



Investigating religious discourses of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom

LS Makoti



orcid.org 0000-0001-8296-5575

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree *Master of Arts in Sociology* at the North-West
University

Supervisor: Ms C Cilliers
Assistant supervisor: Prof J Rothmann

Examination: November 2020
Student number: 24180815

DECLARATION

I, **Louisa Shalati Makoti**, declare that this dissertation as well as the work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I further declare that:

- i. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for the MA degree in Sociology at the North-West University (NWU), Potchefstroom;
- ii. Where any part of this dissertation has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at the NWU or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- iii. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed and referenced;
- iv. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this dissertation is entirely my own work;
- v. I have acknowledged all main sources of assistance;
- vi. Where the dissertation is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- vii. None of this work or its parts have been published or submitted before.

Signed: LS Makoti

Dated: 16 Dec. 20

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been possible without the support and contribution of the following people.

- First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Ms Carole Cilliers. Thank you for your continuous support. Your patience and encouragement made all the difference.
- Second, The Foundation Study Fund for South African Students, also known as Zuid-Afrikaanse Studenten (SSF) Scholarship, for funding my Summer Course Programme (Introduction to Sexuality) at the University of Amsterdam, Netherlands.
- Third, my research participants, for their time and contribution.
- And last, but not least, I want to thank my family, especially my grandmother (Lina Baloyi), uncle (Jacob Baloyi) and aunt (Audrey Baloyi) for their support throughout my studies. I appreciate you all.

ABSTRACT

Pentecostal Christianity is a growing movement in South Africa and Africa, and it has had an influence on the discourse on sexuality (Van Klinken, & Obadare, 2018:559). Its perspective on homosexuality has been that homosexuality is “un-African” and “un-Christian” (Van Klinken, & Obadare, 2018:563). These Christian discourses argue that heterosexuality is the only legitimate sexuality and have contributed to the exclusion and discrimination of gays and lesbians and other non-normative sexualities. Pastors in South Africa, such as Angus Buchan, have referred to gays and lesbians as sodomites and have blamed them for South Africa’s challenges and natural disasters, such as the water crisis that affected the City of Cape Town in 2017 (Hunters, 2017). Most religious discourses maintain that heterosexuality is the norm, but there have been noticeable shifts. For instance, in 2020, the Methodist Church and the Catholic Church came out to support LGBTQI+ rights and same-sex civil unions (Lindeque, 2020; CBC News, 2020). This is important because these developments contribute to the growing number of alternative and positive discourses on sexuality.

The aim of this study was to investigate the religious discourses on (homo)sexuality among young adults in Pentecostal Churches in Potchefstroom. This was done by analysing the relevant literature and by adopting a queer theoretical position. Furthermore, it employed in-depth data collection methods, including conducting face-to-face individual interviews and group discussions. The data analysed showed that participants’ perceptions of sexuality were largely influenced by their Christian beliefs. Participants’ views of sexuality were mostly heteronormative. These views were shaped by Christian discourse, which defined heterosexuality as the only natural and normal sexuality, while alternative sexualities such as LGBTQI+ identities were constructed negatively. For example, gay and lesbian identities were associated with sin, paedophilia, and being lost and deceived. Even though LGBTQI+ sexualities were constructed negatively most of the time, a few alternative discourses emerged. For example, some participants quoted the Constitution of South Africa to point out that gays and lesbians should be treated with equality, just like everyone else. This positive attitude towards LGBTQI+ persons is also visible in religious settings. For example, more liberal churches are welcoming queers than used to be the case.

Keywords: Sexuality, religion, Christianity, Pentecostalism, discourses, sexual identities, alternative discourse, constructivism, heteronormativity, homophobia, queer

ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
ACDP	African Christian Democratic Party
ASSAF	Academy of Science of South Africa
ATR	African Traditional Religions
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
HUMCC	Hope and Unity Metropolitan Community Church
IAM	Inclusive and Affirming Ministries
ISAs	Ideological State Apparatuses
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex and others
RSA	Repressive Status Apparatuses
TA	Thematic Analysis

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	2
1.1.1. Alternative discourses and changing attitudes	5
1.1.2. Problem statement	6
1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	9
1.2.1. Research questions	9
1.2.2. Research objectives	9
1.3. THEORETICAL ARGUMENT	10
1.4. METHODOLOGY	11
1.4.1. Study design.....	12
1.4.2. Study population, sample, and units of analysis	12
1.4.3. Data collection	13
1.4.4. Data Analysis.....	15
1.4.5. Ethical considerations.....	15
1.4.6. Limitations of the study	17
1.4.7. Significance of the study	18
1.5. CHAPTER LAYOUT	18
2. INTRODUCTION	20
2.1. A SHORT HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES AND SEXUALITY IN AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICA	21
2.1.1. Homoeroticism and sexuality in pre-colonial Africa	21
2.1.2. Colonialism and the import of homophobia to South Africa and Africa	22
2.1.3. Religion and sexuality in apartheid South Africa	24
2.1.4. Changes and continuities in religious discourses of sexuality in post-apartheid South Africa.....	27
2.2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SEXUALITY	30
2.2.1. Essentialism vs. Social Constructionism	30
2.2.2. A social constructionist approach to sexuality	31
2.2.2.1. The contribution of gay liberationists and lesbian feminists to critical sex studies..	31
2.2.2.2. Gay liberationists: pride, coming out, and critiquing gender roles	31
2.2.2.3. Lesbian feminists: compulsory heterosexuality and disadvantaging women.....	33
2.2.2.4. The limits of identity	34
2.2.2.5. Foucault and the History of Sexuality	36
2.3. QUEER THEORY: A CONCEPTUALISATION AND CRITIQUE.....	38
2.3.1. Queer theory: A general conceptualisation.....	38
2.3.2. Queer critique of heterosexuality	42
2.3.3. Critique of queer	43

2.4. CONCLUSION	44
3. INTRODUCTION	45
3.1. THE META-THEORETICAL FOCUS	46
3.1.1. Social constructivism	46
3.1.2. Interpretivism.....	48
3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	49
3.2.1. Sampling procedures	51
3.2.1.1. Purposive sampling.....	51
3.2.1.2. Snowball sampling	52
3.2.2. Data collection methods	53
3.2.3. Data analysis	56
3.3. PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION	60
3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	61
3.5. CONCLUSION	62
4. INTRODUCTION	63
4.1. DEFINING SEXUALITY	63
4.1.1. Sexuality before and after finding Christ: Nash's story	63
4.1.2. Heteronormative definitions of sexuality	66
4.1.3. Justifying heteronormative views.....	68
a) Biology	68
b) Gender roles – feminine and masculine	68
4.2. CONSTRUCTIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY.....	70
4.2.1. General views and definitions of homosexuality	70
4.2.2. Constructions of queers	73
a) The Sinner	73
b) The Lost Sheep	76
c) Restoration: From gay to straight.....	78
4.3. ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES: THE GAY CHRISTIAN	82
4.4. CONCLUSION	85
5. INTRODUCTION	87
5.1. CONCLUDING REMARKS: CHAPTERS AND FINDINGS SUMMARY	87
5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES	95
5.3. FINAL SUMMARY	96
LIST OF SOURCES.....	98
APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT	111
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE	112

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Both sexuality¹ and religion are influential aspects of human existence. Moreover, there is a strong connection between the two and religion plays a significant role in shaping the sexual lives of humans (Zuckerman & Manning, 2005:1; Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:5; Verona, 2011:190). Different religions approach sexuality in different ways, hence the multitude of perspectives, oppositions, and debates regarding the relationship between sexuality and religion. For instance, some religions are “sex-positive” in that they see sex as natural, whereas other religions tend to be more “sex-negative” and typically associate sex with sin (Zuckerman & Manning, 2005:1 & 2). In addition, when it comes to the subject of sexuality, religions have traditionally been the gatekeepers of sexual morality and practices (Hunt & Jung, 2009:157; Murray *et al.*, 2007:222). In brief, religious beliefs influence sexual practices and this reciprocal relationship requires sociological inquiry.

Sexuality comprises a personal and a social component. According to Bartelink and Meinema (2014:6), it is difficult to separate the two. For instance, people usually (but not always) have sex in their intimate relations with other persons, which is personal (Hunt & Jung, 2009:157). However, sexuality becomes social once, through their discourses², social actors (such as religious actors) influence how people view their sexual lives (Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:6). The rules and values regarding sex (communicated through discourses) link the personal value of pleasure to that of the larger social group a person belongs to. Some of this social aspect of sexuality may be hidden due to the regulatory nature of rules. Nevertheless, the link may be noticeable in the way in which individuals use their social groups (such as a religious faith group) as a point of reference to evaluate their sexual conduct (Mcfarland *et al.*, 2011:300).

This study focuses on the social component of sexuality by investigating the dominant

¹ Sexuality refers to “humans’ capacity for sexual feelings and includes sexual orientation, sexual identity, social gender roles and sexual activity. Sexuality is an integral part of all persons, a basic need and an aspect of being human. Sexuality includes eroticism, pleasure, intimacy and reproduction” (ASSAF, 2015:18).

² Clarke (2005:148) defines discourse as “communication of any kind around/about/on a particular social or culturally recognisable theme – contemporary and/or historically. Discourse includes word choice, arguments, warrants, claims, motives, and other purposeful, persuasive features of language, visuals and various artefacts; discourse frames debates, influences perceptions, and creates objects of knowledge”.

religious discourses on homosexuality³ among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom in the North-West Province of South Africa. The section to follow provides the background to and reasons for this focus, followed by the problem statement, research questions and objectives, and an overview of methodological choices and theoretical framing of the study. From the discussion, it becomes clear that Christianity plays a significant role in shaping the sexual lives and identities of young adults in Pentecostal churches. It also highlights the heteronormative nature of religious discourses on sexuality, as well as its harmful effects.

1.1. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Aldridge (2013:165), many religions regard sexuality as “the strongest irrational force”, which explains why religions seek to manage it. The latter often takes the form of strict regulations prohibiting certain sexual behaviours and identities. This is a characteristic of most of the major religions and the case with Christianity (Zuckerman & Manning, 2005:8). Most Christian discourses value sexuality within a married, heterosexual relationship, which is seen as the ideal. These discourses construct sexual practices and identities that are different from the ideal norm as deviant. Sexuality is, therefore, framed heteronormatively within most religious discourses.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other (LGBTQI+) identities⁴, for example, are often labelled as a curse to be eradicated (Kaoma, 2012:4). This presents many problems for individuals who do not conform to the ideal or identify as heterosexuals, because the opinions of religious leaders hold much value, especially when it comes to matters related to the family and relationships (Bompani & Brown, 2015:120). In addition, such discourses are troubling to LGBTQI+ rights because they limit the plurality of meanings associated with choices in terms of sexual and gender lifestyles (Ibid.,121). According to Geiger (2013:249), religious doctrines often discriminate against or exclude “a range of sexual expression and gender identities”. As a result, LGBTQI+ individuals are condemned to a life of distress because they are perceived to practice “unnatural” sexual acts (Natividade & De Oliveira, 2013:611). Discourses such as these portray those who do not identify with

³ ASSAF (2015:19) uses the term homosexuality for “individuals who identify as, for example, ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’, or ‘homosexual’, or whose attractions and behaviours focus exclusively or mainly on members of the same sex”. This is how this term will be used in this study.

⁴ LGBTQI+ is an umbrella term which aims to include a range of sexual and gender identities, and excludes heterosexuality.

heterosexuality, practice “natural sexual acts”, or conform to religious regulations regarding sexuality in a negative light (Ibid.).

Those who do not conform to religiously-constructed sexualities, including gays and lesbians are pushed to the margins of society. This is achieved through the social labelling of those who are perceived as deviant and are separated from the rest (McIntosh, 1968:183). It creates an insider/outsider logic, which excludes and oppresses (Fuss, 1991:2). As a consequence, acts of violence are sometimes perpetrated against those who do not conform, including LGBTQI+ persons, in order to “correct” their sexual orientation. This is evident from numerous cases in South Africa where gays and lesbians (mostly lesbians) have been subjected to what is commonly known as “corrective rape”. Perpetrators of such crimes commit them supposedly in an attempt to “cure” gays and lesbians and to force them to identify with heterosexuality (Tamale, 2014a:167).

Religious institutions, therefore, regulate sexuality through external force, but also through internalised guilt, which intensifies self-surveillance (Davies, 1997:21; Tamale, 2014a:162). There are sanctions and consequences for deviance, including guilt and shame, which regulates the sexual behaviour of people (Hardy & Raffaelli, 2003:732; Murray *et al.*, 2007:222; Verona, 2011:188). Moreover, some people might conform to religious discourses for fear of experiencing homophobic attacks. LGBTQI+ individuals might be afraid to reveal their sexual identities in their religious communities lest it bring judgment and prejudice (Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010:850).

South African sexual minorities also experience same-sex discrimination in the form of microaggressions at home, school, and church, despite the fact that South Africa has a constitution that protects their human rights (Francis & Reygan, 2016:181; Nell & Shapiro, 2011:5; Iyayambwa, 2012:51). In South Africa, pastors such as Angus Buchan, Oscar Bougardt and Lazarus Pillay have been vocal about their condemnation of homosexuality. Pastor Buchan, for instance, believes that homosexuality is a sickness that can be cured through prayer (Hunter, 2017; Davis, 2017). In her article entitled “The Cape backlash against Angus Buchan continues”, Stone (2018) reports how Buchan describes Cape Town as a “modern-day Sodom and Gomorrah”, the two biblical cities that were destroyed by God because its people engaged in homosexual activities. According to Buchan, the recent drought in Cape Town was God’s way of punishing people for their homosexual behaviour and for their moral indigence (Hunter, 2017).

The example of Angus Buchan's pronouncements is indicative of a number of things. First, the most influential religious discourses of sexuality in South Africa and the rest of Africa are, to a large extent, Christian discourses (Van Klinken & Obadare, 2018:3). Christianity is the religion with the largest number of followers in Africa, with more than 60% of the population being Christian. As the continent with the fastest growing population rate, this translates to the continent with the most Christians globally (Van Klinken & Obadare, 2018:3). Second, the example also points to the changing nature of African Christianity as a result of increasing Pentecostalisation. Although contemporary Christianity in Africa is very diverse and all denominations are thriving, there has been enormous growth in the number of Pentecostal churches. In addition, as Anderson (cited by Van Klinken & Obadare, 2018:4) argues, other Christian denominations (Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, and independent) have all "moved considerably in a "Pentecostal" or Charismatic direction".

In addition to non-heteronormative sexualities being seen as against religious norms in many parts of Africa, same-sex attraction and activities are labelled "un-African"; an unnatural sexuality imported from the West (Msibi, 2011:55; Lyonga, 2014:97). The argument that non-heteronormative sexualities are "un-African" is often coupled with it also being "un-Christian" and "un-Islamic" (Van Klinken & Obadare, 2018:7). However, the idea that same-sex sexualities are "un-African" have been proven fallacious, because there is evidence suggesting that same-sex relationships are not alien to African cultures. Many scholars have challenged the perception that same-sex relations are "un-African", and that it is homophobia, in fact, that is truly "un-African" (Dlamini, 2006:128; Kaoma, 2012:1; Msibi, 2011:55). This concept is discussed in detail in Chapter 2. This notwithstanding, many African leaders still support the idea that same-sex behaviours are unnatural. Those leaders tend to be intolerant of any form of sexual diversity that contradicts the supposed normative value of heterosexuality and African tradition on the continent (Msibi, 2011:55).

