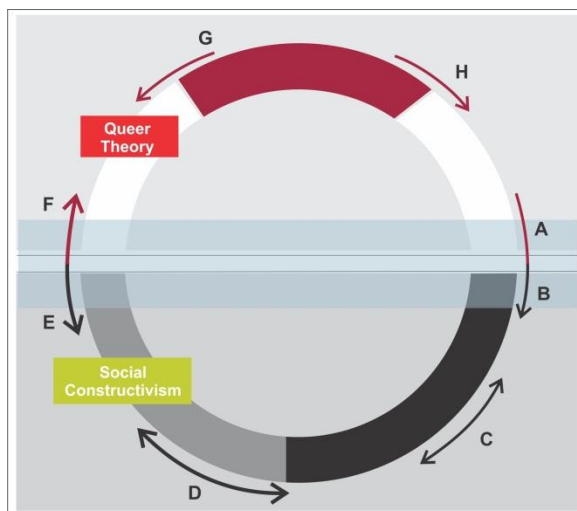
⁵⁸It is worth noting here, that although references were made to the potential for intimacy, love and support from their boyfriends or husbands in these settings, **relationship status** as biographical variable, provided no significant additional findings in the study. This centres on the fact that the views of academics and students were predominantly influenced by their age and academic area of specialisation. References to the relationship status of the participants only arose in their narratives on constructing and/or

Further self-reflexively rationalised differences and similarities also arose in terms of particular stereotypes to which the participants conformed. As evident in subsection 6.2.2 (b), an interesting dualism arose within and between the two groups. Whereas some academics and students clearly mirrored references to Alvarez's (2009) 'gay clone' and Pope et al.'s (2000) 'Adonis complex' in order to attain a muscled, toned and tanned physique, others sought to highlight their supposed "...camp", hypercritical and "...in-your-face"-attitude which, according to external labels, may potentially posit them as gay. Even though neither academics nor students regarded themselves as diva-devotees, one of the younger academics expressed his appreciation for female entertainers' provision of an "...escape" from a "...dull" existence, whereas a social science counterpart, was more taken with female writers, who also transported him to an "...elsewhere" (cf. Freeman, 2011; Morrison, 2011). The importance of female friendships also provided an 'internal' division within the respective groups, since two academics commented on their affinity for a stereotypical 'fag hag' relationship, whilst one lecturer and one student, expressed their disdain for women who wish to "...tokenise[]" their friendships with gay men as stereotypical given, which contradicts the contributions of Moon (1995), Quimby (2005) and Rumens (2008; 2011), who all mostly posit such relationships as mutually beneficial.

Considering these divergent, yet, similar narratives on the manner in which the participants sought to rationalise their homosexuality through self-reflexivity, it became apparent that social constructivism does retain its link with the "ethnic model". The reason for this centres on the fact that a social constructivist conceptualisation of gay male sexuality, is clearly dependent on particular stereotypical sensibilities, embedded in an ethnic and "racialised" (cf. Forth, 2008; Reddy, 2010) configuration. The proposed one-way or reciprocal cyclical progression from **A** to **G**, serves as evident example of the manner in which a supposed homogenised and categorised understanding of homosexuality, is interdependently linked with its diverse and plural configurations within the model of social constructivism (cf. Weeks, 1985). In favouring a categorised configuration of the gay male identity, whether informed by an essentialist or divergent understanding, both the academics and students did so for two reasons. Firstly, to establish a communal link or sense of belonging akin to the noted sensibilities or subcultural referents associated with homosexuality, as per homonormativity (cf. Cooper, 2004; Epstein, 1998). Secondly, they may have done this to assimilate into an existing heteronormative

designing their private spaces to attain the necessary intimacy, love and support, which external contexts do not necessarily provide them.

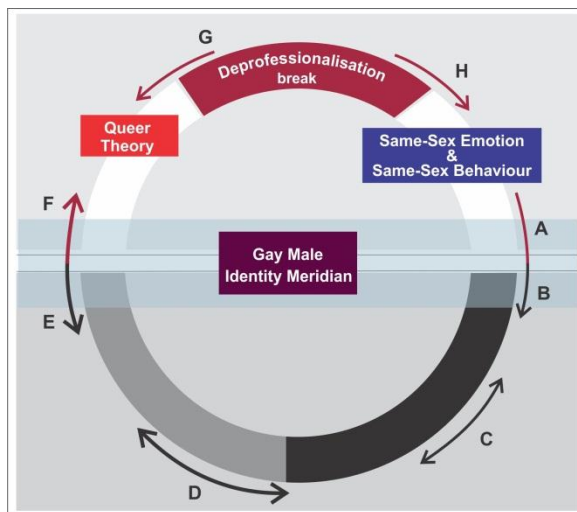
campus milieu in order to either safeguard their personal identities or academic professions (cf. D’Emilio, 1992; Evans, 2002; Francis & Msibi, 2011; Sanlo, 1999; Slagle, 2007). The two-way cyclical movement between the varied submodels depicts the intersectional linkage between each, in order to exemplify male homosexuality as concurrently uncategorised, pathological, homogeneous or internally diverse. This intersectionality implies two consequences. In the first place it re-centres the fact that these models are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive, but rather reciprocally dependent on the other(s), depending on the specific social context (i.e., university, faculty, department or module, as well as interpersonal or intra-psychic scripting) (cf. Simon, 1996) within which the academic or student is embedded (cf. Savin-Williams, 2005; Smuts, 2011). A second implication concerns the potential of considering the deconstruction of these identity models through a **queer theoretical definition** of homosexuality and potential transcendence of the **deprofessionalisation break**.



The last of the models, **queer theory**, provides both a link and sequential two-way movement between itself and social constructivism (Arrows **E** and **F**), and per implication, the ethnic model, through the latter. This reciprocal relationship offers a postmodern and poststructuralist account of the manner in which the participants potentially considered the deconstruction of their seemingly static and homogeneous ethnic gay configuration. Here the sole greyish area is linked with a white section across the **gay male identity meridian**,

which signifies diversity as a non-subordinate ‘otherness’ (cf. Tong, 2008). Regardless of the queer theoretical component’s link to social constructivism, the latter’s inherent principles also imply a communal interplay with the ethnic model. This, once again, centralises the heterosexual/homosexual binary. Whether the participants’ cognisant self-reflexivity materialised the need to conform to a “homosexual role” (cf. McIntosh, 1968), or whether they implicitly or explicitly ‘do straight’ to attain a positive gender assessment, both underline the centrality of an ‘either/or’- approach which serves to homogenise. Warner’s (1991) reference to a “minoritising logic” comes into play, since the gay male is “...ghettoized” (Levine, 1998) from within the homosexual academic milieu, as well as in relation to its supposed dominant heterosexual counterpart. One should only consider the words of the participants as proof of not

being able to master an identity synthesis, but rather assimilate into the mainstream academic culture as “...self-imposed segregation” (Plummer, 1998b:85). These included references to raising an “...awareness” of homosexuality on campuses, the inclusion of a marketable “...gay face” on the university’s website, and the “...normalisation” and “...tolerance” which should be accrued and afforded to gay men, respectively. Although I acknowledge the necessity to retain existing identity categories to, as noted by Weeks (1985), express and support sexual diversity, a queer theoretical contemplation serves to problematise the underlying minoritising logic of these responses associated with binary logic (cf. Warner, 1991:xxvi).



As such, the **deprofessionalisation break**, which implies either a necessity or subtle heterosexist attempt at retaining a self-reflexive endeavour on the part of the gay male academic and student to clearly delineate and differentiate between his private (in settings outside the university) and professional gay identity (in the university setting), remains unhindered, as designated by the divergent arrows (**G** and **H**) (cf. Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962; Ritzer, 2012). This leads to a **'break'** which

further polarises queer theoretical principles (including uncategorised sexual diversity and plurality) from those of same-sex behaviour and emotion (also uncategorised) based on the gay male’s knowledge of a “...set of social reactions” which requires the ‘me’ to take precedence over the ‘I’ (cf. Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962). This makes the realisation of the **sexual being** all the less likely. Much of this underscores the fact that only three out of seventeen academic participants and one student, were able to explicitly critique heteronormativity, heterosexism and gay homogeneity (also see comments on similar attempts in Cooper, 2004:24; Francis & Msibi, 2011:168-169; Grace & Benson, 2000:103; Jones & Calafell, 2012:959; Kopelson, 2002:19; Luhmann, 1998:141; Macgillivray, 2004:113; Maxey, 1999:199; Monson & Rhodes, 2004:89; Plummer, 1996; 2003; Sears, 2009:194; Stein & Plummer, 1996:135; Wallace, 2002:65-66; Warner, 1991:xix). Even these individuals provided contradictory arguments concerning their self-reflexivity about attempts at negotiating their identity performance in and between their private and professional contexts. Although an educationalist ‘queerly’ critiqued the lack of constructive input by management, his disapproval mirrored those of lesbian and gay rights

activists, considering the fact that he believes that he is most comfortable with being labelled as gay in terms of his overall understanding of his sexual orientation. Another academic also expressed his affinity for queer theory and a queer identity, but this is, according to Butler (2008), Halperin (1995) and Sedgwick (2013), troublesome, due to the fact that postmodernists clearly contest the idea of identity categories.

Thus, regardless of their laudable attempts at queering an academic and practical condemnation of the centrality of heterosexism, they do not transcend categorisation, but assimilate into their university communities and provide a 'sigh of relief' to institutional management. This may be because an essentialist rhetoric, if at all existent, about homosexuality on South African university campuses, centres on values which include earlier references from participants to "...acceptance", "...tolerance", "...comfort" and a "...gay friendly" milieu, which may keep the taken-for-granted normativity, dominance and exclusivity of heterosexuality firmly intact. Whereas heterosexuals are afforded the luxury of socialisation rituals which subsequently grant them the opportunity at sexually *being* themselves, sexual minorities are not. Gay men may be left to mistakenly see the dualistic façade of integration into a heterosexual society as proof of acceptance and equality by that community. They, however, further reinforce the "engendered paradox" of the closet, since they emerge from the closet and enter into an existent hegemonic (yet "...gay friendly") culture (cf. Fuss, 1991; Namaste, 1996), as well as an exclusive gay safe space, which implicitly attempts at homogenising, marginalising and differentiating its constituency (cf. Herdt, 1997; Jagose, 1996; Warner, 1991). In retaining unquestioned sexual scripts in contexts such as academia, no opportunity is thus provided to fully embrace the initial importance ascribed to uncategorised same-sex behaviour and emotion, which preceded medical, ethnic and socially constructed models of homosexuality (cf. Dlamini, 2006; Patanè, 2010; Wallace, 2010).

The narratives of the participants thus reflected their conscious attempts at rationalisation and self-reflexivity in order to either implicitly or explicitly conform to a heteronormative blueprint. Regardless of the fact that they may have refuted conforming to a homogeneous understanding of what homosexuality entails, avoided overt (or covert) communal gay male identification with others (or within themselves) or attempts at projecting specific stereotypes, they still exemplified the centrality of heterosexuality as normative sexually orientated arrangement on their campuses. One needs only to consider their self-reflexive attempts at constructing, adapting and/or managing their varied but interconnected selves within and/or between their private and

professional academic contexts. In so doing, the participants re-contextualise the argument of heterosexuals as “captive” audiences when they are confronted with issues on homosexuality in their social or formal academic contexts (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; Grace & Benson, 2000:93; Monson & Rhodes, 2004:87). The gay male academics and students, through explicit or subtle attempts at **professionalising** their identity, also become a “captive audience” in a threefold manner. Firstly, as audience to a preconceived (and scripted) heteronormative play on the respective ‘stages’ of their university campuses (cf. Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962), comprised by their various faculties, departments and meetings as “cultural scenarios” (cf. Simon, 1996), and interpersonally scripted relations with colleagues, students and their internal selves.

Secondly, the “hetero”-play even reaffirms Mead’s (1962) “play” and “game” stages, since the re-contextualisation of the gay male as “captive”, may presuppose an additional and, as Parsons (1959) would argue, “secondary socialisation” attempt at ‘politely’ informing the gay academic and student as to who they should be, what they should “do” as gendered and sexual actors and where, when and whether this would be permissible in the larger university context. In so doing, their larger social context is rendered a “play stage”, since narratives from those scholars (academics and students) in architecture, arts and social sciences, on their campuses, and those in their private contexts (arts and social sciences), all provide subtle references to Morrison’s (2011) escape to a childlike, gregarious and colourful world, separate from heteronormativity. They are in fact ‘allowed’ this queer (or even stereotypically gay) performance, or as one academic noted “acting out”, in order not only to “project”, but simultaneously “protect” and potentially reclaim (cf. Rothmann, 2013c)⁵⁹ their supposed differential and subordinate masculinity in a possibly heterosexist environment. They do this in order for them to develop a coherent sense of self and, are in fact, like children, socialised into specific roles through a playful demeanour of sorts in their respective academic specialisations on campus, and creative endeavours at home (cf. Mendelsohn, 1994:152; Ritzer, 2012:364). But their attempts at childlike “play”, also reaffirm and stabilise the “game stage” and their responsibility towards the “generalised other” in the visible public sphere which, as result, is also kept firmly intact. They become, and retain their status as ‘extras’ and disposable cast members in relation to heterosexual leads during their respective phases or stages associated with identity construction, as opposed to their potentially ‘leading actor’ status in their private

⁵⁹ I forward this argument on the reclamation of a supposed subordinate gay masculinity in the article “Send in the (gay) clowns: *Will & Grace* and *Modern Family* as ‘sensibly’ queer”. Based on an in-depth content analysis of the television situation comedies *Will & Grace* and *Modern Family*, I critically explore the satirical and superiority functions of comedy in either reinforcing or questioning gay male stereotypes. One of the queer theoretically informed conclusions of the article, centres on how the literal performance of one of the gay protagonists, Cameron Tucker as a clown called ‘Fizbo’, emphasises how a colourful and gregariously gay male performance, both “projects” and “protects” gay masculinity (Rothmann, 2013c).

contexts. The work of those who favoured an intersectional interpretation of identity formation, including Savin-Williams (2005), Smuts (2011) and Troiden (1998), also informs the metaphor of the gay male in academia as a “captive” audience member or ‘extra’. I attribute this to their status as “reflexivity losers” (cf. Lash, 1994) in their attempts at rationalising their identity category through what Fassinger (1993:130) terms a “dual identity”, whether laden with stereotypes (cf. Epstein, 1998; Seidman, 2002a) or internally diverse (cf. Nardi, 2002; Plummer, 1998a; Weeks, 1985). They continuously move back-and-forth between the various phases or stages depending on their inclusion or exclusion, their safe or safe(r) context and assimilation into an heteronormative setting or transcending (cf. Butler, 1991; Goffman, 1971) its proscriptive or restrictive boundaries, whether in their private or professional lives.

Finally, their subjective experiences may even render Goffman’s (1971:20) reference to the static “setting” as potentially moveable, since the participants are in fact necessitated to accompany the “procession” of the “hetero”-scripted performances away from and towards their private (or social) and professional academic spaces. In so doing they are, in a subtle yet politely non-negotiable manner, forced to intra-psychically and interpersonally negotiate which of their scripted sexual selves will most accurately reflect the expectations of the “generalised other” or “worthies” in a given context. Regardless, they are posited as “...quite profane performers of the peddler class who move their place of work between performances, often being forced to do so...[resulting in] a ruler [being] too sacred, a peddler too profane” (cf. Goffman, 1971:20). This, in turn, thus pre-empts the **deprofessionalisation** of the gay male identity but, encourages the realisation and performing of the **professionalised gay male academic** and/or **student**. It underlines Johnson’s (2009) “using gender”-debate, since it not only *informs* the participants’ performances in those academic spaces described as “...gay friendly”, homosexually segregated, critically discursive and/or safe(r) (cf. Fox, 2007), and those which necessitate a distinction between the private homosexual and professional academic or student. In effect, it also *renders* them as **inseparably interconnected and “captive”** within the larger “heterosexual matrix” (Butler, 1990:47). This then will (or may), without the necessary discursive interrogation, retain the heterosexual/homosexually binary arrangement and **deprofessionalisation break**.

Only in establishing the link between behaviour and emotion with a queer tendency which favours sexual fluidity, diversity and plurality, could one possibly transcend the **deprofessionalisation break** and depolarise the supposedly static heterosexual/homosexual binary. This further engenders a shift in homophobic focus, in so far as internalised homophobia

displaces institutional homophobia as pre-eminent experience in the life of the sexual minority academic and student. Consider Plummer's (1998b) reference to the fact that homophobia is an illness to be associated with the proponents of heteronormativity and heterosexism, and not the gay 'target'. Arguments in favour of retaining the heterosexual status quo in favour of a "quietest position" (Jagose, 1996) of sorts, facilitate the creation of such internalised homophobia. This not only exemplifies the heterosexual/homosexual binary, but also the gay male academic as "reflexivity loser". Against this background, I acknowledge the role of academic activism, communal identification and safe zone initiatives, as necessary factors to address (and potentially redress) the everyday challenges faced by sexual minority academics and students, **but**, only in the short term. If one were to retain safe zones over a longer period, one may not be able to establish a much needed informative forum for those ignorant on matters relating to homosexuality. This further reinforces the heterosexual/homosexual binary since the gay male academic and student, marginalised as the 'other', believe they will only accrue safety, support and inclusion in a "...ghettoized" and separatist community. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that some of the gay male academics and students wish to retain a sense of belonging, communal identification or "homosexual role" in either their private or professional lives (cf. Athanases & Larrabee, 2003:256; Swank & Fahs, 2012:83), rather than opting for an individualised queer orientation. This could be ascribed to Butler's (2008) disassociation of 'queer' with an identity and Halperin's (1995:62) argument that it represents an identity "...without an essence".

In order for me, as sociologist, to attain some sense of non-subordinate 'otherness' (cf. Tong, 2008) within academia and still acknowledge these categorisations (cf. Weeks, 1985), I had the personal good fortune to join a newly established research unit, Edu-HRight, situated in the Faculty of Education of the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University in April 2013. As part of its Human Rights Education in Diversity-subgroup, I was given the opportunity to generate a Special Interest Group (SIG) entitled **Queer Academic Alliance (QAA)** alongside my new colleagues. This group provides me, as principal convener, the chance to potentially achieve an **intersubjective queer reflexivity** through my academic work. In so doing, I wish to mirror Monson and Rhodes' (2004:89) reference to a "queerly im/perfect praxis", because the QAA will attempt at engaging its members in an intentionally queer reflection of themselves and their surrounding environment, without consciously advocating a particular identity-based lifestyle. As overarching vision for the group, **wle** (cf. Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Grace et al., 2004), as diverse sexual **beings**, attempt at establishing an inclusive environment

in which w/e are able to academically “...bring together academics and students who wish to engage in critical debates on contemporary issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals in contemporary South Africa, as well as internationally” (Rothmann, 2013b). The mission statement of the QAA underscores the varied academic debates in the foregoing chapters on building a “...bridge over troubled waters” (Rothmann, 2012) to establish a reciprocal appreciation and use of the constructive principles of both **lesbian and gay studies** and **queer theory**. It echoes the progressive contributions of several of the previously cited and quoted researchers, theorists and writers (cf. Altman, 1972; Butler, 1990; 1993; D’Emilio, 1983; De Lauretis, 1991; Epstein, 1996; 1998; Gamson, 1995; Ingraham, 2002; Jagose, 1996; Namaste, 1996; Piontek, 2006; Rich, 1993; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008; Stein & Plummer, 1996; Warner, 1991; Weeks, 1985; 1986) and Plummer’s (2003) advocacy of merging the two through a symbolic interactionist inquiry.

A **queer academic attitude** thus displaces the need to ascribe or conform to a specific gender identity or sexual orientation (cf. Grace et al., 2004:303). The attitude rather seeks to encourage a critical dislodgement of the “blessed” (cf. Rubin, 1993:13) centrality of heterosexuality and facilitate constructive debate and advocacy on behalf of so-called sexual minorities facing discrimination and prejudice on university campuses. This attitude should encourage gay male academics and students and their advocates and/or allies, to critically interrogate the persistent and relatively unchallenged governing nature of heterosexuality in mainstream academia in order to unsettle (Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008:849), what one academic termed, our “...unthinkingness”. The **alliance**-component “...re-establishes a clear link with academically focused activism in favour of the acknowledgement and ‘politicisation’ (cf. Weeks, 1985) of human rights in general, and the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer-inclined individuals, in particular” (Rothmann, 2013b).

Through this amalgam of the modern with its postmodern counterpart, w/e should encourage all individuals, whether they identify as heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or as queer, to join. The mere fact that only four participants (three academics and one student) expressed a partly queer critique, underlines the ignorance of sexual beings on matters related to academic discourse on sexual orientation. A conflation of both gender with sexual orientation and, LGBTI-identity categories with ‘being queer’, reaffirms the need for an all-inclusive alliance in which the rights of those who oppose sexual ‘otherness’ as an affirming orientation and attitude in its own right, will be argued academically. By taking my continued references to

Weeks' (1985) foregoing quote into account, and in reverting back to the very first citation of Butler (1991) in Chapter One, which alluded to the inherent problems associated with the "...prospect of being anything", one cannot but acknowledge one unavoidable fact.

Notwithstanding the "...regulatory regimes" (Butler, 1991) which underlie "...normalizing" identity categories, w/e will only be able to diversify understandings of different gender and sexual representations and/or queer attitudes, as well as advocate for their right to their lives, by recognising its convening identity-based source. In doing this, w/e may also have to ascribe to an insistence that the current heterosexual/homosexual power dynamic is inherently flawed (cf. De Lauretis, 1991; Stein & Plummer, 1996), a fact of which its opponents are aware (cf. Butler, 1991) and, in retaliation, may attempt to refute the existence and importance of gender and sexual diversity, plurality and otherness. In so doing, the deprofessionalisation break is in fact challenged through a queer inclination, but will in all likelihood remain intact. Our continued need to 'belong', but also, inadvertently challenge 'gay sensibilities' (cf. Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a), necessitates the acknowledgement of the intersectional co-existence of the varied submodels based on the particular university, faculty and departmental context, in which particular interpersonal and intra-psychic scripts are provided (cf. Simon, 1996).