One such leader is the former South African President, Jacob Zuma, who, in 2006 in a meeting celebrating Heritage Day, stated that same-sex marriages were "a disgrace to the nation of God" and that they were taboos not to be tolerated in "any normal society" (Seale, 2006; Tamale, 2014a:167). Other African leaders have gone so far as to show their intolerance by supporting Uganda's infamous 2009 anti-gay bill, also known as the "Kill the Gays" bill, by attempting to implement the same law in their countries (Kaoma, 2012:1). LGBT individuals in these countries are forced to keep their sexual identities secret for fear

of being prosecuted (Kaoma, 2012:9). Tamale (2014a:158) believes that these leaders use religion as a strategy to gain supporters to further reinforce their intolerance. They do so at the expense of addressing real issues that are affecting the majority of Africans, such as poverty, lack of access to healthcare, education, nutrition, and clean water. Tamale (2014a:158) states that political Christianity has been used to suggest that sexuality is the main key moral issue to be dealt with.

1.1.1. Alternative discourses and changing attitudes

Although it is clear that religious, in particular Christian, discourses on sexuality in Africa are overwhelmingly characterised by a heteronormative ideal and anti-homosexual sentiment, there are also alternative religious discourses that are being mobilised. Just because a discourse is dominant, does not mean that people just accept it without question. Some people challenge them and, in turn, construct their own counter-discourses (Tamale, 2014a:170). Discourses are constantly made and re-made and beliefs about sex and sexuality change over time (Stearns, 2009:1). It is therefore important to also note some of these changes and alternative discourses. An alternative discourse may become more accepted and, over time, even become a dominant discourse.

In South Africa, there is evidence that there are discourses at work that are slowly changing some attitudes. In a report published by The Other Foundation (2016), entitled *Progressive Prudes Report: A survey of attitudes towards homosexuality and gender non-conformity in South Africa*, the survey revealed that South Africans' attitudes towards LGBTQI+ individuals have started to change (The Other Foundation, 2016:4). The survey found that an increasing number of people are supportive of same-sex marriages. According to the report, in 2012 only one in 100 respondents supported gay marriage compared to one in 10 people in 2016. This change might be a result of human rights discourses in South Africa that have had an impact on the attitudes of South Africans. The South African Constitution protects gay and lesbian rights, and promotes and encourages people to be more tolerant of sexual diversity.

These changes in attitudes might also be related to other factors. Some changes, for example, can be noticed in churches' willingness to discuss matters relating to young people's sexuality rather than ignoring all issues related to sex, as it had done in the past (Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:21-22). This can be seen in less conservative religious groups such as liberal Protestants, who are less condemning towards premarital sex, among other things. Members

are encouraged to be more understanding of those who do not practice or conform to some norms. Other faith groups even allow individual members to make their own decisions regarding their sexual lives. Members of such faith groups therefore make decisions about their sexual conduct by relying on both moral messages and their own conscience (Cochran *et al.*, 2004:105). Sexual rules are changing in that they now represent subjective relationships instead of being influenced by objective rules. In this regard, sexual desires are no longer related to family values or with having a family but around a single individual; therefore, they can identify with whichever sexuality they prefer. In addition, sexual standards are also changing because they are influenced by individuals' sexual desires rather than the need for procreation (Davies, 1997:18). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995:5-6) and Chambers (2012:35) refer to this phenomenon as individualisation, in which individual agency is valued more than traditional norms that confine men and women to traditional gender roles.

Also, even though most religious communities still oppose non-heterosexual identities and despite the intolerance of religious organisations and religious people, this has not prevented LGBTQI+ individuals from being religious (Samelius & Wagberg, 2005:27). On the contrary, several independent LGBTQI+ churches have been established. For instance, at the inclusive Good Hope Unity Metropolitan Community Church in Cape Town, LGBTQI+ members are able to have a spiritual life without feeling judged, rejected or possessed (Nell & Shapiro, 2011:45). The former Archbishop Emeritus Njongonkulu Ndungane of the Anglican Church has also advised the church to fully accept LGBTQI+ and asexual individuals (Timeslive, 2018). The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) made headlines in 2015 when it announced that the church would be supporting gay marriages and the ordination of gay ministers. This came as a shock, because the church is well known for its conservative views, especially when it comes to same-sex relations (Ngubane, 2015; Collison, 2018). Even though the DRC overturned this decision at a later stage, these events demonstrate that churches are debating LGBTQI+ issues and that there is growing support in the churches for people who do not identify as heterosexual.

1.1.2. Problem statement

In light of the above, it is clear that the relationship between religion and the changing views of sexuality is characterised by conflict (Shipley, 2015:3). This is worth considering because religion is increasingly becoming an important factor in the lives of young adults, especially when it comes to their sexual behaviour (Verona, 2011:187). In the public sphere and popular

media, the relationship between LGBTQI+ communities and religious communities is depicted in terms of conflict (Bompani & Brown, 2015:121). In South Africa, for example, LGBTQI+ students in rural-based universities still experience stigma and discrimination rooted in religious beliefs, among other factors (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy, 2015:1049). In 2017, the media was reporting on the water crises in the city of Cape Town and a number of religious leaders who share Pastor Buchan's view on homosexuality came forward to support his claims that gays and lesbians in Cape Town were to blame for the drought (Hunter, 2017). Another pastor making news headlines for his extreme views on homosexuality is Oscar Bougardt, who claims that "99% of paedophiles stem from homosexuality" (Baird, 2017). This is problematic, because anti-gay pastors such as Buchan are able to draw crowds close to a million at their gatherings (Davis, 2017).

Despite these negative discourses, the Progressive Prudes Report (The Other Foundation, 2016) indicates that South Africans' views of homosexuality are shifting. Over the years, South Africans have become more tolerant of sexual diversity, as mentioned in The Other Foundation's (2016) Progressive Prudes Report. This is evident in the visible shift and increase of public displays of non-heterosexual behaviour, how they present themselves to others, and in dressing and acting in gender non-conforming ways. According to the Progressive Prudes Report (2016:3), a survey conducted in South Africa revealed that approximately 55% of the population said that they "would accept a gay family member". However, the majority of South Africans (72%) still hold the belief that same-sex relationships are morally wrong. Despite this, 51% still believe that gays and lesbians should have the same human rights as everyone else in the country, and 52% believe that culture and traditions should be inclusive of lesbians and gays. Overall, the majority of South Africans are not violent towards LGBTQI+ individuals. Approximately 80% of South Africans have indicated that they would never verbally or physically harm gender non-conforming persons. This shift is also visible in people's attitudes to accepting same-sex marriages (The Other Foundation, 2016:4). In a world that is predominately religious, there is positive progress in how people treat non-heterosexual individuals.

Bartelink and Meinema (2014:5) found that "84% of the world says that religion is important" to them and it is no different in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (2015:31), approximately 86% of the South African population affiliate with the Christian religion, while 5.4% affiliate with traditional religions, 1.9% are Muslims, 0.2% are Jewish,

and 5.2% are not affiliated with a religion. From these statistics, it is clear that Christianity is a dominant religion in South Africa (Veriava *et al.*, 2017:186). Thus the relationship between religion and sexuality is worth noting and researching, because the majority of South Africans belong to religious groups. According to both Shipley (2015:6) and Nell (2016), academic research into the relationship between sexuality and religion is a relatively new topic. Most of the previous research on sexuality has focused on “potential negative consequences” of activities associated with sexuality, such as unwanted pregnancy and sexually-transmitted infections among young people (Hardy & Raffaelli, 2003:731). Researchers have also been conducting studies on social factors, such as religions and their influence on delayed sexual activities. As a result, most studies on religion and sexuality tend to be based on religious commitment and sexual risk-taking behaviour and measures to reduce these behaviours (Abbott *et al.*, 2016:1069).

Various religious communities in South Africa produce diverse discourses. It is important to have a better understanding of religious discourses if they are to contribute to a public opinion that is tolerant of sexual diversity and a context in which people are free to live their sexual lives the way they want to (Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:4). It is also important to study sexuality in the context of religion, because research suggests that a person’s sexual attitudes are shaped by their religious beliefs and the messages from their religious communities (Abbott *et al.*, 2016:1069). In the context of Africa, Tamale (2014a:157) suggests that there should be more academic focus on the intersectionality of sexual, religious, and legal discourses in order to better comprehend the changing views and potential acceptance of diverse, fluid, and agentic constructions of sexual and gender identities and actions.

In addition, individual freedom has become an increasingly important value, and religion is often seen as an obstacle rather than an ally (Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:7; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 1995:5-6). Geiger (2013:249) proposes that religious freedom can lead to sexual liberation if churches are more accepting of people's different practices and identities. At its basic core, religious freedom is about not using speech to criminalise a variety of sexualities and gender identity. The dearth of knowledge and scholarly discourses on religion and sexuality has prompted the need for carrying out the current study. The following section focuses on the research questions and research objectives of this study.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the preceding background, the following research questions and research objectives were formulated to investigate religious discourses of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom.

1.2.1. Research questions

The main research question for this study is: “What are the dominant religious discourses of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom?”

Research sub-questions:

- a) What does literature and theory state about religious discourses of homosexuality?
- b) What methodology will be useful when studying religious discourse of homosexuality in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom?
- c) What sexual subjectivities are made possible or inhibited by religious discourses surrounding (homo)sexuality?
- d) What are alternative religious discourses on sexuality?
- e) What recommendations and conclusions can be made regarding religious discourses on homosexuality?

1.2.2. Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the dominant religious discourses of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom.

Research sub-objectives:

- a) To state what literature and theorists have found about religious discourses of homosexuality?
- b) To employ the most appropriate methodology to study religious discourse of homosexuality in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom.
- c) To elaborate on the sexual subjectivities made possible or inhibited by religious discourses surrounding (homo)sexuality.
- d) To explore alternative religious discourses on sexuality.

- e) To make recommendations and draw conclusions regarding religious discourse on homosexuality.

1.3. THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

A queer theoretical position was adopted for this investigation of Christian religious discourses on the homosexuality of young adults. A queer theoretical position involves a critique of the concept of heteronormativity, in terms of which heterosexuality is defined as a “natural” sexuality and non-heterosexuality is seen as deviant. One does so by critiquing and challenging the status quo of heterosexuality as the norm (Spargo, 1999:9; Sumerau, & Schrock, 2011:100). Scholars such as Michael Foucault and Judith Butler, whose work is also relevant in this research, contributed to the work that laid the foundations for queer theory. Butler (1990), for instance, used Foucault’s work to make queer theory applicable to studies of gender and sexuality.

Foucault is known as a poststructuralist and did some ground breaking work on what came to be known as queer theory (Namaste, 1994:220 & 223). In keeping with the principles of poststructuralism, proponents of queer theory have investigated why some categories, such as sexuality or race, are valued more than others (Namaste, 1994:223; Watson, 2005:69). In addition, poststructuralists are critical of concepts such as discourse, truth, and the production of knowledge, and ultimately question how they influence everyday life (Holmes & Gagnon, 2018: 1-2). Hence, the components of queer theory, namely its critique of heterosexuality, makes it a fitting tool to investigate normative concepts, especially considering that Christianity relies on normalised discourse to influence individuals’ sexual lives. According to Kavoura *et al.* (2015:89), discourses contain “certain sets of knowledge and social practices”, which establish what is considered normative in a certain society. For instance, religious communities have their own sets of knowledge when it comes to what is considered natural and acceptable sexual conduct. Foucault further states that these sets of knowledge are a social construct. Subjectivity (or identity), which is based on the same sets of knowledge, is then also socially constructed.

Poststructuralist scholars such as Foucault have contributed to how discourses are used by using the term “subject position” to debate the choices individuals make when negotiating their identities. Foucault uses the term “subject position” to highlight the link between discourse and power and to demonstrate how people are hierarchically put into categories,

such as categories of what is considered a normal identity. This is informed by dominant discourses, which have a way of limiting people's feelings, thoughts, and behaviours (Kavoura *et al.*, 2015:89). Informed by queer theory and scholars such as Foucault, Butler and Sylvia Tamale, this researcher sought to investigate the influence of religious discourse on how (homo)sexuality is perceived and how it contributes to how identities are shaped.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

This section comprises a description of the design and research methods utilised in this study. According to De Vos *et al.* (2012:63), qualitative and quantitative paradigms are prominent approaches to social science research. Researchers choose either one or both methodological paradigms based on what they aim to achieve with their research. Qualitative researchers attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon through a detailed "interpretation of the research topic" (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016:100). A qualitative paradigm was selected for this study because its methods of inquiry and strategies of gathering data were appropriate to gaining an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

The idea that individuals construct their sexual identities on the basis of the religious discourses of their Christian communities, namely churches, was central to this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:8) state that qualitative research emphasises the "socially-constructed nature of reality [ontology]", and the intimate relationship researchers have with their participants. Merriam and Tisdell (2016:9) refer to this as interpretive research. It is based on the assumption that there is no single, fixed reality. Rather, multiple realities exist at the same time and people may have different interpretations of a single event. Similarly, qualitative researchers believe in the construction of knowledge (epistemology). Constructivism and interpretivism can be used interchangeably (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:9). Based on a constructionist perspective, qualitative researchers are interested in how people attach meaning to their social experiences and how they interpret their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:15). In particular, people interpret religious discourses based on their subjective experiences, which influence how they construct their sexual identities. The influence religion has on people will be strong if people are strongly attached to the religious institutions they belong to. Thus, an interpretive/constructivism perspective was considered a suitable approach to explore and gain an in-depth understanding of religious discourses on homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom.

1.4.1. Study design

Qualitative researchers attempt to study human action from the perspective of the insider (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:53). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:53), the goal of qualitative research is to understand human behaviour, rather than trying to explain and predict it. Furthermore, flexible methods are used to answer the research questions, which produces rich and descriptive data (Boeije, 2010:11). Qualitative researchers have to collect data in order to understand the viewpoint of their participants (Boeije, 2010:13). The participants discuss their social reality, share opinions on matters, and also share their experiences and how they feel. It is the task of the researcher to interpret or make sense of the participants' realities in order to understand their daily lives. In this study, the participants provided varying perspectives and opinions on how religion had affected the way in which they viewed their own or others' sexual identities. In the end, it was up to the researcher to organise and find connections in the data gathered.

The purpose of this research was to explore religious discourses around sexual identity. Exploratory research is specifically appropriate in cases in which the study topic is somewhat new or has not received a great deal of attention (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:79; Sarantakos, 2013:150). The study contributes to religion and sexuality by focusing on religious discourses of homosexuality, which have not received much attention in research (as discussed in the problem statement). Babbie and Mouton (2001:80) also point out that, if a phenomenon is persistent, it is appropriate to use an exploratory approach.