6.5 CONCLUSION

Three **specific themes** framed the preceding chapter and clearly aligned with the **general and specific objectives** stated as part of Chapter One. These centred on, firstly, the manner in which gay male academics and students potentially **rationalise** their sexual orientation through, amongst others, a conscious attempt at constructing their identity sequentially or intersectionally through "doing gay" (cf. Dowsett et al., 2008) or using gay. In **exploring the perceived influence of rationalisation on the phases associated with the identity construction of gay male academics and students**, additional subthemes arose. These included attaining role models, the anxiety, fear and confusion on the part of gay men, and the importance ascribed to conforming to a gay male ideal as opposed to necessarily transgressing it. A thematic analysis of the noted potential of performing one's sexual orientation through its "doing" or "using"-capabilities, also provided interesting insights. Although some of the academics and one of the older students signalled the potential of transgressing the homogenised and minoritised "logic", the narratives of the participants clearly delineated between either a **heteronormative** or **homonormative** attempt at assimilation (cf. Cooper, 2004:31). Regardless of whether a gay

male segregated context (whether academic, public or private) seemingly provides safety, support, role modelling, unity or “emotional energy” (cf. Johnson, 2009), it also reinforces the centrality of heterosexuality as opposed to the marginality of homosexuality as per Namaste’s (1996) “engendered paradox”. In order to safeguard their identities or physical and emotional selves, these participants are either subtly or explicitly necessitated to reflexively negotiate the particular gay performance which would best suit a given social context.

Secondly, consideration was also given to the role of **self-reflexivity** in portraying this identity in their private and/or public settings. Subthemes considered in this regard focused on the participants’ distinction between several ‘selves’ as mechanism to negotiate and navigate their ‘gay performances’ within and between varied contexts. In addition, the discussion of safety, in general, and the potential benefits associated with safe spaces or zones on university campuses in particular, presented a dualism of sorts. This was attributed to the fact that the participants would (and possibly could **only**) obtain and retain protection through assimilation into either a heteronormative context or, on the other hand, a separate homosexually segregated academic community. As such, regardless of whether the participant decides to emerge from ‘the closet’, he remains a “captive” member of, what Goffman (1971) would term, the “peddler class”, since an openness of one’s sexual orientation may not necessarily manifest in positive results.

Thirdly, whether “doing gay” or doing straight, then implies that safety should be considered a “fettered” ideal, since it was apparent that the gay male academics and students constantly **professionalise** their identities. This is because of the proscriptive cultural and social arrangement which devises particular heteronormative and heterosexist rituals (cf. Butler, 1990; 1991; 1993; Ingraham, 2002; Simon, 1996; West & Zimmerman, 2002) to which they are expected to conform in their private and professional lives. The chapter highlighted the fact that notwithstanding their identification or non-identification with gay male communities, stereotypes or sensibilities, or even a transgressive queer inclination, the participants were posited as “reflexivity losers” due to their purposive or implicit rationalisation of their respective personal or professional identities in South African academia.

These prescriptions manifest factors such as anxiety, fear and confusion and managerial input, amongst others, which brings about the **deprofessionalisation break** in the **(de)professionalisation model of gay male academic identity**. This minimises any possible

attempt at adopting a 'queer inclination' when gay activism, advocacy and mobilisation in order to protect the basic rights of sexual minorities on university campuses, become all the more important. Chapter Seven concludes with a concise demarcation of the in-depth thematic analysis in Chapter Six, which centres on the rationalisation of the gay male identity in South African academia, based on self-reflexive attempts at either hiding or proclaiming one's homosexuality within and/or between one's private and professional contexts.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the concluding remarks of the in-depth qualitative exploration of the identity construction of the gay male academic and student, it is worth considering Halperin's (2012:95) reflection on the inherent contradictions which inform an at once **proud** but, **simultaneously** **shameful** claim of a self-identified gay or lesbian identity:

...instead of winding up in triumphant possession of a gay pride and freedom that we can wholeheartedly call our own, we have constructed a gay identity that actively *represses* both the pathos and the pleasure of those residual queer effects that we prefer to think we have liberated ourselves from that we claim have simply vanished from our consciousness. Instead of transcending the secret shame and solitary pleasures of our sentimentality, as we would like to think, we have assiduously closeted them.

His words recall Butler (1991) and Weeks' (1985) comments on the constant interplay and/or struggle between an individually diverse (and unique) or communally labelled and stereotypical understanding of homosexual identity. Butler (1991) reaffirmed the constant interchange but disjuncture between a self-proclaimed identity through categorisation with the acknowledgement of individual diversity, on the one hand, and the need to communally identify with others in order to protect one's basic rights, gain support or be socialised into 'being gay', on the other. Although undeniably laudable, Weeks' (1985) assertion that it is unavoidable to acknowledge the existence and value of certain proscriptive categories and labels including the 'gay male' or 'homosexual' in order to recognise its intrinsic diversity, such plurality may in fact be subsumed in an assimilationist, essentialist, ethnic or 'sensibly' gay understanding (cf. Altman, 1982; Epstein, 1998; Seidman, 2002a). As such, Weeks' argument does not necessarily deconstruct the supposed sacred position of heterosexuality (and per implication heteronormativity), as internally questionable and tangible in relation to homosexuality, as predicated by De Lauretis (1991). It rather reaffirms the centrality of both heteronormativity as determinant of what is deemed normal, moral and acceptable in terms of the larger gendered and sexually orientated

cultural schema, and that of homonormativity in terms of the clearly defined role (cf. McIntosh, 1968) portrayed by a 'sensibly' gay male (cf. Altman, 1982; Seidman, 2002a).

As concluding reflections on the study, the subsections to follow shortly elucidate the general and specific objectives stated as part of Chapter One. This is followed by recommendations for further sociological inquiry as well as practical strategies to redress discrimination and prejudice faced by sexual minorities on South African university campuses.

7.2 CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS: THE GAY MALE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AS 'REFLEXIVELY DEFEATED' IN ACADEMIA

In order to explore the research objectives of the study, I provided two sets of comprehensive theoretical discussions on gay male identity. In terms of the first, I sought to provide an **in-depth theoretical discussion in Chapter Two of the work of proponents of lesbian and gay studies, queer theory and sociology on the respective models and phases associated with gay male identity in general, and gay male identity construction in particular.** Here primary emphasis was placed on the manner in which conceptualisations of gay male identity changed from their initial form of same-sex behaviour and emotion, through to the medical model's creation of "the homosexual" (cf. Foucault, 1978), its homogenisation as per the "ethnic model" (cf. Epstein, 1998), "racialisation" (cf. Forth, 2008) and "ghettoization" (cf. Castells, 1983; Levine, 1998), as well as its socially constructed (cf. McIntosh, 1968; Plummer, 1998a; 1998b; 2003; Weeks, 1985) and queer theoretically deconstructed (including the work of, amongst others Butler, 1990; 1991; 1993; 2004; 2008; De Lauretis, 1991; Ingraham, 1996; 2002; Jackson & Scott, 2010; Namaste, 1996; Rubin, 1993; Sedgwick, 1993; 2008; Stein & Plummer, 1996; West & Zimmerman, 2002) configurations.

Chapter Three complemented this comprehensive contemplation through a detailed **theoretical discussion of academic research on the experiences of gay male academics and students on university campuses in South African and across the world, as it related to their tendency to either assimilate into or transgress the potentially heteronormative context** of academia. Here emphasis was placed on the current state of discrimination and prejudice on the one hand, in relation to the acceptance and inclusion of sexual minorities in educational settings, on the other. The initial studies of D'Augelli (1989; 1992) and D'Emilio (1992) were complemented by more recent contributions of Evans (2000; 2002), Fox (2007), Rankin (2005) and Sears (2002; 2009). An inclusion of the progressive contributions of several

educators (cf. Chang, 2005; Grace, 2006; Grace & Benson, 2000; Honeychurch, 1996; Maxey, 1999; Petrovic, 2002; Slagle, 2007; Williams, 1993) who wish to challenge the supposed normality of heteronormativity, not only complemented this chapter, but also underlay the discussion in **Chapter Four**.

This chapter introduced a thorough demarcation of the central principles associated with the use of a **qualitative research design, within the metatheoretical paradigm of phenomenology and informed by the methodological principles of symbolic interactionism**. As introductory considerations, a primary emphasis was placed on the epistemological and ontological research bases of interpretivism and social constructivism, respectively. Its use was further justified by means of a critical explication of Schütz's (1932) work on phenomenology and intersubjectivity, as well as Blumer (1969), Goffman (1971) and Mead's (1962) use of methodological principles associated with symbolic interactionism. The use of the qualitative research design, the non-probability sampling methods of purposive, snowball and theoretical sampling, complemented the evaluation of the effectiveness afforded by the data collection methods of in-depth interviews and self-administered questionnaires. As concluding sections for this particular chapter, due attention was given to a detailed biographical description of the academics and students who served as participants, as well as the importance of ethical considerations.

Through this in-depth and thorough theoretical exploration and explication of the manner in which **rationalisation** (cf. Jackson & Scott, 2010) and **self-reflexivity** (Mead, 1962) may engender the creation and maintenance of a **professionalised** configuration of the gay male identity in mainstream society and academia, I sought to 'build' an empirical "...bridge over troubled waters" (Rothmann, 2012) through a **sociological exploration of the experiences of gay male academics and students** in order to potentially transcend the fermented (cf. Slagle, 2007) relationship between proponents of lesbian and gay studies, and those of queer theory (cf. Plummer, 1998a; 2003). Sociological research and social constructivism, as the noted bridges, manifested the theoretical and methodological principles associated with primarily symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. In adopting such an approach, I was able to critically explore how the principles associated with the heterosexual/homosexual binary potentially influence the identity construction of the seventeen gay male academics and twenty four students on South African university campuses. In so doing, the reciprocal influence of the overarching modernistic themes of **rationalisation** and **self-reflexivity** in "**doing**" and/or "**using**" the identity category of 'gay male' became apparent, particularly as it related to the

(de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity. This was done in a twofold manner. Firstly, the **findings** were presented in a detailed and thick descriptive (cf. Geertz, 1973) account in **Chapter Five**, based on the various themes introduced in the theoretical chapters. These included a definition of the gay identity, the participants' choice between individualisation or collectiveness (in terms of the gay group), the potential differences between the private persona of the gay males and their attempts at conforming to a gay male stereotype overtly, or to remain in 'the closet'. These were complemented by a focus on themes associated with the identity construction of the gay males (including the five themes cited in Chapter Two as part of the identity construction phases) as well as the experiences of gay men in the academic context. The latter encompassed subthemes associated with discrimination, safety, the closet, collegiality (or peer-relationships) and the assimilation of homosexual themes into mainstream curricula (including courses and safe spaces).

A critical thematic analysis and a **discussion of the findings** followed in **Chapter Six**, where the noted themes of **rationalisation** and **self-reflexivity** built towards the **(de)professionalisation model**. This model, comprised of the various submodels or paradigms used to conceptualise the category or role of 'homosexual', reaffirmed the interdependence of rationalised gender and sexually orientated performances through self-reflexivity. By adopting the principles of rationalisation, both the academics and students asserted the pre-eminent influence of repetitive rituals, skills and particular phases, stages or themes which are consciously performed and/or negotiated in order to obtain a constructive assessment as it relates to "**doing gay**" or **using gay**. They based their decision on whether to '**come out of the closet**' on the anticipated reactions of the "generalised other" with whom they would have to engage, after their disclosure (cf. Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1971; Mead, 1962). Here the social (and sexual) self's 'I' conceded as shadow to its chasing agent, the 'me', because of accounts which included fear of unwarranted assumptions, alienation, isolation, intolerance, possible verbal and physical homophobia, as well as stereotypical labelling. As such, several diverse yet, interconnected 'selves', consciously constructed by the participants, were identified as means to navigate different "sexual scripts" (Gagnon & Simon, 1973) depending on a given social context. Although it may afford some agency to the individual gay men in their negotiation and 'use' of their 'gayness' in their private and professional contexts, it still renders them as reflexively 'lost' and 'defeated', given their conscious attempt at avoiding negative gender and/or sexually orientated assessment.

Against this background, the centrality of **heteronormativity** is, as such, reinforced, as was evident from the narratives of participants. In assessing the probable advantages or limitations in disclosing their homosexuality in particularly their professional milieus, consideration was given to not excessively flaunting their sexual orientation or pushing the gay agenda which could potentially endanger their careers or result in overt or covert discrimination on their respective campuses. As a likely result, homosexual segregation arose as pre-eminent principle of **homonormativity** (cf. Cooper, 2004; Visser, 2007). Here the participants noted that their areas of specialisation and mostly gay departments, afforded them the necessary safety to disclose their sexual orientation. This, however, results in a reverse binary relationship as per De Lauretis' (1991) work, where heterosexuality becomes the dependent sexual variant in relation to the presumed centrality of homosexuality. I argued that this, in turn, could further exacerbate the essentialist and assimilationist, ethnic and "racialised" character of gay male sexuality, since a new set of social and sexual expectations may be created in order to posit homosexuality as the "generalised other" to which sexually dissident individuals may need to conform. As such, homonormativity on university campuses creates a false sense of safety and security for sexual minorities, since it separates the latter from an existing mainstream society which will not necessarily afford gay men the same courtesy of protection. Homonormativity, thus, does not afford the gay male academic and student as much self-reflexive freedom they may wish to believe it does, and clearly refutes the potential for transgression which Cooper (2004:31) commented on in her work.

As part of the (de)professionalisation model, the **gay male identity meridian** clearly delineated two separate and conceptually diverse ontological orientations on the gay male identity. The upper half comprises the **deprofessionalisation** of the gay male academic identity, since it recalls an attempt at merging a queerly non-subordinate 'otherness' with an uncategorised and unfettered experience of same-sex behaviour and emotion. The lower half, however, signals the rationalised attempts of both heterosexual and homosexual individuals at assigning specific criteria, rituals, scripts and/or 'sensibilities' to both groups, as per **professionalisation**. Here references were made to the supposed naturalness provided by the medical model as well as the normality, "ghettoization", minoritisation and homogeneity embedded in the "ethnic model". Notwithstanding the inherent plurality assumed by the participants' biographical variables such as age and the academic faculties and fields of study, their social constructivist views, were reciprocally linked to the medical and "ethnic model". As such, their narratives centralised a hetero- and homonormative understanding of gay male sexuality. Whether they sought to find

the elusive “elsewhere” or label with which they could most identify, or embraced the “...gay friendly”, “...normal”, cautionary or accepting campus context, an attempt at “doing gay”, resonated most in their feedback. Their constant awareness of themselves as ‘other’ in relation to the taken-for-granted centrality of their heterosexual counterparts’ gendered and sexual performances, reinforced the “engendered paradox” of, not only ‘the closet’, but also the supposed agency self-reflexivity affords sexual minorities. Through self-reflexive attempts at doing, using or disclosing their sexual orientation, the visibility of the participants is in fact overshadowed by their invisibility in the South African university setting. They emerge from the closet *into* an existing “heterosexual matrix” (Butler, 1990:47). This may necessitate, as was evident from their narratives, a carefully considered inauthentic (cf. Halperin, 2012:457) and “cynical” (cf. Goffman, 1971) reflection and negotiation of the degrees of disclosure or foreclosure which do not necessarily imply agency, but rather a rigid ascription to heterosexual or homosexual rituals.

Given this particular gendered and sexual culture, the following recommendations may be considered to sociologically further explore, describe or explain the debates, issues, struggles and possibilities associated with homosexuality in contemporary societies, both in South Africa or further afield.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Two subsets of recommendations, as informed by the study, have been formulated. These include recommendations for **further sociological research** on issues related to homosexuality and **practical initiatives on South African university campuses**.

7.3.1 Recommendations for further academic research

The study informed **five** recommendations for further **sociological research** on homosexual themes in South Africa and internationally.

Firstly, further sociological research on identity construction could apply the underlying principles of the **(de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity** to an explorative and descriptive study on the **experiences** of self-identified gay, lesbian and other sexual minority teachers, teacher educators and students (or learners) in primary and

secondary education in South Africa. These findings could be compared with those from studies on similar experiences in tertiary education, in order to provide a comparative account of gay or lesbian identity construction. In so doing, one could facilitate an intersectional focus on the influence of additional biographical categories including age, gender, ethnicity and race, amongst others, within or between these various educational levels. The work of Grace (2006) and Grace and Benson (2000) on “writing the queer self” and the use of an “autobiographical queer life narrative” respectively, could be used in order to determine whether and why these sexual minority educators seek to disclose or foreclose their sexual orientation within the different educational milieus.

Secondly, it could be of interest to undertake a study on the manner in which university students engage with concepts, phrases and debates on their sex, gender and sexual orientation. A concurrent mixed-method study (cf. Creswell, 2009) could explore how students **conceptualise** categories such as ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’, ‘bisexual’ and ‘straight’ and, per implication, which factors influence their decision to do this. As part of this, one might also consider a longitudinal comparative component through which you identify the potential similarities or differences in these conceptualisations from their first year through to their final (whether undergraduate or postgraduate) year of study. Here focus may be placed on how their initial views on sex, gender and sexual orientation, in general, and understandings of their own gender and sexual orientation, in particular, have changed or remained the same across the three to four years. The research should explicate and clearly demarcate the factors which influenced the fact that their views either remained the same or changed over time.

Thirdly, given the manner in which these individuals conceptualise their sexual orientation, it may also be of value to consider whether academics and students prefer a **categorised identity** (such as ‘gay’ or ‘lesbian’) as opposed to an **uncategorised** ‘queer’ inclination. Such a study could compare the two groups in order to identify differences and similarities within and between the two. If they were to opt for a categorised label, a researcher may wish to consider the influence of certain stereotypes associated with homosexuality on such a label, as well as whether it is again conflated with a gendered understanding of sexual orientation. If they were to opt for the juxtaposing postmodern view, the participants need to also clearly demarcate the intricate nature of their ‘otherness’, ‘diversity’ and ‘plurality’, in order to determine whether this ‘identity’ differs substantially from its modern counterpart.

Fourthly, studies on identity construction in general, and not necessarily within the context of tertiary educational settings, should also provide a continued focus on the nature of **self-reflexivity** afforded to sexual minorities in South African. This study as well as that of Lash (1994), Jackson and Scott (2010) and Smuts (2011), have commented on the importance of considering the available resources, rights and freedom afforded to individuals which either posit them as “reflexivity winners” or “reflexivity losers” (cf. Lash, 1994). Biographical variables including age, disability and race, might be used by researchers to determine which of the two typologies most characterise their research population.

Finally, given the predominant focus on academics in the faculties of arts and social science in this study, it could prove beneficial to attempt a similar sociological inquiry into the lived experiences of academics and students in the **natural-, health- and law faculties**. It has to be noted that the lack of critical engagement on issues related to their identities, does not necessarily imply an apathetic attitude towards homosexuality on the latter group’s part, but rather the difficulty associated with incorporating homosexual and/or queer themes into their varied curricula, as opposed to the relative ease of doing so in arts and social sciences courses.

In addition to these recommendations for further social scientific study, the narratives of the participants underlined the necessity to initiate practical procedures to redress homophobia on South African university campuses.

7.3.2 **Recommendations for practical interventions on South African university campuses**

The following **six** recommendations should be considered in order to address homophobic-based discrimination and prejudice on South African university campuses.

Firstly, the need for a specific **diversity and transformation office** cannot be overstated. Such an office, comprised of both academics, students and administrative personnel, could serve as important support structure for those individuals who identify as members of a minority group. The university management should, as such, provide the necessary funding in order to subsidise various portfolios. These could include a ‘Director of Diversity and Transformation’, ‘Deputy Director’ and administrative support. A further delineation should facilitate an inclusion of project leaders and student representatives who deal exclusively with specific social or biographical categories (i.e., gender, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity and race,

amongst others) which serve as examples of marginalised university staff and students. These directors or their representatives should be granted a seat in the institutional senates or managerial meetings, in order to constructively and proficiently address issues of discrimination on the university campus.

In initialising, commissioning and supporting such an office, members of the **university management**, ranging from the chancellors through to the campus rectors, should forego a potential apathetic attitude on issues concerning discrimination based on, amongst others, homophobia on their campuses. In addition to the noted transformation office, a **second** recommendation centres on how managerial members should also encourage, fund and assign research projects on themes related to diversity, transformation and/or discrimination to specific departments, research units, research teams or individuals. They should also encourage continuous debates on campus, whether it is a colloquium, workshop or seminar. If they were to do so, they need to also attend such initiatives and proactively listen and debate potential solutions to potential problems. In so doing, they should also commit themselves to the drafting of explicit policies on specific forms of discrimination (i.e. homophobia) and refrain from conflating it with general guidelines which deal with discrimination. These policies should be complemented with clear procedural guidelines as to *how* discriminatory practices will be dealt with, *by whom*, as well as the *timeframe* within which it will take place. Here members of the diversity and transformation office could appoint task teams, of which the membership should reflect a diverse contingent of representatives from management, human resources, the legal department and human rights offices. The latter could prove invaluable, since those individuals working with human rights offences related to specific social issues, such as gay bashing, need to bring their knowledge, expertise and insights to the table, in order to avoid potential heterosexist rhetoric.

Thirdly, a formalised and clearly structured **LGBT or queer student organisation** should also be considered. The feedback from the preceding study indicated that these kinds of organisations usually result in a sexualised meeting ‘pool’ for gay men. An academic or any other non-student representative of the diversity and transformation office could serve as convener for the organisation and preside over the appointment or election of a chair, vice-chair, secretary and other important portfolio positions, occupied by self-identified sexual minority students. A particular vision, mission and objective (or objectives) could be drafted in collaboration with the representative from the diversity and transformation office, in order to

formalise and guide its members towards specific outcomes and activities. These could be more academic (i.e., colloquia, book discussions and smaller research projects) in nature, or even latently, result in a sociable and supportive context. A similar organisation or group could also be established for non-students, including academics and support staff, who wish to engage in academic debates during or after their working hours, or who may merely seek a supportive and non-discriminatory group of sexual minorities.

In keeping with this, the diversity and transformation office (or interested academics) should, as **fourth** recommendation, determine the importance, necessity, nature and form of **safe zones** on South African university campuses. Both academics and students cited its importance in terms of the support provided to sexual minorities but, dualistically also questioned its potential for further isolating or marginalising sexual minorities. Given this dualism, it needs to be determined what the particular needs of sexual minorities are on a given university campus. This could also intersect with these individuals' race, ethnicity, age, area of specialisation and primary socialisation by their families, amongst others. One could undertake such an investigation through the use of electronic surveys sent to the work email addresses of university employees and students, in which they are requested to provide insights on specific issues they may feel make them vulnerable or unsafe because of their sex, gender and/or sexual orientation. Based on the feedback, the researcher or research team could make recommendations to the diversity or transformation office as well as management, on the need for safe spaces (or zones) and their potential configuration, features and membership.