1.4.2. Study population, sample, and units of analysis

According to Boeije (2010:36), qualitative research samples are often small because the aim is to elicit the viewpoints and experiences of the participants rather than to replicate the findings. Babbie and Mouton (2001:84) refer to units of analysis to describe what the researcher intends to study, such as the object of the study and the phenomenon. In social scientific research, units of analysis can be individuals, groups, organisations or social interactions (Babbie, 2013:99), but individual people are typically the unit of analysis (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:85). De Vos *et al.* (2012:392) state that participants are chosen based on their characteristics, that could potentially enable them to contribute to the purpose of the study. These can include their sex, race, religion, age, and so forth (Babbie, 2013:97). The locus of this study was the population of Potchefstroom in the North West province. The

units of observation consisted of self-identified Christian youths from Potchefstroom who attended Pentecostal churches.

De Vos *et al.* (2012:390) assert that qualitative sampling is less structured than quantitative sampling. This is why, according to De Vos *et al.* (2012:391), qualitative researchers rely on non-probability sampling techniques. This sampling technique enables researchers to seek out participants and a setting for their study that might result in the gathering of rich data (Gray, 2014:217). The current researcher used non-probability sampling, namely, snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Babbie and Mouton (2001:166) define purposive sampling as choosing a sample based on the researcher's "judgement and the purpose of the study". The researcher began by approaching self-identified Pentecostal Christians that she knew in Potchefstroom, and asked them to refer her to other youth members in their churches. In total, 20 interviews were conducted with 27 consenting individuals. Sixteen of the interviews were individual interviews, with an addition of four focus groups consisting of two to four participants in each group.

1.4.3. Data collection

Qualitative research requires qualitative interviewing, which comprises a variety of interviewing methods (Bryman, 2012:383). Immense attention is paid to the point of view of the interviewee and participants are encouraged to talk about topics they see as relevant and important. In addition, interviewers can ask new questions during the interview process to follow up on interviewee's replies. Furthermore, the interviews are flexible and can be adjusted spontaneously, depending on the direction of the interview, because "the researcher wants rich and detailed answers" (Bryman, 2012:470). Semi-structured interviews were conducted in both the interviews and focus groups. The researcher made use of an interview schedule (Appendix B) to obtain data. The questions asked during the interviews were formulated on the basis of information derived from the literature chapter (Chapter 2).

As De Oliveira (2011:3095) points out, focus groups are "ideal for exploring people's experiences, opinions, wishes and concerns". This technique enables participants to interact with each other as they share their views on a matter. Open-ended questions were used for both the individual and focus group interviews. All the interviews began with a description and identifying questions, followed by more specific questions about religious discourses on homosexuality amongst young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. With the

consent of the participants, the interviews were recorded and later transcribed by the interviewer.

Topics and questions around sexuality and religion are usually considered sensitive and this might have influenced the responses of the participants (De Oliveira, 2011:3095). As such, the researcher was aware of how sensitive the topic was when formulating and phrasing questions. Tourangeau and Yan (2007:860) highlight three concepts related to sensitivity: intrusiveness, the danger of disclosure and social desirability. Questions are intrusive when they are considered to be taboo and private, such as some conversations around sexuality, especially in a religious context. The researcher avoided this by phrasing sensitive questions in an indirect way, such as asking generalised questions rather than asking participants to answer from their own experiences. For example, the researcher asked: “Do you think Christians accept gay people?” instead of phrasing the question in a direct manner by asking: “Do you accept gay people?”.

The threat of disclosure occurs when the participants are concerned that the information they provide during data collection will become known to other people (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007:860, 862). This can be avoided by assuring participants that their privacy will be respected. If this is not done, the participants might give answers that they think are socially acceptable instead of being honest. This occurs when people think that their perspectives deviate from what is considered the norm. Social desirability is influenced by whether or not the participants fear the risk of disclosure, which can be avoided as stated above. Sensitivity concerns are also important when discussing ethics, which is discussed below.

Tourangeau and Yan (2007:862) also suggest asking sensitive questions towards the end of the interview to minimise non-response rates during the early stages of the interviews. The manner in which questions are asked can also influence the response rate of the participants (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007:863). The language or words used in this instance are important. For example, instead of asking participants what they think about gay relationships, the researcher phrased questions as follows: “What do you think about romantic relationships between two men?”. The latter question was preferable because it was less threatening and got the participants talking. Identifying a setting in which the interviews would be conducted was also important. Things such as the presence of other people might influence how participants respond. To address this, the participants were given an opportunity to choose a setting that they preferred. When the participants did not have any setting in mind, the

researcher suggested one.

1.4.4. Data Analysis

According to De Vos *et al.* (2012:399), data analysis “is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data”. This involves utilising analysis strategies to organise, interpret and sort out data so that it is easy to manage. Thematic analysis (TA) is a form of qualitative analysis that enables the researcher to manage data (Alhojailan, 2012:40). TA relies on an inductive approach (Sarantakos, 2013:379) and is a “method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns [themes] within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). This is important because large amounts of data that must be interpreted are collected during interviews (Alhojailan, 2012:39). Identifying themes and coding are central practices in TA. This makes it easy for the researcher to identify matching themes and to choose which themes to code (Sarantakos, 2013:379). From the collected data, TA can be used to identify factors that influence the issue being studied (Alhojailan, 2012:40). For instance, TA made it possible for the researcher to identify the relationship between religious discourses and sexual identities.

According to Alhojailan (2012:40), TA is appropriate when a researcher seeks to discover what the data represents through interpretation. Analysis should enable one to discern the subjective meanings and lived realities of the research participants by identifying themes (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016:101). Themes are central to data analysis in that they constitute the results of the study. They are used as concepts that enable one to organise ideas in order to answer the research question. Coding is one of the processes of organising data during analysis. It takes place throughout the analytical process and involves assessing the transcribed data to create codes. These codes contain data that the researcher finds interesting because it contains meaningful information that is relevant to the phenomena being studied. This process is part of analysing data, as it enables the researcher to organise it into meaningful groups (Braun & Clarke, 2006:87 & 89).

1.4.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in the context of social research are centred on how researchers should treat the people who participate in the research and which activities are appropriate for the researcher to engage in (Bryman, 2012:130). Gray (2014:68) defines ethics as “sets of moral principles or norms that are used to guide moral choices of behaviour and relationships with

others". According to Boeije (2010:44), researchers must take into account the "moral accuracy of their research activities in relation to the people they meet" during the research process, such as participants, funders and other parties. In social research, debates about ethical principles are centred on four main areas. These include whether the participants will be harmed, the use of the informed consent, the privacy of participants, and deceiving participants (Bryman, 2012:134). Taking into account the sensitivity of the topic, it was essential to ensure that the abovementioned ethical principles were taken into consideration; not only for the benefit of the participants, but to ensure that good data would be gathered.

During research, it is unacceptable to harm participants. Harm includes physical harm, the loss of self-esteem, and mental harm (Bryman, 2012:138; Gray, 2014:74). The "do no harm" principle may prove to be challenging because, as Bryman (2012:138) puts it, it is not always possible to anticipate the harm in all circumstances. However, this does not mean that researchers should not take measures to protect participants. In this study, the researcher tried to make the participants feel comfortable by reassuring them that they did not have to answer questions if it made them uncomfortable. They could also stop the interview or group discussions at any time they chose to do so.

If the researcher is aware of possible harm that might be inflicted on participants, it is essential for them to obtain informed consent from participants (Bryman, 2012:138). Written informed consent was obtained from the participating individuals before the commencement of the interviews. According to Boeije (2010:45) and Flick (2014:50), informed consent is a crucial general ethical necessity. The ethical principle of informed consent means that researchers should provide prospective participants with adequate and detailed information on the nature of the study in order to enable them to make informed decisions before they voluntarily decide to participate in it (Bryman, 2012:138; Boeije, 2010:45; Gray, 2014:75). The informed consent form has to provide a clear outline of the nature and purpose of the study. Furthermore, researchers should not deceive participants by lying about the true nature of their study (Gray, 2014:79).

Tourangeau and Yan (2007:862) suggest that participants might be reluctant to answer questions during interviews if they are concerned about confidentiality, for instance, if they fear that their information will be made accessible to third parties. As noted above, questions around sexuality are usually considered sensitive and, as such, the participants' confidentiality and privacy had to be respected throughout the research process. The former

refers to the manner in which the participants' personal information was treated (Bryman, 2012:143). This, according to Gray (2014:79), can be achieved by restricting identifying features such as cell phone numbers and names to protect the identities of the participants. In this study, pseudonyms chosen by the participants were used to protect their identities. Also, the participants' information was not made accessible to third parties.

It is not acceptable for researchers to impinge on the privacy of participants (Bryman, 2012:142; Flick, 2014:50). Boeije (2010:46) defines privacy as “the interest of individuals to control the access that others have to them”. This simply means that the participants decide who they choose to disclose information to and researchers do not have the right to share that information with anyone. The participants also do not have to answer questions they feel uncomfortable with and they may request that the researcher changes the focus of the interview if certain questions are considered too personal or private. The informed consent form should provide the participants with a clear understanding of whether their right to privacy will be violated, and, if so, to what extent.

The matter of privacy cannot be discussed without mentioning anonymity. The participants who wished to remain anonymous were given that option. As noted above, the researcher used pseudonyms instead of participants' real names to ensure this. The signed consent forms with the participants' real names were kept in a safe place known only to the researcher and her supervisor, and will be kept for a period of seven years. The recordings of the interviews were saved on the researcher's password-protected computer. In addition, the participants were told where they could report any misconduct that might occur during the interview process. This put the participants at ease, because they knew that there was someone they could take their complaints to if the terms they agreed to prior to the interviews be violated.

1.4.6. Limitations of the study

The sample of this study comprised only Pentecostal Christians and their perspectives on the issue at hand. In the future, the same study could be conducted with a larger sample, and also focus on people who affiliate with other religions and who do not affiliate with any religion. It would be interesting to see the types of discourses produced among different religions that occupy the same space. Another possible limitation might be due to the fact that the sample will comprise only of Pentecostal participants. Therefore, their views on religious discourses of (homo) sexuality might be similar causing the data to lack diversity.

1.4.7. Significance of the study

As stated in the problem statement, this study sought to explore the religious discourses on homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. It is important for Christian communities to be more tolerant of sexual diversity because it would relieve some of the tensions in societies. Greater tolerance could in turn also present a possible solution to the problem of homophobic violence and other forms of discrimination against those who do not identify or conform to the dominant sexual norms.

The plan is to share the results of this study with churches around campus, especially those attended by young adults. The hope is that this initiative will encourage religious leaders in those churches to start or continue having conversations about the sexuality of young adults in a way that would actually help them cope with the challenges they encounter with respect to their sexuality.

1.5. CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter one: Introduction and problem statement

The first chapter comprised an introduction to the current study by providing a background and a problem statement, the central theoretical argument, research questions, research objectives, and the methodological framework.

Chapter two: Literature review and theoretical framework

Both the literature review and theoretical framework of the study are presented in the second chapter. The literature review presented the background on the history of (homo)sexuality in (South) Africa. A queer theoretical position was adopted with a view to critiquing heteronormativity.

Chapter three: Research methodology

This chapter contains a description of the methods utilised in this study. The study design, units of analysis, data analysis and methods of data collection are discussed, as well as how ethical considerations were accommodated.

Chapter four: Findings and discussion of findings

This chapter includes a presentation of the data collected and a thematic analysis of the findings. From the themes produced during the analysis, the potential influence of religious discourses on the sexual identities of young South African adults is discussed.

Chapter five: Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter concludes the proposed study and contains recommendations for possible future studies.

CHALLENGING HETERONORMATIVITY IN RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES ON HOMOSEXUALITY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2. INTRODUCTION

Religion plays a significant role in how Christians perceive matters of sexuality. Religious discourses have been used as a basis for Christian sexual norms from which to regulate the sexual lives of Christians. This chapter provides a review of the academic literature on religious discourses of homosexuality. It assisted the researcher in answering the first research question by showing how religious institutions, among others, have the power to produce discourse that make certain sexualities possible (heterosexuality), while limiting others (LGBTQI+). It further provided the researcher with theoretical constructs to help select and interpret the data during the process of data analysis.

The chapter has two parts. The first part contextualises religious discourses of homosexuality in Africa and South Africa by discussing literature on homosexual practices in pre-colonial Africa, followed by a discussion of the introduction of sexual categories and homophobia by colonial Christianity and its reinforcement during apartheid South Africa. The first part is concluded by discussing changes and continuities of religious discourses of homosexuality in post-apartheid South Africa.

The second part discusses the theoretical literature that focuses on constructionists' approaches to sexuality. This includes critiques of heterosexuality by lesbian feminists and gay liberationists of the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the contributions of key authors, including Michel Foucault and Judith Butler. The chapter is concluded by demarcating specific queer theoretical principles that were used during the process of data analysis, to help select and interpret information. A queer theoretical position helps to demonstrate how institutions of power, together with their agents, are responsible for producing sexual categories through the dominant discourses that they produce. Furthermore, it provides the researcher with theoretical tools to critique and challenge dominant and normalised sexual categories.

2.1. A SHORT HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES AND SEXUALITY IN AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICA

To understand contemporary religious discourses on sexuality, it is important to contextualise it historically. As will be demonstrated, these discourses contributed to the construction of homoeroticism as an alien sexuality in Africa and South Africa. To that end, this section will firstly discuss non-heteronormative sexualities in pre-colonial Africa. This is to understand the context in which colonial discourses were introduced, and to debunk the widely held idea that homosexuality is ‘un-African’, which is discussed secondly. Thirdly, apartheid is discussed, and lastly, the post-apartheid and current context.

2.1.1. Homoeroticism and sexuality in pre-colonial Africa

The myth that homosexuality is alien to the African continent has been intensely debated. According to Cock (2010:201), this is one of the biggest myths in Africa as homosexuality is both indigenous and traditional in approximately 50 African societies. Looking at the history of sexuality in Africa, evidence suggests that neither the gay identity nor the category of a pathologised homosexuality existed. However, this is not to say that same-sex practices did not exist; throughout history, men have been having sex with men, and women with women. While these practices were not bound up with gay or lesbian identities, same-sex practices were standard and diverse. They were part of African societies and their belief systems (Cock, 2010:201; Msibi, 2011:56 & 63).

In numerous African countries and societies, the representation of same-sex relationships from pre-colonial times has been illustrated in various cultural themes, such as in art, language, and marriage (Mehra *et al.*, 2019:5; Tamale, 2014b). In art, same-sex practices during pre-colonial times are evident from artefacts such as cave paintings found in Zimbabwe depicting two male figures engaging in what seems to be same-sex sexual behaviours (Tamale, 2014b). Some of those ancient cave paintings were also depicting ritual sex engaged in by two men (Mehra *et al.*, 2019:5). According to Tamale (2014b), ritual sex was common in some African societies, which believed that same-sex sexuality was a “source of magical powers to guarantee bountiful crop yields and abundant hunting, good health and to ward off evil spirits”.

The vocabulary found in some African languages also suggests that same-sex practices predate colonisation. For instance, ‘mudoko dako’ was used to refer to women in Uganda

who were treated as men, and vice versa. Similarly, 'inkotshane' (male-wife) was a term used by the Shangaan of Southern Africa; 'motsoale' (special friend) was used by Basotho women to refer to same-sex relationships; and 'gor-digen' (men-women) was used in Senegal to refer to gay men, (Tamale, 2014b). These instances are contradictory to the assumption held by some African leaders, such as the former president of Zimbabwe, who claimed that homosexuality is a "western disease" (Msibi, 2011:63).