A **fifth** recommendation centres on the incorporation of a **homosexual** and/or **queer pedagogical** component as part of either an exclusive or mainstream course and/or curricula, one that may be able to facilitate a critical inclination amongst academics, lecturers, researchers and students, on issues related to the taken-for-granted heterosexist rhetoric of current modules (cf. Chang, 2005:173; Robinson & Ferfolja, 2008:849). In so doing, proponents of this endeavour could attempt at providing a balanced account of current academic and lay debates on gender, sex, sexuality and sexual orientation on local, national and international level. Although mainstreaming may risk a noted "captive" audience situation (cf. Barnfield & Humberstone, 2008; Dews & Leste Law, 1998:12; Dolan, 1998:44), the lack of knowledge and understanding about academic debates or mere conceptualisation of central concepts, necessitates an inclusion of a study section or component of overarching courses in communication studies, psychology, social work and sociology, amongst others, as a concise

yet, informative introduction. Those who wish to specialise in these particular fields, may decide to opt for a more exclusive programme, curriculum or module, which explicitly deals with LGBT and queer themes. These could take the form of overarching programmes or specific modules or short courses on both undergraduate and/or postgraduate level. Here academic specialisation in these particular fields could also result in supervision possibilities for academics who wish to expand on the existing body of knowledge through Master's or Doctorate-level research by students.

A **sixth** recommendation focuses on the establishment of a **research unit** which should focus exclusively on **human rights challenges** and **possibilities**. An evident example on the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University is **Edu-HRight**. This interdisciplinary body, comprised of representatives from mainly educational sciences, law and social science, undertakes research projects on human rights infringements in South African society and literacy pertaining to human rights, and also seeks to encourage constructive and sustainable strategies which may encourage and "...infuse" a critical academic culture, through research (Human Rights Education in Diversity, 2013). As part of the larger body, members of the smaller Special Interest Groups (SIGs), including the mentioned QAA, enter into collaborative academic endeavours which promote a critical interrogation of heteronormative and heterosexist assumptions in educational and broader societal contexts (Rothmann, 2013b). As convener of the SIG, I will attempt to observe the realisation of three objectives. These include my own intersubjective endeavour towards "writing [m/y] queer self" (cf. Grace, 2006) as openly gay male educator and researcher in South African academia, as has been done by several other international scholars cited in the preceding chapters. The second objective is to undertake further sociological and interdisciplinary research on issues related to homosexuality, whether embedded in modern, postmodern or poststructuralist accounts. Thirdly, and as concluding thought to the thesis, I wish to encourage a critical debate on and interrogation of heterosexist pedagogy, rhetoric and behaviour on the campuses of South African universities in general, and my own campus, in particular. In so doing, I may succeed in self-reflexively deconstructing not only my own reflexively 'damaged', 'defeated', 'distorted' and 'lost' (cf. Lash, 1994) gay male sensibility and subjectivity, but those of other academics and students as well, through the creation of a safe, supportive and non-judgemental academic atmosphere.

7.4 FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE HETEROSEXUAL/HOMOSEXUAL BINARY

In closing, I deem it appropriate to again quote Halperin's (2012:456-457) indelible insights forwarded in his most recent work, *How to be Gay*. Using this as my closing thought, his argument provides a clear sociological link between the modern inclination to rationalise, as well as do and use one's sexual orientation through either a **hetero-** or **homonormative model** (cf. Cooper, 2004:31), as opposed to a queer critique of assimilation, homogenisation and 'the other' as subordinate, from a postmodern and poststructuralist stance:

...We will be queer forever. Gay kids still grow up, for the most part, in heterosexual families and in heteronormative culture. That is not going to change to any great extent...We are [thus] called to subjectivity by a demand to be inauthentic. We are required by the social vicissitudes of our very existence to *play a role* that involves faking our own subjectivity...Straight culture will always be our first culture, and what we do with it will always establish a certain template for later, queer relations to standard cultural forms. Gay subjectivity will always be shaped by the primeval need on the part of gay subjects to queer heteronormative culture (Halperin, 2012:456-457).

Although 'queerly' questionable, the centrality of the heterosexual/homosexual binary remains intact through identity construction, communal identification and an inauthentic gay male self-reflexivity (Halperin, 2012:457), regardless of whether one chooses a 'side' of the Kinsey continuum, or whether you embed yourself (un)comfortably somewhere in the middle. The **(de)professionalisation model of the gay male academic identity** clearly recentres the binary as an unavoidable and definite "...organizing method" (Fuss, 1991:1) of sexuality in contemporary society, in general, and the academic community in particular. As such, further sociological study, as noted in the preceding section on recommendations, is imperative to emphasise the 'looming' threat of homophobia in both Africa and South Africa and initiate constructive strategies to curtail its potentially debilitating effects.

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Addendum A: Informed Consent Statement

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT
PHD-STUDY: EXPERIENCES OF GAY UNIVERSITY ACADEMICS AND STUDENTS IN
SOUTH AFRICA
FIELD OF STUDY: SOCIOLOGY
NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

RESEARCHER: MR. J. ROTHMANN
Tel.: 018 299 1595
21081719@nwu.ac.za

Dear respondent,

This **Informed Consent Statement** serves to confirm the following information as it relates to the Sociological PhD Thesis on gay academics and students' experiences in South Africa:

- 1 The main purpose of this study centres on obtaining information from both gay tertiary academics and students, in an attempt to determine the nature of their everyday experiences.
- 2 The procedure to be followed is a qualitative research design, which includes open-ended questions, the completion of self-administered questionnaires and/or focus group sessions, whereby respondents are given the opportunities to communicate their subjective views on the noted topic during either a face-to-face in-depth interview or by completing the questionnaire themselves. Basic background information related to the name of the respondent, age, current relationship status and academic qualifications will be asked. Interviews and/or focus group sessions will be recorded on a tape recorder, to ensure sufficient transcription of information communicated by the respondent. If, at any time during the interview the respondent(s) feels that it should be switched off, the researcher will oblige.
- 3 The duration of the interview and/or focus group session will be no longer than two hours at most.
- 4 If at any point during the interview and/or focus group session the respondent should feel uncomfortable, he will be given the opportunity to either make his/her discomfort known, or immediately end his participation.
- 5 It should also be emphasised that participation takes place on a voluntary basis, with the consent of the respondent without any form of coercion.
- 6 The confidentiality, anonymity and privacy of respondents are guaranteed. Fictitious names will be utilised when quoting statements in the dissertation, communicated by the respondents.
- 7 If a respondent regards any information as confidential in nature, and wishes to prohibit the researchers to publish it in the final dissertation, he should make this known during the interview. This will be adhered to by the researcher.
- 8 A list of the questions to be asked during the interview and/or focus group session will be made available to the respondent before the commencement of the interview and/or focus group session on request. This will be done to ensure mutual understanding of what has been asked to avoid discrepancies during the interview.
- 9 A summarised copy of the final thesis will be made available to respondents on request.

I, ... (name and surname), hereby declare that I have read and understand the contents of the Informed Consent Statement, and give my full consent to Mr J Rothmann to progress with the interview and/or focus group session on(date) and use information communicated by myself to him in his PhD Thesis.

Name and Designation	Signature	Date
Prof JF Cronjé Supervisor		
Mr J Rothmann Researcher		
Respondent		

Preoccupation with female writers, entertainers (actresses, singers)		
Any other stereotypes you associate with 'being gay.'		
Question 1.9 Based on your answer in 1.7-1.8, please identify at least three (3) SOURCES of such stereotypes or alternative sources you use to construct your identity (e.g. peer group, family, mass media – magazines, television shows, films)		
1		
2		
3		

Gay identity as 'public'

Question 1.10 Do you attend public places (bars, clubs or churches) of which the patrons are predominantly/only gay men?
YES / NO
Question 1.11 Please elaborate by providing examples.
Question 1.12 If you answered yes in 1.10, what were your experiences in attending these public places?

Question 1.13 Please describe your residential setting in terms of its content, design and layout.
Question 1.14 Does your residential setting serve as a safer environment than an external context?
YES / NO
Question 1.15 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons.
Question 1.16 Do (or have you ever) gone to great financial lengths to create a perfected residential setting for purposes of entertainment of gay friends ?
YES / NO
Question 1.17 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons.
Question 1.18 Do (or have you ever) gone to great financial lengths to create a perfected residential setting for purposes of your own contentment as source for 'invisible' safety from mainstream society ?
YES / NO

Question 1.19

Please **explain** your answer shortly by providing reasons.

Different forms of 'selves'

Question 1.20

How many **'selves'** do you project in your daily interactions with others? (For example, a 'sport self', 'lecturer self', 'friend self', 'son self', etc.)

Question 1.21

Please explain your answer shortly by providing **examples** of these different 'selves' and ***how they differ***.

(e.g. My 'lecturer self' differs from my 'son/friend/family-self' because my family is not aware of my sexual orientation)

Example of 'self' (sport, student, friend, son, romantic relationship, etc.)

Shortly describe this 'self' (for example, 'sport self' is more masculine)

Stages/phases for gay identity construction

Question 1.22 Identify which of the following 'stages' or 'phases' you progressed through in constructing your identity as gay or lesbian (cf. Cass, 1984; 1990)		
Stage / Phase	✓	Own experiences
Acknowledgement of 'differentness' (may include feelings of confusion, fear, anxiety)		
Identity confusion / Shame (e.g. overcompensating through work, spending on home, car, clothes, appearance and/or denying identity as 'passing' phase)		
Tolerance through marginal involvement (<i>"I may be homosexual becomes</i> – I probably <i>am</i> homosexual", going to clubs, bars, gay churches, etc.)		
Acceptance and assumption of identity (may include 'coming out', sense of security, increase in number of gay friends, networks)		
Identity pride / synthesis (Confronting homophobia, advocating equality, 'celebrating' homosexuality)		
Question 1.23 How would you define 'the closet' or 'being in the closet'?		
Question 1.24 Have you ever willingly remained 'closeted' in your private/social environment?		
YES / NO		
Question 1.25 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.		

Question 2.1 Have you experienced any form of direct/personal discrimination at your university based on your sexual orientation?
YES / NO
Question 2.2 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
Question 2.3 Do(es) your university/faculty/classes provide a safe environment for you to ‘live out’ your gay sexual orientation?
YES / NO
Question 2.4 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
Question 2.5 Have you ever willingly remained ‘closeted’ in your work environment?
YES / NO
Question 2.6 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.

Question 2.7

Have you ever willingly **censored** yourself during classes/presentations/colloquia pertaining to statements associated with your own sexual orientation, or homosexuality in general?

YES / NO

Question 2.8

Please **explain** your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.

Question 2.9

Does your behaviour in your work environment **differ** from what you exhibit in contexts outside the university?

YES / NO

Question 2.10

Please explain.

Question 2.11

With whom do you better interact at work – your **male or female colleagues**? Please elaborate.

Academic field of specialisation

Question 2.12

Has **your field of study and/or specific subjects** in your programme influenced your views and/or experiences of your sexuality?

YES / NO

Question 2.13

Please **explain** your answer shortly by providing examples.

Question 2.14

Do you think it is beneficial to have a **gay or lesbian lecturer** to lecture university courses?

YES / NO

Question 2.15

Please **explain** your answer shortly.

Question 2.16

Do you think it would be beneficial to have a **course on LGBTQ⁶⁰-issues?**

YES / NO

Question 2.17

Please **explain** your answer shortly.

⁶⁰ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer

Question 2.18 List three (3) sections you would like to see included in such a course .		
1		
2		
3		
Question 2.19 List three (3) things your current university could do to address issues faced by LGBTQ-individuals on campus.		
1		
2		
3		
Question 2.20 Do you believe that it would be beneficial to have safe zones (spaces) for gay lecturers and students on the university campus?		
YES/NO		
Question 2.21 Please elaborate.		
Question 2.22 What forms could (or should) such safe zones take?		
Form	X	Please elaborate
One-to-one consultation with a lecturer, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker		
Social activities for students: 'socials', reading groups, 'movie nights', study groups		
LGBTQ-office with trained counsellors, legal personnel		

LGBTQ-courses (voluntary/involuntary)		

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Question 1.4 Shortly explain your answer in 1.3.
Question 1.5 What are the positive features associated with forming part of such a visible group?
1
2
3
Question 1.6 What are the negative features associated with forming part of such a visible group?
1
2
3

Gay stereotypes

Question 1.7 Do you conform to specific stereotypes associated with 'being gay'?		
YES / NO		
Question 1.8 Please select any of the following categories presented as examples of stereotypes which have been associated with gay men with which you associate/disassociate with.		
Category of stereotype	X	Reason why you associate/disassociate yourself with this
Body consciousness (excessive exercise, focus on hairstyle, dress code, mannerisms)		
Friendships with women ('fag-hag'-relationship)		

Preoccupation with female writers, entertainers (actresses, singers)		
Any other stereotypes you associate with 'being gay.'		
Question 1.9 Based on your answer in 1.7-1.8, please identify at least three (3) SOURCES of such stereotypes or alternative sources you use to construct your identity (e.g. peer group, family, mass media – magazines, television shows, films)		
1		
2		
3		

Gay identity as 'public'

Question 1.10 Do you attend public places (bars, clubs or churches) of which the patrons are predominantly/only gay men?
YES / NO
Question 1.11 Please elaborate by providing examples.
Question 1.12 If you answered yes in 1.10, what were your experiences in attending these public places?

Question 1.13 Please describe your residential setting in terms of its content, design and layout.
Question 1.14 Does your residential setting serve as a safer environment than an external context?
YES / NO
Question 1.15 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons.
Question 1.16 Do (or have you ever) gone to great financial lengths to create a perfected residential setting for purposes of entertainment of gay friends ?
YES / NO
Question 1.17 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons.
Question 1.18 Do (or have you ever) gone to great financial lengths to create a perfected residential setting for purposes of your own contentment as source for 'invisible' safety from mainstream society ?
YES / NO

Question 1.19

Please **explain** your answer shortly by providing reasons.

Different forms of 'selves'

Question 1.20

How many **'selves'** do you project in your daily interactions with others? (For example, a 'sport self', 'lecturer self', 'friend self', 'son self', etc.)

Question 1.21

Please explain your answer shortly by providing **examples** of these different 'selves' and ***how they differ***.

(e.g. My 'student self' differs from my 'son/friend/family-self' because my family is not aware of my sexual orientation)

Example of 'self' (sport, student, friend, son, romantic relationship, etc.)

Shortly describe this 'self' (e.g. 'sport self' is more masculine, for example)

Stages/phases for gay identity construction

Question 1.22 Identify which of the following 'stages' or 'phases' you progressed through in constructing your identity as gay or lesbian (cf. Cass, 1984; 1990)		
Stage / Phase	✓	Own experiences
Acknowledgement of 'differentness' (may include feelings of confusion, fear, anxiety)		
Identity confusion / Shame (e.g. overcompensating through work, spending on home, car, clothes, appearance and/or denying identity as 'passing' phase)		
Tolerance through marginal involvement (<i>"I may be homosexual becomes</i> – I probably <i>am</i> homosexual", going to clubs, bars, gay churches, etc.)		
Acceptance and assumption of identity (may include 'coming out', sense of security, increase in number of gay friends, networks)		
Identity pride / synthesis (Confronting homophobia, advocating equality, 'celebrating' homosexuality)		
Question 1.23 How would you define 'the closet' or ' being in the closet '?		
Question 1.24 Have you ever willingly remained 'closeted' in your private/social environment?		
YES / NO		
Question 1.25 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.		

Question 2.1 Have you experienced any form of direct/personal discrimination at your university based on your sexual orientation?
YES / NO
Question 2.2 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
Question 2.3 Do your university/faculty/classes provide a safe environment for you to ‘live out’ your gay sexual orientation?
YES / NO
Question 2.4 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
Question 2.5 Have you ever willingly remained ‘closeted’ in your work environment?
YES / NO
Question 2.6 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.

Question 2.7 Does your behaviour in your work environment differ from that you exhibit in contexts outside the university?
YES / NO
Question 2.8 Please explain.
Empty space for answer
Question 2.9 With whom do you better interact with at the university – your male or female students? Please elaborate.
Empty space for answer

Academic field of specialisation

Question 2.10 Has your field of study and/or specific subjects in your program influenced your views and/or experiences of your sexuality?
YES / NO
Question 2.11 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
Empty space for answer

Question 2.19 Please elaborate.		
Question 2.20 What forms could (or should) such safe zones take?		
Form	X	Please elaborate
One-to-one consultation with a lecturer, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker		
Social activities for students: 'socials', reading groups, 'movie nights', study groups		
LGBTQ-office with trained counselors, legal personnel		
LGBTQ-courses (voluntary/involuntary)		

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Addendum D: Extracts from the transcribed interview with a gay male academic (Ridge)⁶²

SECTION C OPINION-RELATED QUESTIONS ON GAY IDENTITY

Question 1.1 Do you identify as gay?
YES AND NO (participant laughs)
Question 1.2 Shortly explain your answer in 1.1.
Certainly I have identified myself as a gay man since I was 20 years old. But I'm increasingly moving out of the 'box', I find sexuality identity categories problematic, when it comes to capturing the complexities of sexuality and desire, so, yes and no...So, I would rather identify as queer because of the fact that my own work [...] I cannot separate between my public and private sphere, I find this distinction purposed, problematic.
Question 1.3 Do you believe that it is important to form part of a gay group/community ?
YES AND NO
Question 1.4 Shortly explain your answer in 1.3.
You see I find the notion of gay community very problematic, any notion of community is problematic, because it presupposes some common thread that runs through all the members of community. And if this thread is that you sleep, or have sex or desire men, well I guess be it... The so-called community and gay spaces have been important to some extent in my life when I was moving around...because when you move from one socio-cultural context to the other, it's actually much easier to get to know people, on the basis of sexual identification...I think it's important to be part of queer spaces, spaces where sexuality is not an issue, whether you identify as a gay man or a lesbian, or queer, it's just fine. That is important.
Question 1.5 What are the positive features associated with forming part of such a visible group ?
...Well, the whole issue of 'safety', safe spaces, just to not have someone jump out of their seat when they see a man touching another man. I am very adamant not to conflate gay spaces with queer spaces, in other words...a queer space is not necessarily a gay space for me. It is open for all types of sexualities where, where even people who identify as heterosexual could also go there, but with the knowledge that non-normative sexualities will be there...where they wouldn't pass judgement.
Question 1.6 What are the negative features associated with forming part of such a visible group ?
I think...I have at times issues with the hypersexualisation of what I would call, 'gay spaces', male-only or dominated gay bars, which I have gone to.[...]When you are there alone, fairly the assumption is that you are there to hook-up and have sex with someone else,...I am not passing moral judgement, but sometimes I would like to go to a gay bar...and it feels nice in the gay bar with other gay men, just chat with people...my experience, especially when you show up on your own, it becomes like, you are available for much more than just chatting with someone else...I had this experience in [a South African city], especially in male-dominated gay bars.

Gay stereotypes

Question 1.7 Do you conform to specific stereotypes associated with 'being gay'?
See below
Question 1.8 Please select any of the following categories presented as examples of stereotypes which have been associated with gay men with which you associate/disassociate.

⁶² It should be noted that certain sections of the transcript have been omitted, in order to safeguard the identity of the participant.

Category of stereotype	X	Reason why you associate/disassociate yourself with this
Body consciousness (excessive exercise, focus on hairstyle, dress code, mannerisms)		[Laughing] I guess...Do I conform, then I'll say no, but, do other people feel that I conform to a stereotype, yes. I'm interested in physical exercise, not obsessed with it, I'm not obsessed with clothing...lots of other stereotypes with which gay men are associated. I have been perceived...as camp, because I like to be excessive in the way I say certain things. I am very open...it has more to do with my sexuality in the way I am very in your face, perhaps over-usage of wittiness, and at times being very hyper-critical of things. I don't control my voice, it ranges from darker tone to vacuous...
Friendships with women ('fag-hag'-relationship)	NO	I have female friends...of my best friends...are women, but they are definitely not fag-hags. It was a very balanced relationships, it is very interesting that my friendships were always me and the woman and another man, who isn't my partner. So, in other words, it was a trio of friends who go out, an interesting synergy between us.
Preoccupation with female writers, entertainers (actresses, singers)	NO	I guess, there...Singer yes, I have been a big fan of Maria Callas and opera...it is the only big celebrity, which I have been into. I read a lot of different books, but there are no divas.
Any other stereotypes you associate with 'being gay.'		I am very into reading, hyper-analysing, critical mind, but not in terms of, I mean I'm not, don't have a fetish for gadgets...[...] I don't think I can be easily put into one of the boxes. But, I'm sure if you ask friends of mine, they would easily box me somewhere...I think it has more to do with my hyper-critique, wittiness, making fun of people and behaviours.
Question 1.9 Based on your answer in 1.7-1.8, please identify at least three (3) SOURCES of such stereotypes or alternative sources you use to construct your identity (e.g. peer group, family, mass media – magazines, television shows, films)		
1 When I came out...It was the end-point of many years of reflection on my sexuality. My coming to terms, realisation, at that time I was exclusively attracted to men, wasn't particularly painful or problematic...that was fine. The socialisation into gay culture...it was through literature, I read everything I could read...anything which was literary and had a homosexual theme. That was the kind of sources which formed my gay sexual identity.		
2 I was a very evident self-identified gay man in my 20s, into my 30s when I actually realised I was attracted, partially, not as much as to men, but to women. I never had a relationship with a woman or even a sexual relationship with a woman, but at that specific time of my life I was in a relationship with a man and everything was fine. But then I met a woman, but there was much more of just liking this woman...So that was a time which coincided with me reading Judith Butler and queer theory, Eve Sedgwick and whole queer theoretical literature. I realised sexual desire and sexual identity were two different things. This was something I very much conflated, equated, I had completely bought into 'if you desire men, then you're gay', after reading queer theory, being gay is an identity category with its own history and on its own, whereas the fact that you desire another man, cannot really be 'boxed' into this identity category. So at the moment,...the influence I have is mainly from my theoretical readings.		
...I also still read literature on queer theory, it has a huge influence in the way in which I see myself as academic and in my private life...so that's why I'm more reluctant to identify as a gay man, although I have no problems with the category, but I also believe that it is this category which has backfired – I guess I have been out as a gay man too long to actually consider to going back and do something else, or experiment with something else. That's why when I teach...I always say that categories are fine up to a certain limit, for me when I was 19 or 20, but then you realise it obscures certain aspects of your sexuality to play out, if you've just identified too long with a specific identity.		