Homoeroticism was also prevalent among peers who had not entered into heterosexual marriages. It took place in the context of friendship rather than an obligation that one had to fulfil (Ward, 2013:412; Tamale, 2014b). Same-gender relations were valued for their socialising purposes, in which close-knit ties were encouraged between members of the same gender. These ties were usually between peers, but also occurred between older and younger people. The latter occurred in a context where older people were assigned the role of socialising the young in sexual matters. These same-sex relationships did not evoke any feeling of hostility or the need to prosecute those who indulged in them (Van Klinken & Chitando, 2016:3). This is because same-sex practices were not considered sexual, and as a result, they were not named nor policed.

To summarise, African sexualities were viewed in terms of practices and not identities. While the category 'homosexuality' did not exist, based on the sexual practices that people engaged in, it is clear that they fit what is labelled homosexuality in modern times (Dlamini, 2006:130). Not only did 'gay' or 'homosexual' identities (in its modern sense) not exist in Africa, but the problem of homophobia did not exist either (Ward, 2013:410). Rather, homophobia appears to have been brought in with colonial laws and attitudes. Hence, homophobia, rather than homosexuality, should be considered a colonial import. This is discussed next.

2.1.2. Colonialism and the import of homophobia to South Africa and Africa

More than 70 countries in the world still criminalise homosexuality. Many of these laws can be traced back to their introduction during colonialism, and for more than half of these countries, during British colonialism (HRW, 2008:5). In the 1860s, a set of laws that prohibited male-to-male sexual relations (and carried severe punishment) was introduced throughout the British Empire (Han & O'Mahoney, 2014:272). These laws were a result of the fears that "soldiers and administrators – particularly those without wives at hand – would

turn to sodomy in these decadent, hot surroundings” (Gupta cited by Han & O’Mahoney, 2014: 273). ‘Sodomy’ was also criminalised in South Africa under Dutch-Roman law, the common law from the Netherlands. Although South Africa was taken over by the British in 1906, it retained Roman-Dutch law, which also criminalised sodomy. The goal of these laws were two-fold: on the one hand to protect Christians from ‘corruption’ and on the other, to reform and Christianise local customs (Ibid. HRW, 2008:5). Religious discourses of homosexuality were, therefore, central to many of the anti-homosexuality laws that still exist today.

The implementation of these colonial laws took place without any local consultations or debates (HRW, 2008:5). Van Zyl (2011:338) agrees that colonial legislation ignored the values of African sexuality and further imposed its legislative framework on both sexual behaviours and individual subjectivity. These included forms of African kinships, including polygamy and traditional initiation rites, which were scrutinised in the promotion of “Victorian values of ‘decency’ and ‘morality’” (Van Klinken & Obadare, 2018:562). Tamale (2014a:154) concurs and further states that “forms [of] sexual practices that were acceptable in pre-colonial Africa were encoded [by colonial Christianity] with the distinctive tags of ‘deviant’, ‘illegitimate’ and ‘criminal’ through proselytization and acculturation”. Also, the colonisation of African people and their traditional cultures introduced the categorisation of people into sexual identity categories, such as heterosexuality, and homosexuality (Dlamini, 2006:130; Gunda, 2017). According to Van Klinken and Obadare (2018:562), this policing of African sexual practices, intimacy, and relationships by colonial laws and missionaries was done to reshape the cultural values and meanings of Africans in the hope of “civilising the native”. This was because the sexualities of Africans were considered perverse; and had to be rectified and normalised using colonial discourse (Dlamini, 2006:135).

Therefore, while homoeroticism has a long history, dating back to pre-colonial Africa and South Africa, it was within colonial institutions, including the law, science, medical, and religious institutions, that African same-sex sexual practices were made visible (Dlamini, 2006:129; Van Klinken & Chitando, 2016:3). Colonial discourses constructed African sexualities heteronormatively through discourses already established in their colonial regimes. These discourses were interested in patriarchal Christian moralistic control of sexuality for the purposes of reproduction and the desire to control it (Van Zyl, 2011:338). Colonial discourses assumed sexuality to be heterosexual, with marriage used as a political

institution to regulate not only fertility but desire as well. According to Van Zyl (2011:338), African societies used marriage to monitor kinship. However, polygynous marriages were common, and in some cultures, this occurred between same-sex partners. However, it was with “colonial legislation on sexuality and the adoption of Christian marriage rituals that heterosexual monogamy gained hegemonic ascendancy in Africa” (Van Zyl, 2011:338). Dutch-Roman law that criminalised sodomy in South Africa also ruled Namibia and Zimbabwe, both countries that still criminalise homosexuality. Anti-homosexuality sentiment and laws were further entrenched during apartheid, which is discussed next.

2.1.3. Religion and sexuality in apartheid South Africa

South Africa was ruled by an apartheid government from 1948 to 1994. Homosexuality continued to be criminalised during this time and the criminalisation was supported by religious discourses. The apartheid legislation against homosexuality was inherited from Roman-Dutch law (discussed in the previous section), which prohibited behaviours ‘contrary to the order of nature’ such as male-on-male sex, sodomy (hetero and homosexual), masturbation, and bestiality (Falkof, 2019:277; Brown, 2014:457). In 1957, even more specific laws were implemented under Section 14 of the Immorality Act of 1957 (Brown, 2014:459).

According to Retief (1995:101), the apartheid government was interested in policing sexuality and in enforcing the Christian valued of the Nationalist party as a way of ensuring that the White South Africans were “sexually and morally pure”, unlike the Black South Africans. One way of policing sexuality was with the sexual laws mentioned above which warranted harsh penalties for those found guilty of being sex offenders. Under apartheid, gay men (specifically white gay men) were perceived as a threat to the family and to gender roles because the apartheid system was maintained by a code of conduct based on socially correct gender roles (Falkof, 2019:274). This is supported by Brown (2014:456), who states that the National Party (NP) found homosexuality problematic because the National Party’s apartheid doctrine highly valued heterosexual marriage, procreation, and family life. In this regard, homosexuals would not be fulfilling their obligation of reproduction.

Even though homosexuality was outlawed, the National Party subjected it to minimal enforcement, as it was more concerned with issues of race (Falkof, 2019:277). However, it was still framed as a threat to the nation’s health and a threat to the moral order and, at times,

it was the focus of intense scrutiny. An example is the appointment of a Select Committee in 1966 to investigate the issue of homosexuality following a police raid of an all-male party at a private home in Johannesburg (Brown, 2014:458). The Select Committee was mainly concerned with potential danger of homosexuality to the country's youth and whether it was contagious (Falkof, 2019:277). According Retief (1995:105), the Committee believed that older gay men and lesbian women were spreading homosexuality by targeting and seducing teenagers. During this time, the psychiatric lobby maintained that homosexuality was a psychological disorder which should be dealt with medically instead of imprisoning gays and lesbians. The work of the Select Committee led to responses such as the 1968 amendment of the Immorality Act, which included laws such as 'men at a party clause' (Brown, 2014:456). While black homosexuality existed and was common among migrant mineworkers (men would take or become wives), the Select Committee was mainly concerned with White homosexuality. The State's legislation did not consider migrant mine workers because black homosexuality "helped to contain the threat of unbridled black male sexuality within the hostel space" (Falkof, 2019:285; Retief (1995:105). Retief (1995:107) further states that lesbians and gay black culture were hardly ever discussed. White homosexuality, on the other hand, was considered a direct challenge to the Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity (Ibid.). The apartheid state's construct of masculinity was based on Afrikaner nationalism and a puritan form of Christianity (Du Pisani cited by Conway, 2004:212). It took the form of the "white Calvinist heterosexual patriarch who was financially stable, physically healthy and historically aligned with violence, racism, domination, and control" (Conway, 2004:214). The existence of gay white men was, therefore, interpreted as a weakness to the white South African patriarch. This weakness caused fears about possibly being a threat to the hegemonic masculinity on which the system was based (Falkof, 2019:274).

However, a shift started taking place towards the end of the apartheid regime in the 1980s and early 1990s. It was set in motion by a combination of factors, including political uprisings, and social and economic pressures (Falkof, 2019:274). It was also around this period that gay and lesbian movements began to establish themselves politically and became recognised as part of the anti-apartheid movement. These movements came to work together as they had a common objective, and they became known as the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (the Coalition).

Stychin (1996:460) identified the Coalition and the African Christian Democratic Party (the ACDP) as the two major players during the deliberation process regarding gay rights and the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Constitution. The ACDP shows how religion once again was a major player in framing debates on sexuality in South Africa. The Coalition was in favour of having sexual orientation covered in the Constitution and presented a number of arguments. The Coalition was met with some opposition, mainly from the ACDP, as part of its bigger political plan (Stychin, 1996:473).

The ACDP was formed in 1993 to articulate Christian moral views in politics. The party mainly consists of evangelical Christians who believe that politics should be based on the word of God. The ACDP also thinks that the concept of a Christian family should be the nation's identity (Stychin, 1996:474). The ACDP conceived of sexuality in terms of "evangelical Christian discourse and African nationalism". In its conception of sexuality, the ACDP argued that rights have to reflect the word of God. The ACDP further constructed homosexuality in Eurocentric terms as colonial contamination, with mostly the upper class and the professional elite as its members. Lesbians and gays in South Africa were accused of adopting similar ideas from lesbian and gay movements from Europe and America. Not only did the ACDP claim that Africans were co-opted into homosexual practices, but they further claimed that, as members of an elite, they had managed to influence "the political process into accepting them into the constitutional order". The ACDP characterised homosexuality as an artificial identity category. Furthermore, it was considered a choice to practice various sinful and unlawful sexual acts. For the ACDP, protecting homosexuality was not different from protecting paedophiles, bestiality practices, or just common criminals (Stychin, 1996:475).

Regardless of the opposition to the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Constitution, during the drafting of what would be the Constitution of a democratic SA, the African National Congress (ANC) was determined to enforce equality that would not be based on non-racialism (Christiansen, 2016:572). Other forms of discrimination, including those based on race, sex, gender, religion, and culture, were deemed unfair (Christiansen, 2016:589). For sexual minorities, this meant that their sexual orientation would no longer be used against them.

2.1.4. Changes and continuities in religious discourses of sexuality in post-apartheid South Africa

In 1994, South Africa became a democratic country. Shortly after, in 1996, South Africa would make history by being the first country to recognise “sexual orientation as a human right in its Constitution” under the Bill of Rights, Act 108 (Van Zyl, 2011:335). The Constitution decriminalised homosexuality or discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, making it one of the most progressive constitutions in the world in terms of protecting LGBTs (Samelius & Wagberg, 2015:36). The decision to include sexual orientation in the Constitution was recognised by others on an international scale, and other countries soon followed (Christiansen, 2016:586).

Addressed in the Constitution is the equality clause under the Bill of Rights, which prohibits discrimination by the State or any persons based on the grounds of race, religion, or sexual orientation (Van Zyl, 2011:337). According to Samelius and Wagberg (2015:14), this was important, as it was almost impossible to protect the rights of LGBTQI+ persons if they were not recognised as humans in the country. Once this clause was addressed in the Constitution, the Coalition challenged other discrimination legislation. These included benefits for lesbians and gays, medical aid, adoption and parental rights, and the abolishment of sodomy as a crime (Van Zyl, 2011:337). The Coalition was successful and more changes followed suit in 1998 (NCGLE sodomy case) when the South African Constitutional Court “decriminalised consensual same-sex sexual activity between adult males” (Christiansen, 2016:588). And, in 2006, the Civil Union Act of South Africa went on to legalise gay marriage (Nell & Shapiro, 2011:12). It was argued that people should not be denied marriage privileges because of their sexual orientation (Christiansen, 2016:594).

Although homosexuality has been decriminalised in South Africa, the attitudes of most people towards LGBTQI+ persons do not reflect the law as stated in the Constitution; and as a result, acts of homophobia thrive (Tamale, 2014b). Religious discourses are still used to condemn and discriminate against gays and lesbians. As such, they do not reflect what the Constitution is trying to achieve. For instance, some homophobic pastors preach about how God condemns LGBTQI+ people in their sermons (Gunda, 2017). For example, Pastor Sipho Mengezeleli of the Godly Governance Network thinks that being gay is unnatural and nonhuman (Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013:266). And other pastors speak against homosexuality, linking it with paedophilia. Samelius and Wagberg (2015:39) blame this on

the lack of knowledge on the side of pastors. Statements such as these make LGBTQI+ people vulnerable to discrimination, including corrective rape, which happens more frequently in townships. Furthermore, this makes LGBTQI+ individuals more prone to contracting HIV, as explained by reported high rates of the virus, especially among black lesbians (Christiansen, 2016:602; Samelius & Wagberg, 2015:39). Despite the government's attempt to solve this problem, it persists.

According to Nell and Shapiro (2011:5), many LGBTQI+ people experience homophobia at home, schools, and churches. Even with the decriminalisation of homosexuality, homophobia continues to be engrained in communities; and Gunda (2017) blames churches. This blame stems from preachers who tend to be aggressive in expressing their views about homosexuality. In this regard, Christianity poses a critical challenge when it comes to recognising LGBTQI+ rights and tolerance. For example, consider the case of Ecclesia de Lange and the KZN pastors who were against the Hate Speech Bill. In 2015, De Lange, a lesbian Methodist Church Minister, took her church to the South African Constitutional Court after she was suspended following her announcement that she intended to marry her partner. The church found her guilty of insubordination, and she was asked to resign by church authorities. The court ruled against De Lange, arguing that she had to comply with the church's arbitration system (Rickard, 2015).

In recent years' pastors from churches in KZN have also challenged the hate speech bill. The Hate Speech Bill aimed to address some human rights issues, especially those concerning xenophobia, racial discrimination, and sexual orientation (Mngoma, 2017). The KZN pastors argued that South Africans have the right to choose whether or not they want to accept LGBTQI+ people, and that that decision should not be forced on them, just because they are received in other parts of the world (Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013:267). In Durban, a group of pastors publicly opposed the Hate Speech Bill, which was announced by Minister of Justice, Michael Masutha, in October 2016. According to the pastors, their right to freedom of speech was being violated, and they further stated that the courts have no right to dictate to them what they cannot preach when it comes to sexuality. Religious leaders, including Pastor Lazarus Pillay, objected to this bill and even went as far as getting a petition of over a million signatures to submit to the Justice Ministry. Pastor Pillay, however, argued that the Bible condemns homosexuality and that it is in his right to preach what the Bible teaches, even if the Constitution of South Africa allows people to embrace their freedoms (Mngoma, 2017).

When religious leaders preach against homosexuality, they reinforce hate and discrimination, which puts the lives of LGBTQI+ individuals at risk and, to some extent, contributes to homophobic crimes. Sivu Siwisa, speaking on behalf of Gender Dynamics – a rights group for transgender people – stated that, in a country like South Africa where people are still murdered because of their gender identity and sexual orientation, it is vital for religious leaders to move away from promoting hate speech (Mngoma, 2017). This is problematic, because their messages reach many people, and could directly or indirectly contribute to the discrimination against LGBTQI+ people, especially taking into account how devoted members listen to their priest, minister, and other leaders (Gunda, 2017; Cochran *et al.*, 2014:105).