Gay identity as 'public'

Question 1.10 Do you attend public places (bars, clubs or churches) of which the patrons are predominantly/only gay men?
YES
Question 1.11 Please elaborate by providing examples.
See above
Question 1.12 If you answered yes in 1.10, what were your experiences in attending these public places?
I remember the first time I went to a gay bar...it was very extremely exciting first of all because [the broader environment] was very conservative, where homosexuality was still taboo...but it was exciting, it was a whole sense of doing something which wasn't allowed, the bar's door was this...dark door, where you had to press a button and they open the door...of course I was young, 20, a lot of attention, acknowledgement, boosting for one's self-esteem, was nice – I'm here, and all these men are also looking for other men' and I'm a sexual object – there is a duality, now I find it more, it's not as appealing as then – it was a new thing. It made me very happy...I wouldn't sleep with all the men, but the fact that I was acknowledged as sexual object was great.

Gay identities as 'private'

Question 1.13 Please describe your residential setting in terms of its content, design and layout.
I live in [a South African city], in a house...I'm a minimalist, I have very few pieces of furniture, ultra-modern, and couple of antique pieces of furniture. Mixture of Western and African art...Very clean in terms of the style, I chose it, because it had a view...Important to have a view...
Question 1.14 Does your residential setting serve as a safer environment than an external context?
Not a big fan of 'safe', when I used safe I refer to gay bars... [It is] very difficult to break into the house. Whereas it is impenetrable from the street – when you're in, it doesn't have as much of these safety characteristics...In terms of my sexual orientation, I feel safe everywhere, I don't distinguish, I wouldn't make that separation from how I feel in the house from how I feel somewhere else, I feel the same way here at the university.
Question 1.15 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons.
[See above.]
Question 1.16 Do (or have you ever) gone to great financial lengths to create a perfected residential setting for purposes of entertainment of gay friends ?
NO
Question 1.17 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons.
The previous owners did much of the work, but I like entertaining in my house in my kitchen – would like to change this, because I like to cook, and put in a fireplace. But there is a fine line between functionality and aesthetic needs, because my parents said that since I was [young age], I had a certain developed sense of taste, simple, yet expensive things, designer things, it has more to do with few objects connected to the house to have, never to many...

Different forms of 'selves'

Question 1.20 How many 'selves' do you project in your daily interactions with others? (For example, a 'sport self', 'lecturer self', 'friend self', 'son self', etc.)
We definitely perform identities in many ways, but it is more dependent on the other person you interact with of whether your sexual identity will play a bigger role, or whether it is just inherent in the communicative event. I would say certain things with some people and not with others...but this is not necessarily based on my sexual orientation.

So no, I'm very much queer with friends, my father and my students and at the university and anywhere else...there are shades of queerness, some aspects become more salient and others more grounded, but definitely when I arrived at [my current university]...it was clear that I was a self-proclaimed gay man. ...My colleagues know, in the same way a lot of the conversation with my friends revolves around sex, the sexualisation of public spaces – talk about sex, sexual identity and men. Most of my students have projects on gender and sexuality.	
Question 1.21 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples of these different 'selves' and how they differ. (e.g. My 'lecturer self' differs from my 'son/friend/family-self' because my family is not aware of my sexual orientation)	
Example of 'self' (sport, student, friend, son, romantic relationship, etc.)	Shortly describe this 'self' (for example, 'sport self' is more masculine)
[See above.]	

Stages/phases for gay identity construction

Question 1.22 Identify which of the following 'stages' or 'phases' you progressed through in constructing your identity as gay or lesbian (cf. Cass, 1984; 1990)		
Stage / Phase	✓	Own experiences
Acknowledgement of 'differentness' (may include feelings of confusion, fear, anxiety)		I felt that I was different from a very young age – 4 or 5 years at the time. And throughout this period I was convinced that I was in the wrong body, that I was in fact a girl, I always experimented with the female roles – the princess. I was always engendering the female roles and was actually a transgender individual.
Identity confusion / Shame (e.g. overcompensating through work, spending on home, car, clothes, appearance and/or denying identity as 'passing' phase)		I experienced shame as a child in primary school – I was ostracised and teased. But I don't like psychological models...I just worked hard to be the best [not necessarily overcompensate], but not in terms of masculinity. I always cultivated my interests through reading, and being on my own. But I was a very happy child, child on his own. The ostracism ended between 12 and 18 years of age, because my classmates realised and understood that they had much more to gain from me, because I was able to understand the work and explain it to them. So in a way I was exploited by them.
Tolerance through marginal involvement ("I <i>may</i> be homosexual becomes – I probably <i>am</i> homosexual", going to clubs, bars, gay churches, etc.)		[See discussion on clubs – public spaces.]
Acceptance and assumption of identity (may include 'coming out', sense of security, increase in number of gay friends, networks)		I was most comfortable with my own body between my 20s and 30s.
Identity pride / synthesis (Confronting homophobia, advocating equality, 'celebrating' homosexuality)		That is precisely where I am at the moment. Teaching about gender and sexuality...I'm not a gay activist, I am very critical of the gay movement in South Africa. I feel that I display an academic activism through the study of gender and sexuality, I

		try to make it very visible in the academic environment and that's why I give very 'provocative' talks with provocative titles. I'm not a member of any outside gay group, although I do take part in...Pride [marches] as academic.
Question 1.23 How would you define 'the closet' or ' being in the closet '?		
(Laughing) Well, I find this metaphor very problematic – 'coming out of where and into what?' [...] It's also very much based on this idea that we have an identity that suddenly crops up and suddenly you jump out of the closet...It is so narrow...I guess, and this is something I have huge problems with gay activism...It is reproduced by the activists themselves...In many ways it reproduces a heteronormative way of seeing the world...it's as if everyone else is out and you are somehow not...it's a very minoritising process.		
I however believe that for some people it is important to say that they 'came out' for their parents. In an ideal world, there is no need to come out, in the same way heterosexual people don't come out suddenly at 18 and tell their parents, 'Mom, dad, I'm heterosexual!', and it's like why?...I did do this when I came out for my mother, for her it wasn't very groundbreaking for my parents...they knew it all throughout...yet they don't really understand the practical implications...they had an idea that homosexuality was something confined to the private space, they did however realise it's not only a private thing, but very much a public and political idea [...]		
...I have issues with the notions of acceptance, tolerance is even worse...the question is, why bring up the question of acceptance in terms of sexuality,...why would acceptance be salient for homosexuality? Rather than in terms of race, because this may be taboo to say 'I accept you because you're black. I accept you because you're white', but it's absolutely fine to talk about or say 'I accept you because your homosexual'...I don't actually want your acceptance at all. It's like giving a token of pity.		
Question 1.24 Have you ever willingly remained 'closeted' in your private/social environment?		
YES / NO		
Question 1.25 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.		
[See above.]		

SECTION D OPINION RELATED QUESTIONS ON ROLE AS LECTURER

Question 2.1 Have you experienced any form of direct/personal discrimination at your university based on your sexual orientation?
[See response below.]
Question 2.2 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
This is a difficult question, because it takes many forms...it's also very difficult to prove whether something was said or done on the basis of sexuality or other bases...all [of] universities [where I studied] did not have a problem with me being gay, or rather non-heterosexual, because it was at this time I started seeing myself as queer rather than gay...[my current university], mmm...I was told by my students that some of the lecturers struggled with my openly non-heterosexual agenda [...] if you are a formal [academic], or you do formal research, they do not fully understand the practical reasons or implications of why I do what I do. There was never an incident, an overt discrimination, but sometimes what is not said, or the sighs, rolling of the eyes at certain meetings are more telling than any words...
Question 2.3 Do(es) your university/faculty/classes provide a safe environment for you to 'live out' your gay sexual orientation?
YES AND NO

Question 2.4 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
I'm always worried when I begin a year about the first and third year students who I will be teaching for the first time. I don't have a problem with honours-students, because by then they know me [...]. The third year students worry me at times, because it is the first time they study [themes related to gender and sexuality studies]...But there was never a problem. I am waiting for the moment where someone will evoke religion to go against the topic that I covered...I don't know how the university is going to react, because the problem is, the respect of everyone's rights is going to clash, if I were to expect your religious rights, and your religious rights say X, and my rights on sexual orientation and rights as academic to teach the course, there may not be a compromise. The only compromise is the one of a discursive compromise. You come to class, you cringe, you just have to deal with it...the same way I don't shoot down a comment that has been uttered on the basis of traditional beliefs or religious beliefs. I am very happy to have them voice it in class, and then voice my view.
Question 2.5 Have you ever willingly remained 'closeted' in your work environment?
I'm always open about my sexuality.
Question 2.6 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.
[See above.]
Question 2.7 Have you ever willingly censored yourself during classes/presentations/colloquia pertaining to statements associated with your own sexual orientation, or homosexuality in general?
I don't think I have. I use anecdotes from my own life, because I think it makes it easier for students to relate to themselves. Because in the way I see myself to 'shock' them, and then I'll do repair work...shock is good, it breaks them out of their entrenched routines, it's like an earthquake, it unsettles you. You go home and think about it...it's all about unsettling common sense...I don't believe in censorship.
Question 2.8 Please explain your answer shortly by providing reasons and/or examples.
[See above.]
Question 2.9 Does your behaviour in your work environment differ from what you exhibit in contexts outside the university?
[See previous questions.]
Question 2.10 Please explain.
[See above.]
Question 2.11 With whom do you better interact at work – your male or female colleagues ? Please elaborate.
It depends on the different people – I don't interact well with male colleagues.

Academic field of specialisation

Question 2.12 Has your field of study and/or specific subjects in your programme influenced your views and/or experiences of your sexuality?
[See above.]
Question 2.13 Please explain your answer shortly by providing examples.
[See above.]
Question 2.14 Do you think it is beneficial to have a gay or lesbian lecturer to lecture university courses?
YES
Question 2.15 Please explain your answer shortly.
It's necessary to invite my students' point of view – both those who identify as non-heterosexual and

heterosexual, they need to see it's part of diversity, just as it is good to have different lecturers in terms of race, and nationality. Good to demystify this entrenched belief that sexuality takes place behind the closed doors of your home – it's such a difficult belief to just counter. Heterosexuals don't realise that they are constantly flaunting their sexuality – them being married, their kids...it's so hegemonic. So dominant that people have stopped seeing it, so it's good for me to be openly non-heterosexual, brings sexuality into public sphere...If I were not open about my sexuality, I believe I would be doing a great disservice to the next generation of [social scientists]. It's a thoroughly political act.
Question 2.16 Do you think it would be beneficial to have a course on LGBTQ⁶³-issues?
YES
Question 2.17 Please explain your answer shortly.
Based on a conversation with colleagues of mine, we believe that courses on gender and sexuality [...] should be made compulsory to demystify the naturalness of heterosexuality.
Question 2.18 List three (3) sections you would like to see included in such a course .
Feminist theory showing how it has developed
LGBTIA, queer development
Readings of Rubin, Butler, Halperin. It is important to read the radical thinkers of the 80s.
Question 2.19 List three (3) things your current university could do to address issues faced by LGBTQ-individuals on campus.
I am worried that [my university] doesn't have a clear structure in place of what will happen based on homophobia, what will be the machinery to be set in motion. If this happens, how do you go about it, they need to take it seriously, I might be wrong, it's my perception...Especially for a student, there has to be a clear procedure, not policy. Policies are fine, they are symbolic...
Question 2.20 Do you believe that it would be beneficial to have safe zones (spaces) for gay lecturers and students on the university campus?
It is a clash in my mind between the ideal world and the real world. In an ideal world we should not be kept safe when for example we walk hand-in-hand in [a mall] with another person, irrespective of their gender, man with a man, with a woman, or a transgender person, and no one should react. But unfortunately, that's not the reality. I think that safer zones are good in the short term – a good strategy to sensitise people, make them aware of this, and foster the idea of respect of each other as human beings, based on who we want to identify as. If safe zones are here in 20 years' time, it means we have failed somewhere...[...]
Question 2.21 Please elaborate.
[See above.]
Question 2.22 What forms could (or should) such safe zones take?
[See above.]