From the discussion thus far, it is clear that there is a general lack of acceptance towards LGBTQI+s among religious people. According to Yip *et al.* (2011:11), it is most common among men and older generations, as compared to non-religious people, women, and millennials, who are more accepting. Due to the lack of acceptance, Christian LGBTQI+ people may feel compelled to reject one of their identities (Nkosi & Masson, 2017:81). In his study, Yip (1997:115) found that gays felt that they had to choose between their sexual and Christian identity because the two personalities were not compatible. Christian sexual ethics reject homosexuality and, as a result, gays and lesbians may feel rejected and experience feelings of guilt, shame, and judgment from religious members (Nkosi & Masson, 2017:81; Yip, 1997:113). These feelings may cause gays and lesbians to experience some anxiety due to the fear of being found out. To cope, they may have to physically and mentally distance themselves from their churches (Yip, 1997:113). Given the negative association Christians attach to homosexuality and how some churches have openly expressed their intolerance towards LGBTQI+ persons, it is not surprising that some LGBTQI+ Christians end up leaving their churches (Samelius & Wagberg, 2015:26; Sumerau & Schrock, 2011:99; Ward, 2013:413).

Even though Christianity has a long history of condemning same-sex practices, in more recent years, faith has been used to combat the marginalisation of and discrimination against LGBTQI+ individuals (Samelius & Wagberg, 2015:27). A growing number of LGBTQI+ faith-based movements have attempted to engage with religious communities (Gunda, 2017). Other Sheep and IAM (Inclusive and Affirming Ministries) are just some of the organisations working towards the inclusion of LGBTQI+ persons in religious settings by speaking on

sexuality and gender issues. Other Sheep aims to offer religious leaders and communities alternative Biblical interpretations to create a pluralism so that various presentations can coexist. It involves religious and LGBTQI+ people engaging in dialogue, in contextual Bible study, and sharing personal stories. It addresses issues of oppression and questions of diversity in a broader sense in the church (Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:34 & 35). IAM encourages churches to be inclusive (Gunda, 2017).

In 2020, there have also been further changes from religious institutions, such as in the Methodist Church and the Catholic Church. The Methodist Church announced that LGBTQI+ persons were welcome in their churches. The Church went on to recognise LGBTQI+ rights, including the right to get married (Lindeque, 2020). In the Catholic Church, Pope Francis also endorsed LGBTQI+ rights such as the right to a civil union so that they could be legally covered in the recent Francesco documentary. Furthermore, the Pope stated that, “homosexual people have the right to a family” (CBC News, 2020). These progressive developments will have a great impact on religious discourses of homosexuality.

2.2. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SEXUALITY

This section focuses on three points. First, broadly distinguishing between essentialist theoretical approaches to sexuality and social constructionist approaches to sexuality. Second, the development of a social constructionist theoretical approach and contributions by gay liberationists, lesbian feminists, and Michel Foucault are discussed. Third and last, a queer theoretical approach to sexuality is discussed.

2.2.1. Essentialism vs. Social Constructionism

Historically, conversations on sexuality tended to adopt one of the following stances: essentialism over constructionism or vice versa. These views are thought of as opposing each other when it comes to the nature of sexuality. For a long time, the development of the theory of sex has assumed a western perspective and its analysis of sexuality followed an essentialist view that generally portrayed sexuality (or sexual orientation) as congenital and immutable (Volger, 2016:864; Honeychurch, 1996:344). From a sexual essentialist perspective, sex is eternally fixed, asocial, and transhistorical. Over the past century, fields that were considered essentialist in their approach dominated the theory of sex. These fields include medicine, psychiatry and psychology. These fields were considered essentialist because they regarded sex as the property of the individual, and as something that is found in one's hormones

(Rubin, 2011:149). Sexual essentialism is known for its sex-negativity as it associates anything that has to do with sex with danger, destruction, and negative forces. According to Rubin (2011:150), this explains why most Christian religions see sex as the root of all evil.

Contrary to sexual essentialism, constructivism supports the notion of a historically constituted sexuality with subjective meanings that are in the process of constant change (Dilley, 1999:459). The idea of a natural sexuality is, therefore, largely opposed by proponents of a social constructionist approach, including lesbian feminists and gay liberationists, Foucault, Butler and queer theorists, who have argued that sexuality is a social construct. This study takes a social constructionist theoretical approach to sexuality, drawing specifically on queer theoretical principles. What follows is a discussion of how a social constructionist view of sexuality has developed from the 1960s and has informed a queer theoretical understanding of sexuality. It discusses the contributions of gay liberationist and lesbian feminist social movements and theory to an anti-essentialist conception of sexuality. It also discusses the contributions of Foucault and feminist post structural scholarship to a critique of earlier views. The discussion and chapter conclude by identifying specific queer theoretical principles that aided the process of data analysis and helped to theorise the relationship between religion and sexuality.

2.2.2. A social constructionist approach to sexuality

2.2.2.1. The contribution of gay liberationists and lesbian feminists to critical sex studies

Seidman (2009:18) argues that the contributions of gay liberationists and lesbian feminists from the 1960s resulted in what is perhaps the most important concept in critical sex studies – understanding heterosexuality as an institution. Their views differ in important ways (to be discussed next), but both groups share a critique of sexual voluntarism (Ibid.). They argue that normative heterosexuality creates a social order that involves a gender binary and heterosexual-homosexual binary, resulting in male dominance and heterosexual privilege (Seidman, 2009:19). As a result of these conditions, heterosexuality becomes compulsory. These understandings have also informed a queer theoretical understanding of sexuality.

2.2.2.2. Gay liberationists: pride, coming out, and critiquing gender roles

The gay liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970s are typically seen as a break from the

work and politics of the earlier homophile movement, which sought to increase tolerance of homosexuality and the view that it is a natural occurrence. The gay liberation movement is distinct from the homophile movement in that there was an aggressive public assumption of a gay identity, based on taking pride in being gay. The police raid of the Stonewall Inn bar in New York in 1967, which was met with resistance by its patrons, has become a symbolic marker of a break with assimilationist politics (typical of the homophile movement) and a view that tolerance and acceptance should be sought without disturbing the status quo. This new sense of identity and taking pride in it is important in understanding the later critiques by queer theorists (Jagose, 1996; Bateman, 2015; Armstrong & Crag, 2006:724).

This new movement that mostly started in a US context, happened in a context of other social movements such as the women's and civil rights movement. It also rejected medical and other professional opinions of sexuality, such as the psychiatric view of sexuality (Jagose, 1996). Instead of accepting 'expert opinions', people were encouraged to recognise their personal experiences as authoritative. A coming-out narrative was promoted as an important way to bring about social transformation – to publicly and unapologetically declare one's sexuality and assume a gay identity (Jagose, 1996:38; Bateman, 2015).

The theorising that emerged from the gay liberation movement provided a critique of sex and gender. Gay liberationists saw themselves as sharing the oppression of patriarchy because their sexuality, and sometimes general behaviour, were seen as not being masculine (Hurley & Johnston cited by Jagose, 1996:39). They argued that the oppression of homosexuality was a result of constraining gender roles that keep people from acknowledging who their true selves are (Bateman, 2015). They rejected traditional conceptualisations of sex and gender and views that saw gender roles as natural. They saw everyone as being oppressed by this system and were committed to challenging fixed ideas of masculinity and femininity. It was believed that liberation from repression brought about by fixed ideas about gender would result in a liberation of the artificial categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality and would allow people to explore their bisexual potential (Jagose, 1996:41; Bateman, 2015).

This critique of gender is an important contribution to a social constructionist understanding of sexuality and is perhaps the most important connection between gay liberation and queer understandings of sexuality (Jagose, 1996:41). Queer theory has, however, challenged gay liberationists' promotion of identity, as well as their understanding of a 'natural' sexuality that is being repressed by society. Queer theorists also critique the belief that large-scale social

transformation is possible.

2.2.2.3. Lesbian feminists: compulsory heterosexuality and disadvantaging women

The gay liberation movement developed alongside the women's movement in the 1960s and 1970s. A small number of lesbian women were involved in the gay liberation movement and some in the women's movement. Despite this involvement, lesbian women increasingly felt that they were being marginalised in both movements. On the one hand, the women's movement refused to deal with homosexuality and saw militant lesbianism as detracting from the project of securing equal rights for women. On the other hand, the gay liberation movement did not acknowledge how gay men and lesbian women were differently affected by oppressive structures (Jagose, 1996:44 & 45; Valk, 2018).

Increasingly, lesbians started analysing their specific political position. However, this effort was met with resistance and indifference in the gay liberation and women's movements. The feminist movement initially distanced itself from lesbianism, afraid that it would take some of the focus away of what the feminist movement was trying to achieve. The gay liberation movement also avoided calls by lesbian women to confront their role in patriarchal culture and admit that sexuality is gendered and produce differences between gay men and lesbian women (Jagose, 1996:45). Lesbians involved in women's organisations such as the National Organisation for Women (NOW) increasingly became dissatisfied with the ignoring of lesbian issues. A number of women broke away to more directly challenge this refusal through position papers and disruptions at women's congresses, which slowly led to progress. The lesbian feminist writing of the 1970s focused on collective organising and theorising of the lesbian position (Jagose, 1996: 46-49; Arthur, 2015).

In 1980, Adrienne Rich published her enormously influential essay titled 'Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence', which exemplifies the lesbian feminist position of the 1980s (Jagose, 1996:49). Rich aimed to link 'lesbian' with 'feminist' and to highlight the position of lesbians as women. Rich saw lesbianism as best understood within the categories of gender, a position that distances itself from an affiliation with the gay liberation movement. According to Rich, gender, and not sexuality, is the primary category of identification for lesbian women. Rich also coined the term 'compulsory heterosexuality', which became enormously influential and contributed to the analysis which Seidman (2009)

sees as the most important contribution to critical sex studies, of viewing sexuality as an institution. Rich sees heterosexuality as working to the detriment of all women (Jagose, 1996:53). According to her, heterosexuality is not just a matter of ‘personal preference’, but a structure and institution such as capitalism, and “maintained by a variety of sources” (Rich cited by Jagose, 1996:54). By naturalising heterosexuality and pathologising lesbianism, heterosexual masculinity is privileged and kept in power. For Rich, lesbianism is an act of resistance to compulsory female heterosexuality and it denaturalises heterosexuality.

Rich’s position denaturalises heterosexuality by naturalising gender categories (Jagose, 1996:54). However, not all lesbian feminists agreed with this analysis. The work of Monique Wittig, for example, also challenged heterosexual dominance, but she disagrees with Rich on the presumption of gender categories. She sees gender as underpinning categories of sexuality, and that doing away with sex roles would result in the disappearance of categories such as homosexuality and heterosexuality (Wittig cited by Jagose, 1996:55).

Lesbian feminism is often presented as a coherent movement, but it is clear that it encompasses a range of political and theoretical positions. It is also seen as opposite to queer theory, but some of queer theory’s most important thinking originated in early lesbian feminist thinking. This includes arguing how gender is complicit in legitimising heterosexuality as normative, viewing sexuality as institutional rather than personal, and providing a critique of heterosexuality (Jagose, 1996: 56-57).

2.2.2.4. The limits of identity

The political work and theoretical analysis of both gay liberationists and lesbian feminists made an important contribution to a constructionist understanding of sexuality. This is important to note, as these movements have often been critiqued as having essentialist views of sexuality (Jagose, 1996:60). Both movements worked to transform oppressive social structures and to present same-sex sexual practices as valid (Jagose, 1996:60). Both lesbian feminists and gay liberationists also agreed that the gender binary, hetero/homosexuality division, male dominance, and heterosexual privilege make it possible for heterosexuality to become compulsory (Seidman, 2009:19). Furthermore, gay liberationists and lesbian feminists pointed out that compulsory heterosexuality and the gender binary are mutually dependent on each other, in that heterosexuality prescribes gender differences and a binary that normalises heterosexuality (Seidman, 2009:20). These were important constructionist

insights into sexuality that movements and theorists that followed them, built on.

The initial focus on liberation by gay liberationists and lesbian feminists assumed that individuals should be freed from the constraints of a system that bind them to fixed gender and sexual roles to fully live out their androgynous human nature. This focus on liberation started shifting in the 1970s to make way for an ethnic model, which had a focus on community identity and cultural difference (being lesbian or gay was constructed as analogous to being a member of an ethnic minority). The focus, therefore, increasingly became one of building community within the movements and on securing civil rights (Seidman cited by Jagose, 1996:59). The shift to an ethnic model, that is seen by many as the movements losing their radical edge, was partly because of a disillusionment with the grand vision of transforming society, and partly because of a re-evaluation of strategies of power and resistance, which had more of a focus on securing local and specific rights, rather than an attempt to change a universal social order (Jagose, 1996:60).

The ethnic model constructed a unified lesbian and gay subject, which enabled gays and lesbians to be seen as a coherent community, and to mobilise for their rights around this identity. This process, however, excluded some groups who did not identify with the subject of the ethnic model. This included black gays and lesbians who argued that race was not just an identity category additional to their sexuality, but central to their experiences. These contributions by black gays and lesbians destabilised the idea of a unified gay and lesbian subject (Jagose, 1996:63). The subject of the ethnic model was similarly challenged by non-normative sexualities who did not fit the 'standard' idea of a gay man or lesbian women. The ethnic model uncritically accepted normative ideas about sexuality – viewing it through a binary lens of heterosexuality and homosexuality. Critiques of a unified subject was not necessarily to broaden the category, but to show the limits of identity categories. These limits of identity were further informed by the work of postmodern and poststructuralist scholars on understandings of sex, gender, sexuality, power and resistance. All of this contributed further to the development of a constructionist, and specifically queer, understanding of sexuality.

One of the poststructuralist scholars, whose work contributed to a postmodern understanding of sexuality, is Michel Foucault. His work is briefly discussed next as it further developed a constructionist view of sexuality and informed the theoretical thinking of Judith Butler and other queer theorists.

2.2.2.5. Foucault and the History of Sexuality

Foucault's 'History of Sexuality' (1978) is taken as the main theme of this section. Foucault's work is especially important in this chapter because it helps to provide an understanding of how institutions such as the church have power to define what is acceptable when it comes to sexuality. Foucault focused on discourse and the part it plays in producing and regulating human sexuality. His work also demonstrated how power is productive, not just repressive. Foucault's scholarship contributed to problematising claims to identity and, as is discussed in the section on queer theory, was foundational for the ideas of theorists such as Judith Butler in further criticising the norm of heterosexuality.

Foucault's analysis (1978:3) begins in the 17th century when, according to him, people did not feel the need to conceal sexual practices and could speak freely about topics relating to sexuality. However, this changed towards the 19th century. Around this period, the Victorian bourgeoisie appear to have been determined to take control of sexuality and confine it to certain institutions in society. A sense of secrecy developed around the way people spoke about sexuality and only certain institutions such as the family had the legitimacy to talk about sex. According to Foucault (1978:17), the 17th century may appear to have been an age in which the censorship of sex became masterful. It was as though the subject and conversations surrounding sex were to be eradicated from everyday discourse. But, argues Foucault (1978:17), if one looks closer, the past three centuries could also be seen as a period of discursive explosion around sex, even though some control was exerted over what was said. This control could be seen in the "policing of statements" in which sexuality became strictly controlled in terms of where and when it could be spoken about, under which circumstance, who could talk about it, and the social relationship of the speakers (Foucault, 1978:18). For instance, parents could not talk about sex with their children, teachers with pupils, and masters with domestic servants.

From the 18th century, various discourses about sex started to gain momentum. This was especially true with agencies of power, including the Church and medical institutions, which were determined to hear sex spoken about, and each produced their discourse. For instance, in the Catholic Church, this could be seen in the explicit questions used in confessional manuals (Foucault, 1978:18; Spargo, 1999). During confession, it became crucial to be descriptive and give as much detail about the sexual acts as possible, such as positions, body language, places touched, and moments of pleasure as they occurred, while remaining

discrete. Even though some statements were policed, it was still essential to confess in detail the sins of the flesh, thoughts, and desires. This was done to impose self-examination rules and to demonstrate how important penance was when it came to the sins of the flesh (Foucault, 1978:19). It was then that the sexuality of the individual became the focus, and confession in the Church became one way of embodying social norms (Spargo, 1999:16). Good Christians were obligated to confess their sins of the flesh. Everything sexual had to be confessed, put into discourse. This is how sex was transformed into a discourse (Foucault, 1978:20).

There is a noticeable difference in how the various discourses throughout centuries have influenced sexuality. For instance, during the 16th century, people who engaged in ‘shameful’ sexual practices only had to go to confession (Spargo, 1999:18). However, during the 19th century, people who engaged in those practices such as same-sex were now seen as having a different identity from the normal one caused by their abnormal biology. People who engaged in same-sex practices were then categorised as ‘homosexuals’ (Mottier, 2012:28). As Foucault (1978:43) puts it, the “homosexual became a personage”, a species. Homosexuality became a sexual category for people who engaged in same-sex practices. It was personified, and became a trait that defined certain individuals (Foucault, 1978:44). This belief that abnormal biology was behind manifestations of same-sex desire led to the use of sexual inversion to describe people who suffered from some type of gender disorder. This included women who were believed to be “trapped in men’s bodies” and vice versa, people believed to have a third sex and those who dressed in clothes of the opposite gender (Mottier, 2012:30).

In view of the above, it is clear that specialised fields and institutions had the power to produce and name sexual categories and identities. Organisations of power needed to produce certain identifying categories so that they would be able to classify people (Volger, 2016:859). The practice of naming categories and assigning qualities to certain categories, strips individuals of their agency as influence supersedes them and falls to the group with the most influence or power (Samelius & Wagberg, 2005:11). According to Foucault (1978:9), the nature and modes of power present in societies are responsible for repressing sexuality and behaviour. Foucault (1978:140) referred to this phenomenon as bio-power, the exercising of control over bodies. This bio-power can be seen in how religion and other specialised fields of knowledge are responsible for exercising their powers over the bodies and the lives of people (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2013:1476).

However, in relationships where power operates, resistance is bound to occur. As Spargo puts it, “there is no relation of power without resistances”, as those whose sexual identities have been labelled as deviant may find a common voice (Watson, 2005:71; Spargo, 1999:21 & 22). Oppressed groups may challenge dominant discourses through resistance in a form of reverse discourse to free themselves from this repression (Foucault, 1978:5). For instance, the hegemonic religious discourse of homosexuality may push gays and lesbians to take up the process of identity formation, and in turn challenge its categories through reverse discourses (Volger, 2016:859). Reverse discourses or counter normative alternatives are discourses that desire to transform knowledge associated with a particular discourse (Rasmussen, 2006:81). They further want to bring attention to the “other” that has been negated or forbidden (Lloyd, 2005:99). Despite being defined by outside discourses, gays and lesbians are active in those discourses (Honeychurch, 1996:343). This is what Foucault (1978:101) had to say about the reverse discourse of homosexuality:

...there is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and “psychic hermaphroditism” made possible a strong advance of social controls into the area of “perversity”; but it also made it possible for the formation of “reverse” discourse: homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or “naturalness” be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified.

Foucault’s work contributed to the reshaping of lesbian and gay studies built by challenging the idea that identity involves a “coherent and abiding sense of self” (Jagose, 1996:82). He also challenged commonly held ideas about power and resistance and informed the work of queer theorists. In the next section, the development of queer and queer theoretical thinking is discussed.

2.3. QUEER THEORY: A CONCEPTUALISATION AND CRITIQUE

This section offers a discussion on the general conceptualisation of queer theory which includes a queer critique of heterosexuality. It is followed by a critique of queer theory.

2.3.1. Queer theory: A general conceptualisation

As discussed, the history of the institutionalisation of Lesbian and Gay Studies, which progressed rapidly during the 1990s, created a platform for the coming of queer theory (Green, 2007:28; Jagose, 1996:2; Schippert, 2011:67). The theory, as mentioned, drew

immensely from Foucault and poststructural feminism to critique Gay and Lesbian Studies' approach of the self and institutions responsible for the construction of contemporary homosexuality (Seidman, 2009:24)⁵.

When it comes to sexuality, poststructuralists reject the assumption that sexuality as a whole is a naturally given part of humans. As has been discussed, Foucault believed sexuality was mostly a social construct (Namaste, 1994:221; Mottier, 2012:31). However, this does not mean that Foucault and other sexuality scholars entirely disregard the role of biology (Spargo, 1999:12), but there is a shared sentiment among sexuality scholars that sexuality is not entirely a natural drive (Berger, 2009:662). This is supported by Watson (2005:70), who states that queer theory builds on Foucault's analysis of discourse and the notion of identity being "culturally and historically constituted". Also, as was shown in the previous section, gay and feminist theorists have been promoting the idea of sexuality as a social construct before the emergence of queer theory in academia (Stein & Plummer, 1994:183).

When queer theory came into the scene in the 1990s, it was replacing lesbian feminists and gay liberationists' critique of compulsory heterosexuality, as a revamped critical sex theory. When used as an adjective, queer means "not normal", or to be more precise, not heterosexual. It has been used more frequently as an alternative for diverse sexualities and genders (LGBTQI+), not fitting standard norms (Dilley, 1999:457). Queer can also be used as a noun to refer to individuals in marginalised groups. The term queer is politically charged as it describes the discrimination experienced by those who share a collective identity resulting from being marginalised due to their sexuality, rather than their gender identity. Queer is not from one particular school of thought, its institutionalisation is prominently associated with gays and lesbians. However, it also extends to cross-dressing and gender ambiguity, among other topics (Watson, 2005:68; Jagose, 1996:3). Seidman (1994:174) concurs and further states that queer theory is more than just about the oppression of gays and lesbians or gay liberation, but it also looks at institutional practices and the sexual discourses they produce and the social life that comes thereafter. In addition, it analyses how differences are repressed. For instance, a heterosexual person may engage in same-sex practices from time to time, and this does not necessarily mean that they are in denial about a bisexual identity. Often enough, sexual identity categories are inadequate in that they do not accommodate

⁵ Poststructuralism is a school of thought that challenges the foundationalist approach which sees individuals as autonomous, free to make decisions without the influence of the political and moral context they live in. The poststructuralist approach aims to dismantle traditional epistemologies (Namaste, 1994:221-23).

people like this example (Denton, 2016:58). It was this lack of inclusivity that made it possible for queer to emerge as a way of identification (Jagose, 1996:77). When it comes to sexuality studies, much attention is given to the opposition between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Consequently, people who do not fall in either of these identity categories e.g. people who identify as bisexual and transgender, have been excluded (Namaste, 1994:228). Outside literature, queer is not only used by gays and lesbians, but by those who also find the gay and lesbian identity to be restrictive.

Queer is found to be more flexible or fluid (Jagose, 1996:75). According to Stein and Plummer (1994:182), queer does not only look at gay and lesbian communities as examples of sexual difference. Rather, it is characterised by a variety of critical practices and critiques which wishes to dismantle, among other things, sex-gender systems and the representation of gay and lesbian desire in media. It furthers disrupts traditional categories and sexual powers located within the social and political sphere, which are communicated through discourses and are imposed by regulations (Spargo, 1999:9; Stein & Plummer, 1994:182).

The term queer theory itself was popularised by Teresa de Lauretis (1991) in ‘Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities’ when she was questioning the notion of normality (Watson, 2005:69). Queer is considered a consequence of problematising the construction of certain universal terms (Jagose, 1996:74). It would be fitting then if queer theory were called a category of contradiction, contradicting ‘normality’, and standing with the marginalised. From a queer analyst position, the hetero/homo binary is regarded as a “master category of social analysis” (Dilley, 1999:459). It is known for problematising categories of gender, sexuality, and identities, and further asserts that the concept of a natural sexuality is impossible by calling into question even unproblematised categories such as ‘man’ and ‘woman’ (Stein & Plummer, 1994:182; Jagose, 1996:3).

Once a derogatory word associated with homosexuality, queer has been proudly reclaimed by LGBTIQ+ and those whose sexualities have been “defined against the norm of heterosexuality” (Spargo, 1999: 3&7; Denton, 2016:59; Jagose, 1996:1). South African gays have also had to redefine and reclaim negative words such as ‘moffie’ – which was used as a derogatory term to refer to them – and now use it to identify or refer to themselves (Samelius & Wagberg, 2005:11). Eventually, it became adopted by those who embraced being different with no desire to fit in or of be tolerated (Spargo, 1999:38). Queer has an anti-identitarian element to it; it rejects the naming of subjects (Green, 2007:27). Queer theory, according to

Namaste (1994:224) “is interested in exploring the borders of sexual identities, communities, and politics” and in investigating how these borders are produced, regulated, and challenged. Queer’s interest in exploring borders makes it a particularly useful tool for understanding the “complexities of identity, oppression and group dynamics” (Watson, 2005:68).

Queer theorists did not only focus on heterosexuality, but they revisited cultural concepts (Seidman, 2009:24). They understand heterosexuality as being constituted discursively through cultural norms; compulsory heterosexuality and gender no longer took centre stage in their critiques as it had done previously. Even though Feminists and queer theorists sometimes had competing priorities, they both referenced from mainly two texts which were featured in most debates of the 1990s. First, Judith Butler’s (1990a) ‘Gender Trouble’, which was read both as a feminist and queer text. Butler was different from queer in that she took gender as a central critique in her analysis of heterosexuality (Jackson & Scott, 2010:80). Building on the foundation laid by Foucault, which saw sexual categories because of discourses, Butler took this a step further to explore and expose gender categories (Spargo, 1999:52). Butler focused on gender difference, taking the sex/gender binary as a starting point. She aimed to denaturalise the ideology of heteronormativity, the idea that a man can only be with a woman (Lloyd, 2005:25). She questioned some normalised expressions that are thought to be associated with only certain genders. Through this, Butler was able to demonstrate how gender privileges heterosexuality (Jagose, 1996:83). Gender Trouble (1990) “sought to undermine all efforts to wield a discourse of truth to delegitimise minority gendered and sexual practices”. This is not to say that all minority practices should be accepted or celebrated, but rather, some thinking ought to happen before arriving at any conclusions (1990: viii). The aim is to trouble gendered categories that promote compulsory heterosexuality and gender hierarchy and challenge sex, gender and desire categories (Bem, 1995:330).

For Butler, categories – whether heterosexual or homosexual – rely on what she refers to as gender performance to be successful (Watson, 2005:68). According to her, gender is performative. Gender performativity posits that our bodies are gendered in that our behaviour consists of a set of acts that are sustained over time. Thus, gender identity is essentially produced through the repetition of acts, which have made them appear natural over time whereas they are not (Jagose, 1996:84; Lloyd, 2005:25). This can be achieved through gender socialisation where modes of behaviours, such as gestures, are encouraged as they represent a

specific gendered identity. According to her, “gender is not an expression of what one is, it is something that one does” (Lloyd, 2005:25). Butler’s take on gender identity is a critique of the assumptions which have been made about gender, the popular one being that gender is naturally given. For her, gender is essentially based on impersonation.

To make sense of her take on gender performativity, Butler made it applicable to drag (Jagose, 1996:85). Butler sees all gender as drag, some sort of imitation of an envisioned man or woman (Bem, 1995:331). Drag is a good example of how gender is falsely naturalised and a way of deconstructing some strongly held assumptions that prioritise other genders and sexualities, due to their status as natural above others (Jagose, 1996:85-86). Gender performance is produced to be coherent with gender practices that regulate it (Butler, 1999:33). To quote Butler, “in imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself, as well as its contingency” (Butler, 1999:137-138). It is also important to note that by performativity gender, Butler was not implying that people could just decide what gender they felt like being on a given day (Jagose, 1996:86).

Bem (1995:329) proposed dismantling some of the assumptions mentioned above as they are culturally constructed meanings that have been practically linked with all human experiences, including modes of dress, how people express their emotions, and experience sexual desire. According to Bem (1995:33), this could be eliminated if sex, gender and desire categories (a thousand categories to be exact) can blossom and be fluid, thereby de-privileging the currently two-privileged genders that are “treated as normal and natural”. Similarly, Jackson and Scott (2010:26) support the idea of using plurals in the analysis of sexuality as a way of referring to sexualities instead of individualised human experiences that define divergence of “sexual identities, practices, and lifestyles”. Keeping in mind that queer theory opposes heteronormative assumptions; the next section offers a critique of heterosexuality.

2.3.2. Queer critique of heterosexuality

The queer critique of heteronormativity entails unsettling heterosexual norms (Jackson & Scott, 2010:74). For Victoria *et al.* (2010), categories such as LGBTIQ+ are responsible for heterosexuality retaining its status as the norm. LGBTIQ+ categories reinforce the idea that heterosexuality is the norm by constantly referring to homosexuality as a minority group, different from the norm. The focus on heterosexuality and homosexuality as being in opposition with each other has led to further marginalisation of other sexual orientations,

such as bisexuality. The danger of this is that heterosexuality and homosexuality are seen as the opposite of each other while simultaneously ignoring the diversity of human sexuality.

Feminists continued to critique hetero-relations dominated by men and the privilege and the norm of heterosexuality (Jackson & Scott, 2010:78). Many feminists became interested in queer theory primarily because of how it approached 'sexual and gendered identities', and how it was adamant about dismantling binary concepts that separated the sex (male and female) and sexual orientations (heterosexuality and homosexuality). Working collaboratively and sometimes separately, queer theory and feminism contributed to the revival of the analysis of heterosexuality. These two groups (feminism and queer theory) emphasised different aspects in their critique of heterosexuality. Foremost, the privilege and the naturalness of heterosexuality followed by the hierarchy it established as some gender divisions are privileged as the norm. Feminists mainly thought that gender division and hierarchy are related (Jackson & Scott, 2010:79).

2.3.3. Critique of queer

Like any other theories, queer theory has received its fair share of criticism. Queer theory has been criticised a great deal by gays and lesbians, and queer activists in academia for some of the following reasons. First, queer is no longer seen as a movement but an accessory of some sort. It has been turned into a slogan and thrown around like a fashion accessory, e.g. printed on t-shirts. Spargo (1996:66) questions whether queer has lost its value and has become just another identity category.