⁶³ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer

Addendum E: Extracts from the self-administered questionnaire completed by a gay male student (Russell)⁶⁴

SECTION C OPINION-RELATED QUESTIONS ON GAY IDENTITY

Question 1.1 Do you identify as gay? Yes
YES
Question 1.2 Shortly explain your answer in 1.1.
Yes, I identify as gay. I have no problem with disclosing my sexual orientation, given that I consider it of no less or more relevance than the colour of my skin. As such, my sexual orientation is not something I <i>identify</i> with, per se. In that respect I am sometimes almost more comfortable with the concept of being 'homosexual' as opposed to 'gay'. Obviously I don't use the word homosexual since it is old fashioned and very tainted with negative connotations of abnormality. However, it does actually come closer to a true description of my sexual orientation and the way in which I live my life when it comes to matters related to my sexual orientation. "Homosexual" entails not much more than just the accidental gender of the person I feel physically, emotionally, romantically attracted to. The word 'gay' implies a lifestyle or some generic description of behaviours, opinions, views and a culture that I have to ascribe to because I am romantically attracted to a person of the same sex. By definition, "gay" makes me more open to being stereotyped than "homosexual". Beyond that, my identification with my sexual orientation is none. By implication this would mean that I do not subscribe to gay culture – and therefore identifying as gay – in as far as it involves more than the gender of my potential partner / gender focus of my general attraction patterns – does not exist for me. I actively pursue a life that is not defined by my sexual orientation. That being said – it is very challenging to keep it that way, and order to survive and navigate through life in a way that is psychologically balanced and healthy, does require some endorsement of gay culture.
Question 1.3 Do you believe that is important to form part of a gay group/community ?
Yes – to a degree.
Question 1.4 Shortly explain your answer in 1.3.

⁶⁴ The participant (Russell), sent this self-administered questionnaire via email in an Acrobat Reader (PDF)-format. The latter part of the questionnaire was omitted, since the participant's actual name appears in some of the answers. The line-spacing has been left unchanged.

Yes, it is important to be exposed to, and have access to a gay group and community, but there is no real importance in *forming part* of a gay group/community as a permanent point of identity reference. In this instance it is only important to form part, temporarily, when:

a) you have recently accepted your own sexuality and you're ready to meet other gay people, and
 b) for a short period of time (no more than a year or two is necessary). Membership to a gay group / a gay community facilitates a young gay individual's survival as required by a very real need for support, understanding, guidance and someone to talk to and ask questions. However, once you've become acquainted with "how the system operates", how to read behavioural cues, body language (collectively: your "gaydar") and most of the things no one could (anticipate) preparing you for, membership to a gay group/community is no longer necessary. Prolonged exposure/membership beyond the time necessary to "upskill" and "become totally comfortable" with your sexual orientation – could stand to diminish/inhibit the development of your *own* frame of "sexual" reference and gender identity, let alone your identity in general. Individual authenticity can get lost in over-dependence / over identification with a gay group/community. That being said – the importance of having one or two gay *friends* (as opposed to group/community membership) is however invaluable. Once I could read and understand social cues unique to gay life and other gay men – I re-integrated heterosexual men and women in my friendship circles to start my responsibility of enlightenment. I also felt it very necessary to have this balance, since I believe that any gay man need the support, acceptance and sources of identification with straight male identities since they offer a lot in terms of general *male gender* identity. I therefore saw three "periods" in the development, or rather, the assimilation of my gay identity. Before coming out, there was poor, if not non-existent identification with my latent gay orientation and other gay men/women, and gay "unfriendly" straight men. Once I came out, accepted it and assimilated it, a period followed in which I went to "gay school" as marked by an almost exclusively gay friendship circle. Once I had the tools, felt the confidence and could start carving my own way, I returned again to include straight friends, male and female. But this time around, there was a balance between heterosexual (but gay friendly) and gay friends (with no ties to the gay community as such).

Question 1.5

What are the **positive features** associated with forming part of such a **visible group**?

At this point in my life: absolutely nothing. Previously, there were some benefits as described above.

Question 1.6

What are the **negative features** associated with forming part of such a **visible group**?

- 1) Greater vulnerability and higher risk associated with assault/victimization
- 2) Positive, active, conscious development / adoption and subsequent reinforcement of negative stereotypes/destructive behaviour, especially in cases where an individual presents with poor

ego development.
3) Strong associations with such a visible group makes it exceedingly difficult for people with a limited understanding of a gay sexual orientation to get to know you for the man or woman that you are, and not “the gay” person.

Gay stereotypes

Question 1.7		
Do you conform to specific stereotypes associated with 'being gay'?		
This is a very difficult question to answer as it is stated above, I'll break down the answer as follows, and you can use the answer that best suits your intention with the question:		
- Do I look stereotypically gay, yes, quite a bit. I have some fairly androgynous features, and I have never been super butch. - Do I exhibit behaviour that is considered stereotypical, but <i>positive</i> (e.g., <i>musically inclined/artistic</i>) YES - but it's spontaneously expressed, and not through 'adopting' behaviours /attitudes through socialization with, or conditioning by the gay community. - Do I exhibit behaviour that is considered negatively stereotypical (drug use/sexual practice without discretion?): NO - Thus, do I conform to specific stereotypes associated with being gay: Yes and No.		
Question 1.8		
Please select any of the following categories presented as examples of stereotypes which have been associated with gay men with which you associate/dissociate with.		
Category of stereotype	X	Reason why you associate/disassociate yourself with this
Body consciousness (excessive exercise, focus on hairstyle, dress code, mannerisms)		I do not subscribe to any of the stereotypes listed on the left. Where I <i>do</i> fit, in part of in full, what is considered a stereotype, it is a result of my own personal taste (dress), my authentic personality (the mannerisms I do happen to have) or a choice I make for my own health (going to gym).
Friendships with women ('fag-hag'-relationship)		No. I don't have any fag-hag relationships
Preoccupation with female writers, entertainers (actresses, singers)		None. Ok, perhaps it's worthwhile to say that I use to be properly obsessed with Enya as a teenager, but the basis of that preoccupation was the musicality of her work. The fact that I thought she's elegant and represents a "classiness" with which I could associate, was subordinate to the musical fascination. Around age 24 I lost this preoccupation, as I grew somewhat tired of the repetitive nature of the music. Since

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		then I have not had any preoccupations with anyone, but instead shifted to having preoccupations with objects/activities.
Any other stereotypes you associate with 'being gay.'		Other stereotypes, some of which are well known, others becoming more prevalent, would be: • Excessive identification with/indulgence in theatre, musicals (in gay men predominantly) • Dysfunctional (in establishing successful gay relationships) pre-occupations with courting/having sex with straight men (for gay man, and some gay women) • Culture slaves ("Kultuur-vrate") • Strong identification with form and subsequent value judgment: i.e., material wealth/financial status of individuals • Vegan/Vegetarian eating habits • Alternative medical approaches [homeopathy/spiritual healers/alternative, eastern medicine] (in both gay men and women) • Alternative (non-orthodox) spirituality, and or agnosticism/atheism • Well known, but a strange stereotypical behaviour I find quite entertaining, yet inexplicable: gay men referring to each other using female descriptors/nouns: "Oe my suster! / Oh that bitch, <i>she</i> is something else!" I would like to mention that these stereotypes or stereotypical behaviour I have listed above come from my own perceptions of the stereotypes 'within the stereotypes'. I don't think straight people, at large, are very aware of these. Although, I do find that straight people who are more often exposed to gay men and women, are starting to pick up on these "insider" stereotypes, as indicated by their tendency – in the absence of other clues – to infer sexual orientation on the basis of some of these new stereotypes.
Question 1.9 Based on your answer in 1.7-1.8, please identify at least three (3) SOURCES of such stereotypes or alternative sources you use to construct your identity (e.g. peer group, family, mass media – magazines,		

television shows, films)
The stereotypes I have listed come from my interactions with gay men and women over the years. The primary sources of MY identity formation are listed below in 1, 2 and 3
1) My family
2) My friends, both straight and gay, male and female
3) Feedback from people with whom you associate through either mutual interest in an activity or whatever other activity.

Gay identity as 'public'

Question 1.10 Do you attend public places (bars, clubs or churches) of which the patrons are predominantly/only gay men?
NO
Question 1.11 Please elaborate by providing examples.
I used to go clubbing when I was younger. Both straight and gay clubs. I have also been to a number of gay church congregations. However, it fulfils no purpose anymore – and certainly aren't places that are conducive to social networking or creating a sense of belonging. Not even the gay church for that matter.
Question 1.12 If you answered yes in 1.10, what were your experiences in attending these public places?
Awful. At a gay bar/club: striking up casual conversation without having someone think you just want to have sex, is nearly impossible. People are not really receptive to neutral conversation in a gay club or bar, because the undercurrent of sexual tension and general "on-the-prowl" behaviour does not provide room for interaction to be perceived as having a friendly, non-sexual motive. In addition, from a practical point of view it is quite difficult to converse with someone over very loud music. You're often forced to enter someone's personal space to be heard, which, from a non-verbal communication point of view, sets the scene for misinterpretation. E.g. having to lean in on someone, cup your hand, touch his face and speak close to his ear, to make small talk = misfit between behaviour, and motive, unless the motive <i>is</i> to flirt. Either way, it is difficult to say if the practicalities of the situation cause the misinterpretation because it doesn't allow for casual conversation, or whether the context (bar, club) per se, is generally not a good place to make new friends. I think it's a combination of both. So, unless you're there to simply dance and enjoy yourself, with the emphasis on <i>yourself</i>, it is quite unpleasant and boring, unless you're looking for a hook-up. On the other hand, if I am being approached, it's almost always sexually charged. I also feel

that the general atmosphere is very competitive, sexually charged and extremely superficial. At age 30, I can think of better ways of enjoying myself/finding the stimulation I seek.

As for the gay church – very surprisingly – experiences have been equally negative. Gay congregations often consist of small, intimate and close-knit groups. Hence, they're quite "clicky". Sadly, one would think that shared faith and worship might provide a basis for establishing new friendships, but, in my experience of both a gay church in Johannesburg, as well as one in Pretoria – I was not very warmly welcomed, and I was met with quite some defensiveness / animosity. I concluded that I must have somehow posed a threat to the unity of existing units, or something to that effect. I don't know. Other than that – I went to one church a couple of times, but left it after going for tea and other refreshments following a service. I saw a pile of the EXIT lying in the church hall. I have no judgment of EXIT, but no other church displays copies/hands out copies of the Huisgenoot, or Sarie, or Junk Mail or Die Sondag-newspaper or whatever other magazine after a church service. Let alone a newspaper with sex classifieds. Not really contextually appropriate I thought, and in my view very stereotypical. In summary, the whole church and networking experience was not particularly convincing if you find yourself amongst a few guys having a chuckle over the enormous dick on the last page of EXIT – moments after a church service. I couldn't take the church seriously.