Second, queer writing has been criticised for its tendency to mainly focus on the negative aspects of gender and identity, and for imprisoning concepts (Spargo, 1999:67). Queer has been found to reduce and dilute understanding to a point of illogicality. Their attempt to not explain sexuality in terms of the essentialism/constructivism dichotomy has disregarded any genetic motivated studies. For instance, Butler's work on performativity has received criticism as a queer text for making it sound as if people can easily choose their gender just as they choose something to wear (Spargo, 1999:67). However, according to Jagose (1996:89), this criticism stems from people who have oversimplified or taken Butler's work on performativity in a literal sense. Jagose, in defence of Butler's work, noted that many people tend to misread Butler's work and that that is where their criticism stems from. Butler's theory was also critiqued for being too limited and not offering any insights on how

economic and social inequalities can be addressed (Watson, 2005:76). For others, she did not take power relations in her analysis of gender (Jagose, 1996:88).

Another critique against queer theory was that, once queer becomes normalised and respected, it stops being queer (Spargo, 1999:68). This assumption has been disputed by De Lauretis, who states that even with the rapid conceptualisation of queer, queer theory will not become irrelevant because it is constantly being reworked to fit the current social and discursive circumstances.

2.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter offered both the literature and theory of this study. The first section of the literature review provided a brief history of religious discourses and sexuality in Africa and South Africa. The discussion provided evidence that same-sex practices in Africa preceded colonial identities. It further showed that it was colonial discourses, namely Christian and anti-gay discourses, that were imposed on African sexual practices. These alien discourses continuously claim that homosexuality is neither Christian nor African. These discourses contributed to the Dutch-Roman law that criminalised sodomy in South Africa and, later, the anti-homosexuality sentiment under the apartheid government.

The study adopted a queer theoretical position in an attempt to comment on heteronormative ideas. The theory was influenced by the contributions of gay liberationists and lesbian feminists. Scholars such as Foucault and Butler are also influential figures in the development of the constructionist view of sexuality. Their work show how types of discourses, namely scientific/medical and religious/confessional, contributed to the construction of sexuality as we know it. Queer theory was a useful tool in that it could be used to challenge some of the dominant discourses from religious and medical institutions by arguing that sexuality is a social construct. Not only does it challenge heteronormative assumptions regarding sexuality, but it also acknowledges the existence of multiple sexualities.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design and methodology that guided the process of data collection and analysis. To choose the right research design or methods, the researcher should first understand the concept of a research paradigm. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26) define a paradigm as “a researcher’s worldview,” perspective, way of thinking, “or a set of shared beliefs that inform the meaning or interpretation of research data”. It is described as a worldview in that it consists of the researcher’s abstract ideas and principles, which shape how they both see and interpret the world and their actions in that world. Furthermore, it is a conceptual lens for researchers to assess the methodological aspects of their research and to determine the appropriate research methods and ways of analysing data. Therefore, a research paradigm guides researchers with the principles it provides. Paradigms also influence the researcher’s choice of what or how a phenomenon should be studied, and how to interpret the results of their studies. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:27), a research paradigm consists of the following elements: epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology. These elements are essential as they explain the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and norms of every paradigm. Epistemology in a paradigm refers to knowledge or the nature of knowledge (Don-Solomon & Eke, 2018:2-3). This includes how something comes to be known or what constitutes the truth. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. The element of methodology has to do with the research methods, such as sampling, collecting, and analysing data. The last part, axiology, is the ethical considerations of conducting research.

As indicated by the research objective, this study is explorative in nature. Therefore, qualitative research methods fit best, as these are explorative and it “stresses the importance of context, setting” and participants' viewpoints (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:58; Bailey, 2016:21). Furthermore, it is also worth noting that qualitative researchers consider epistemology to be interpretive and ontology to be socially constructed (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26).

The objective of this chapter is to determine the most appropriate methodology when studying the religious discourses of homosexuality among young people in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. To do so, this chapter discusses the paradigmatic elements

mentioned above in the following order. To begin with, it addresses the meta-theoretical (epistemology and ontology) focus of this study. This is followed by a discussion of the qualitative research methods that were selected, including sampling techniques, data collection methods, and data analysis. The researcher also provides the participants' biographical information. Finally, the ethical considerations (axiology) the researcher adhered to when conducting this research are discussed.

3.1. THE META-THEORETICAL FOCUS

This segment describes the characteristics of the meta-theoretical positions (social constructivism and interpretivism) taken by this study. When it comes to research, there are philosophical assumptions that inform the researcher's choice of theories that ultimately guides the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018:15). These philosophical assumptions include the researcher's ontological perspective (that is the researcher's views of reality), their epistemological position (what counts as actual knowledge), and the process of the research (methodology) (Creswell & Poth, 2018:18; Mason, 2002:14). What a qualitative researcher considers social reality is influenced by their assumption of a constructed notion of reality (ontology) and an interpretive approach to knowledge (epistemology) (Dean, 2018:3; Creswell & Poth, 2018:20; Mason, 2002:63). According to Thanh and Thanh (2015:26), the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm highly favours qualitative methods. This is significant for interpretivists, because these approaches provide them with rich data needed to understand a context to the full extent. Additionally, qualitative methods can support interpretivists' claims of a socially constructed and ever-changing reality (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26). This section highlights what accounts as reality in research and for participants. It also sheds some light on how knowledge is produced, interpreted, and also internalised.

3.1.1. Social constructivism

In Sociology, social constructivism is a body of knowledge that examines how the conceptualisation of the world came to be. By definition, it is a perspective that assumes that social and interpersonal interactions make up human experiences (Galbin, 2014:82). Social constructivism is rooted in several places, including social history and psychology, and existential-phenomenological psychology, to name a few (Galbin, 2014:87). Gay and lesbian theories have also paved the way for the development of social constructivism (Seidman, 1994:171). Throughout the 1980s, studies of homosexuality and the institutionalisation of gay

and lesbian study programmes were dominated by social constructionist perspectives. Having been rooted in academia and activism, social constructivism took from labelling and phenomenological theory, and Marxism and feminism heavily influenced it. Through the lens of social constructivism, sexuality – or the category of sexuality, whether heterosexuality or homosexuality – together with its classification and norms, are social and historical constructs.

Social constructionism has several features. To begin with, it disagrees with the positivistic approach, which believes in the existence of a single reality (Galbin, 2014:83; Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019:27). For the most part, social constructionism emphasises socially constructed realities. The evidence of those various realities is represented by the different perspectives that individuals hold, and they are also products of knowledge (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:25; Dean, 2018:3; Creswell & Poth, 2018:20). Furthermore, it takes a stance against assumptions taken for granted in the social world, which benefit and reinforce the interests of prominent social groups. Social constructionism also believes that our understanding of the world is a result of a historical process involving the interaction and negotiation that takes place among people.

According to Hurd (2008:300), social constructionism premises include the belief that meaning is socially constructed. Galbin (2014:84) asserts that meaning is the product of the “prevailing cultural frame of social, linguistic, discursive and symbolic practices”. In a world that is socially constructed, the social constructivist theory argues that people direct their acts toward objects and others based on what they mean to them (Hurd, 2008:300). The presence of patterns and cause-and-effect relationships are governed and constituted by networks of meaning and practices in a constructed world. Even though meanings and practices may appear stable, they are not permanently fixed. Over time, ideas, methods, and patterns considered to be set at some point, changed. For instance, consider how the discourse of homosexuality changed from the 17th century up to the 21st century, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Literature Review). While each century may have problematised homosexuality to some degree, there is a distinction in the way different institutions in those different centuries viewed and treated homosexuality.

For example, Foucault (1978:3) paints the seventeenth century as an era characterised by sexual freedom. However, towards the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this changed, as several social institutions – including religious, medical, law, and education – influenced a lot

of the discourses around sexuality (Oosterhuis, 2001:31-32). Sexuality became more restricted, and its purpose was redefined with the focus on reproduction, and specifically for married, heterosexual couples. However, towards the twentieth century, the discourse took a turn from the conversations of earlier decades and centuries. One of the most significant changes could be seen in the way laws that had previously constrained homosexuality in various social institutions, were altered. For instance, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, some countries started decriminalising homosexuality. Others went as far as legalising same-sex marriage. South Africa, for example, legalised same-sex marriage in 2006 (Nell & Shapiro, 2011:12). This growing tolerance of homosexuality reinforces claims made by Hurd (2008:300) that in a socially constructed world, meanings and practices are not permanently fixed; instead, they change over time. In this regard, social constructivism does not take homosexuality or same-sex experiences as being a fixed identity, but as one with different meanings and social roles throughout history (Seidman, 1994:171).

3.1.2. Interpretivism

As mentioned, epistemology is one of the core elements of a paradigm. The term episteme is derived from a Greek word meaning knowledge. In research, epistemology has come “to describe how we come to know something; how we know the truth or reality; or what counts as knowledge within the world” (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:27). When it comes to knowledge, epistemology is concerned with the nature and forms of knowledge, and how knowledge can be both acquired and communicated between people. For researchers, this has to do with how they can gain insight to contribute and deepen understanding in their fields of study. As a qualitative study, this research will be looking at knowledge from an interpretivist approach. The development of the interpretive paradigm was influenced by the critique of the natural sciences’ positivistic worldview. Positivism is primarily used by quantitative researchers who argue in favour of the existence of one reality (Dean, 2018:3).

Interpretivist researchers, in contrast, believe in the presence of multiple, subjective realities, which are socially constructed. Keeping in mind that the nature of ontology in a qualitative paradigm assumes the existence of various realities, the existence of those multiple realities is supported by a qualitative epistemology in which knowledge becomes known through individuals’ personal experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018:21; Thanh & Thanh, 2015:24). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:27), and Rahi (2017), an interpretivist paradigm emphasises the perspective of individual participants and makes every effort to try and

understand how they interpret “the world around them”; hence, why interpretivism is sometimes referred to as a constructivist paradigm.

Epistemology requires that researchers investigate how it is that people come to know what they know. This study found that, when it came to religion and sexuality, much of the existing knowledge on African sexualities is shaped by the discourses of the powerful elite, such as politicians, religious leaders, and the media. Leaders in these institutions set in motion discourses on sexuality, which are then taken as sexual truth and universal norms (Tamale, 2014a:156). Religious leaders, such as the ones previously mentioned (e.g. Buchan), have not shied away from expressing their displeasure regarding LGBTQ issues. For such leaders, the only accepted truth when it comes to sexuality is that a man is supposed to be with a woman and vice versa. Thus, they only accept heterosexuality as the truth. However, this position of religious leaders has not been accepted by everyone.

For instance, Tamale (2014a:170), has argued that some Africans do not passively accept established hegemonic sexual discourses. Some people have rejected these dominant sexual discourses. Attempts to reshape African sexualities and to challenge these ‘truths’ have also been influenced by feminist movements, particularly feminists in academia. They have made a significant contribution to the deconstruction of “religious understanding of sexuality” (Tamale, 2014a:159). They have done so by challenging what has long been considered sexual truths of African sexualities, as well as the various forms of discrimination, including those based on sex and sexual identity (Hunt & Jung, 2009:164; Tamale, 2014a:159). Instead of merely accepting previous knowledge, these movements challenge it and offer their interpretations. Rejecting dominant discourses and coming up with alternative discourses is in line with the interpretivist paradigm, because both argue against the notion of a single truth. Instead, they advocate for knowledge that is subjective and thus interpretive. The following section discusses the research methodology of the study.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the methodology element of this research paradigm. The discussion includes the process of selecting research participants, methods of collecting, and analysing data. The researcher’s choice of research design and methodology is determined by their research objectives and questions. Having well-defined research objectives can help the researcher make the right decisions about which research design to use. This can include

deciding which population should be part of the study, to selecting which methods of data collection and analysis should be used (Thomas & Hodges, 2010:43; Bailey, 2016:19). The qualitative paradigm chosen offers methods of inquiry and data collection that best suit the research questions asked. This decision was determined by the main research objective, which seeks to explore the dominant religious discourses on homosexuality amongst young adults in Pentecostal churches in a small city. Also, the researcher used a qualitative paradigm because it supports the notion of socially constructed reality and interpretivist knowledge (Dean, 2018:3).

According to Rahman (2017:103), qualitative research focuses on people's "lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organisational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomena, and interactions between nations". It places emphasis on people and how they make sense of things in their worlds. For Flick (2014:542), qualitative research is "interested in analysing subjective meanings". These conceptualisations of qualitative research align with the social constructivist premise of multiple realities because it assumes that realities are social constructs (Galbin, 2014:83; Bloomfield & Fisher, 2019:27). A qualitative paradigm is ideal for this study because it supports the pluralisation of life (various viewpoints and experiences), which is accompanied by the growing emphasis on individualised lifestyles and biographical patterns (Flick, 2009:12). This support of the pluralisation of life is illustrated in its accounting for the ways people create their meaning (Hurd, 2008:300). It also seeks to understand the world from the perspectives of individuals, which explains why it emphasises an interpretivist approach to data. This approach makes it possible for the researcher to make sense of people's lived experiences and their meanings (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:24). For instance, participants may have varying interpretations of a particular phenomenon, which in turn forms their realities. Those realities are constructed through their conversations and the discourses around them. The aim of qualitative research is to comprehend a phenomenon (including the one researched in this study) from the viewpoints of different participants, trace the path of discourses, or understand how rules (cultural or social) are relevant to the situation the researcher is attempting to comprehend (Flick, 2009:66).

The following features summarise qualitative research and were implemented in this study.

1. Qualitative studies take place in a naturalistic setting;

2. An array of research questions are designed with the goal to explore, interpret, or make sense of the social environment;
3. Non-probability sampling methods are used to determine which individuals will yield vital information regarding research questions;
4. Data collection techniques include observation and interviewing practices, among others.

3.2.1. Sampling procedures

In any given study, researchers have to identify a phenomena or individuals that they consider to be relevant. In other words, they have to select a sample. A researcher must first identify a “setting, population, or phenomenon of interest” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:68). According to Marshall and Rossman (1999:69), once the researcher has identified a relevant population for the study, they can proceed to sampling the population. Rahi (2017) defines a population as “all people or items that one wishes to understand, while sampling is the process of selecting a segment of the population for investigation”. In this study, qualitative sampling procedures made it possible for the researcher to identify and select participants whose participation would most contribute to understanding the dominant religious discourse of homosexuality. Qualitative sampling procedures rely on non-probability sampling, defined by Rahi (2017) as a “sampling approach in which the chance or probability of each unit being selected is not known or confirmed”. In this study, non-probable, purposive and snowball sampling methods, which are specific to qualitative research, were employed to recruit participants (Gentles *et al.*, 2015:1778).

3.2.1.1. Purposive sampling

The sampling method chosen by the researcher is essential as it has to allow the researcher to answer their question of interest. In this regard, the methodology objective is ultimately decided by the research question (Tongco, 2007:147). Accordingly, qualitative sampling is characterised as purposive because it is informed by the objectives of the research. Purposive sampling, also commonly referred to as judgment sampling, is a participant selection tool that gives the researcher the choice when selecting participants. It is driven by what the researcher needs to know and who they need to talk to, to get the relevant information based on the knowledge or experience of participants (Tongco, 2007:147). This statement is supported by Gentles *et al.* (2015:1778), who assert that qualitative sampling is purposive in that

participants who can contribute in-depth data to the study are selected. This means that participants are selected strategically so that they are relevant to the research questions being asked (Bryman, 2012:418). The only non-negotiable criteria for inclusion was that participants should be a young member (under the age of 30) of a Pentecostal church in Potchefstroom. The researcher attempted to include an even number of men and women, and have diversity in terms of race, however, these were negotiable criteria and everyone who met the non-negotiable criteria was included.

With purposive sampling, researchers are not allowed to make generalisations about the population (Bryman, 2012:418). In any case, the intention of this research is not to make any generalisations or represent the views of all Christians. Instead, it seeks to offer some insight into the perspectives of the participants on religious discourses of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. The researcher also utilised the snowball sample method discussed next to locate participants.

3.2.1.2. Snowball sampling

In social science, snowball is arguably employed often as a qualitative sampling method (Noy, 2008:330). According to Bryman (2012:418), snowball sampling is an example of purposive sampling. The initial step in snowball sampling involves the researcher contacting possible identified participants who are recruited and then asked to make referrals, and so on (Bryman, 2012:202; Rahi, 2017). According to Noy (2008:330), snowball sampling is a repetitive process of the researcher being referred to other participants. This is particularly effective when the researcher is attempting to obtain and access specific information and populations (Noy, 2008:330). In this study, the researcher applied this sampling method by asking people she already knew identified as Pentecostal Christians to recommend prospective participants. They were asked to refer the researcher to people who met the characteristics of the identified sample. People who agreed to participate were again asked for referrals – a repetitive process, as pointed out by Noy (2008:330). The researcher found this method to be convenient as it made it easier to get hold of participants.

In some cases, the researcher did not have to explicitly ask participants to suggest prospective participants, as they did so voluntarily. They knew people who would potentially be interested in taking part in this study. Talking to participants who were already keen on sharing their views meant that the researcher would obtain rich data, because they felt like

they had something to add to the conversation. Therefore, sampling mostly relied on participants identifying and referring the researcher to more participants who shared the same characteristics. For instance, these were usually members of their peer groups who went to the same churches as them. With this method, the researcher was able to interview participants from different Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. The researcher decided to talk to participants from different Pentecostal churches to see if they agreed or disagreed in their views on sexuality. Once participants were identified, data could be collected.

3.2.2. Data collection methods

Interpretivists use methods that allow them to gain an in-depth understanding of human relationships in their environment and the roles people take to create the social fabrics they belong to (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26). Keeping in mind the meta-theoretical focus of the study, which emphasises the idea of a constructed nature of reality and an interpretivist approach to knowledge, qualitative data collection methods such as interviewing allows the interviewer to build knowledge as they interact with the interviewees (Mason, 2002:64). According to Creswell and Poth (2018: 136-164), qualitative interviews attempt “to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experience, to uncover their lived world”. According to Punch (2014:144), interviews are an excellent method of accessing perceptions and meanings that people have. As such, taking into account the objective of this study, the researcher chose to employ interviews as a suitable method of collecting data. Berg (2009:101) defined interviewing as a conversation with the aim of gathering information. It is an effective means of gathering information if the researcher's point of reference is "understanding the perceptions or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events" (Berg, 2009:110). To gain a better understanding of participants’ perceptions, the researcher chose two of the commonly used interviewing methods, namely, individual and focus groups, conducted in a face-to-face setting (Marshall & Rossman, 1999:61; Punch, 2014:144; Ryan *et al.*, 2009:309).

Qualitative interviewing can be grouped under the following three structures: standardised, semi-standardised, and unstandardised (Berg, 2009:105). When placed on a continuum, standardised and unstandardised interviews would be located on opposite ends, with semi-standardised interviews somewhere in the middle. Each structure differs slightly or significantly from the other based on where they are located. For instance, standardised interviews tend to be highly structured. The research questions have to be asked in a specific

order, using the exact wording of each question (Ryan *et al.*, 2009:310). Furthermore, additional items may not be added, and the language level may not be adjusted. Thus, there is no room for deviation. Unstandardised interviews, in contrast, are on the polar opposite of standardised interviews in that they are entirely unstructured (Berg, 2009:105 & 106). These types of interviews do not follow any order of questions or are under any obligation to stick to the wording of the questions in interviews. Unlike standardised interviews, unstandardised interviews allow the interviewer to adjust the level of language. The interviewers do not go into the interviews with a list of fixed questions, and more items can be added. Instead, they develop, generate, and adapt questions according to each meeting.

The last interview method, semi-structured, is located in the middle of the structure continuum. According to Mason (2002:62), semi-structured interviewing techniques have the following standard features: for the most part, this interviewing method typically involves face-to-face, “over the phone or the internet” conversations that take place one on one or in groups. Here the interviewer will arrange a list of questions and defined themes (Berg, 2009:107). The items may be asked in a systematic order; however, the interviewer has the freedom to deviate. For instance, during the interview, questions may be reordered, and additional items may be asked. Furthermore, the interviewer can adjust the language if interviewers need more clarity. In this research, a semi-structured interviewing method was employed by the researcher because it was appropriate for conducting individual and focus group discussions in a face-to-face setting.

When conducting interviews for this research, the researcher found that in some instances, it was necessary to reorder the questions as every interview session differed. This was also done to avoid repeating questions that had already been answered. According to May (2001:123), semi-structured interviews can start with the researcher having specified questions, which the interviewee is free to probe by asking for clarification or elaboration, which takes the form of a dialogue. This is supported by Marshall and Rossman (1999:69), who compared qualitative research in-depth interviews with conversations that require less formal events. During such conversation-like interviews, participants get to talk about a phenomenon as they view it. To concur, the researcher in this study found that the data generated from less structured interviews was more detailed. Because the discussions felt more like a conversation as the researcher did not have to ask questions in the specific order they were listed in the interview schedule.

It was through a series of mock interviews and trials with the different qualitative interviewing structures discussed above – standardised, semi-standardised, and unstandardised – that the researcher was able to determine that a semi-structured approach would produce the best results. Before the pilot of the actual data collection of this study, the researcher conducted mock/practice interviews. Three of those interviews were with individuals, and one was a focus group discussion with three people. These practice interviews helped the researcher to conduct interviews in a way that fostered the best outcome. For instance, the researcher was able to learn which interview structure worked best for this type of study. In the mock interviews, the researcher adopted a more structured approach by asking participants questions in a fixed order with minimal to no prompting. This approach did not yield rich data.

This lack of data ultimately influenced the researcher's decision to employ a more conversation-oriented approach, which was less structured. Conducting mock interviews further helped the researcher in a number of ways. Interview questions were redefined: for instance, items that were not clear were adjusted to minimise confusion, and the researcher was able to identify repetitive questions. The researcher could also prompt participants efficiently to solicit more information in the interviews. Furthermore, the researcher was able to anticipate some of the follow-up questions participants had. The mock interviews also showed the researcher that taking an interest in participants' lives – for instance, asking why they preferred the church they affiliated with to other Pentecostal churches – allowed participants to feel more relaxed when the interview began. Due to the relaxed nature of the interviews, the participants were able to redirect some of the questions they had been asked back at the researcher. Other participants were also curious to know the researcher's religious affiliation or the researcher's sexual identity. The researcher identified as heterosexual and agnostic (religious view).

Once the mock interviews were complete, the actual data collection began. From the sampling procedures, 27 prospective participants were identified and invited to be interviewed for the study. The interviews were conducted over approximately ten weeks, from 30 January 2019 till 9 April 2019. Of the 27 consenting participants, 15 took part in individual interviews, while the remaining 12 participated in five focus group discussions. The interviews conducted lasted between 20 minutes and one hour. The individual interviews were face-to-face interviews, where the researcher and participant engaged in a conversation

guided by a set of questions prepared beforehand. The interviews were conducted in English. During the meetings, the researcher got to know more about the different perspectives participants had about religion and sexuality. The researcher also had the opportunity to conduct group interviews. Group interviews were different from individual interviews in that group discussions allowed the researcher to engage with more than one participant simultaneously.

Group interviews are characterised by strong interactions among the interviewees in the group. According to Hakansson (2014:186), focus groups allow participants to “reflect both on their own” and on other people’s perspectives. In focus group sessions, people who share similar experiences or even those who come from different backgrounds are invited to take part. For example, the participants who took part in this study’s group discussions were all from Pentecostal churches. In total, there were five group interviews. The first group discussion had four (Black) participants, two males and two females. The second group consisted of two (Black) female participants. The third and fourth group both consisted of one (Black) male and one (Black) female participant. And the last group consisted of one (Black) female and one (White) male participant. The researcher decided to continue the discussions with only two participants after noticing that, in the first group, not all participants engaged in the conversation. Most of the time only two people were doing the talking while the rest just agreed with what was said. The researcher found that two participants could feed off each other and contribute equally to the discussion. For instance, in cases where participants had opposing views, they could ask each other questions regarding their points of view.

Qualitative interview methods, as depicted above, can be advantageous for the researcher. However, they do come with some disadvantages. Transcribing the interviews and analysing transcripts can be quite time-consuming (Bryman, 2012:469; De Vos *et al.*, 2012:398). Qualitative interviews can be lengthy, which means that transcribing the conversations can take even longer. Once the data was collected, the next logical step was data analysis, which would take the researcher one step closer to understanding religious discourses of sexuality amongst the sample of participants.

3.2.3. Data analysis

Thematic analysis (TA), a commonly used qualitative analytic approach, was used to analyse

the collected data (Seidel, 1998). The underlying objective of TA is to produce themes that practically yield results in research. Through this process, the researcher gains a deeper understanding of the assumptions that inform participants' perspectives of the world and a particular topic. This includes participants' perceptions based on their "subjective meanings and social reality", which are conveyed through themes and subthemes (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016:101; Basit, 2003:143). During analysis, TA is a method that identifies, categorises, analyses, and reports emerging patterns or themes within the data. Themes contain codes that share a common element and bring ideas together. During analysis, this method helped the researcher to identify and organise recurring themes and concepts throughout the interviews. The researcher was then able to select which ideas were relevant for the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79-80; Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016:101). According to Vaismoradi *et al.* (2016:100), TA's key characteristics include "a systematic process of coding, examining meaning and provision of a description of the social reality through the creation of themes".

In qualitative analysis, coding lays the foundation and is the starting point of data analysis. It is a process of transitioning from the collection of data to extensively analysing data. It involves organising data by assigning codes to it. In a qualitative inquiry, a code can be a word, tag, label, or a short paragraph that summarises sections of data that stood out for the researcher, while coding is the process of putting codes on data. Coding is done to assign meaning to a segment of data (Saldana, 2016:4-5; Punch, 2014:173; Basit, 2003:144). From here, themes emerge with identifying patterns. The themes identified in TA can be inductive or theoretical. In this study, the themes identified were both inductive (data-driven) and deductive (theory-driven). The analysis was inductive in that themes that were identified were linked to the data collected from interviews conducted. These themes did not necessarily emerge from the questions participants were asked. As a coding process, the inductive analysis does not attempt to fit data in a "pre-existing coding frame" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:83). TA, in this sense, is data-driven. However, this study was conducted with an established objective of exploring dominant religious discourses of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. Therefore, the analysis was also theory-driven in that data was approached with formulated questions from the literature which the researcher sought to understand (Braun & Clarke, 2006:84).

The patterns that emerge from themes are anything repetitive, regular, or that appears consistently more than twice. Researchers take these patterns as indicators of how people

experience the world they live in. Once these patterns become predictable, they serve as trustworthy evidence of the findings as they demonstrate habits that people see as crucial to their daily lives (Saldana, 2016:5-6). Patterns may be based on “similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence and causation” (Saldana, 2016:7). Patterns of coded data do not only categorise things together solely based on their similarity but also because they share some similarities in their differences.

According to Braun and Clarke (2006:86-87), “analysis is not a linear process”, where one phase leads to the next. On the contrary, it is a recursive process that involves moving back and forth between the stages. There are several approaches to analysis, including those of Huberman and Miles, Creswell, Morse and Field, and the method of Marshall and Rossman (Theron, 2015:6). For the most part, all these approaches follow a recursive process and the six phases of TA mentioned by Braun and Clarke (2006:86). In the first phase, the analyst familiarises themselves with the data. This stage mostly happens when data is being transcribed and while reading and re-reading the data and writing down ideas for coding. It also takes place during the data collection process. In this study, the researcher worked with verbal data (interviews), which were transcribed into Word format before the TA could be conducted. This phase is similar to what Theron (2015:5) refers to as initial (open) coding. According to Holton (2010:24), open coding is characterised by an in-depth analysis of data as it requires the researcher to go over the data line by line.

This process leads to the second phase where the researcher codes the data as thoroughly as possible to get core concepts. Consequently, this will result in multiple codes, some of which will be discarded at a later stage when codes are being organised under themes (Glaser, 2016:108). The coding process entails grouping data under specific codes. The codes are then assessed for meaning concerning the phenomenon being studied (Braun & Clarke, 2006:87-88). In this study, coding was performed manually, using Microsoft Office Word. The researcher coded by highlighting and naming sections of sentences or phrases from the interviews, which was retrieved later for further analysis. Once all the data was coded, the researcher looked for themes in the third phase. Here codes were collected under potential themes that are broader than codes (Braun & Clarke, 2006:87 & 89). The third phase is usually referred to as selective coding (Glaser, 2016:108). It is a process that entails the researcher managing the multitudes of codes by focusing on relevant ones. Holton (2010:31) further asserts that the researcher can only begin with selective coding once potential core

concepts have been identified. In phase four, themes are reviewed. Here, the researcher checks the themes to see if they match the coded data and the rest of the data set and also checks which themes work. For instance, they check whether the themes are supported by enough data and whether they have ensured that all the extracts work with themes they have been grouped under. At this point, there should be a visible story traceable in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006:87 & 91).

Themes have to be clearly defined and named in the fifth phase. As analysis is an ongoing process, each theme is refined to tell a clear story of analysis. Themes that will be presented for analysis (in Chapter 4) are further defined and refined, and the analysis should have a clear picture of what each theme is about (Braun & Clarke, 2006:87 & 92). At this stage of analysis, the data should have produced a thematic map. The last phase of TA entails “producing the report”. This is the writing-up stage of TA. Selected extracts from the analysis must link with “the research question and literature” to produce “a scholarly report of the analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:87 & 93). The analysis should account for the data by telling a story that is “concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting”. It isn’t just about providing data; it must be an analytic narrative.

3.3. PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The table below displays the biographical information of the study's participants. The table reflects the data collection methods, names, age, sex, and race of the participants.

Table 1: Biographical information of participants

Data collection segment	Name	Age	Sex	Race
Individual interviews	Nash	25	Female	Black
	Simone	27	Female	White
	Kim	23	Female	Black
	Amo	21	Male	Black
	James	22	Male	Black
	Tbell	28	Female	Black
	Bossy	25	Male	Black
	Jane	20	Female	Black
	Siya	19	Male	Black
	Allison	22	Female	Black
	Kagiso	24	Male	Black
	Chris	23	Male	Black
	Gosiame	22	Female	Black
	Abbe'Gayle	20	Female	Coloured
	Lamor	21	Male	Black
Focus groups	Zorro	24	Male	Black
	Kiprop	20	Male	Black
	Michelle	24	Female	Black
	Monice	21	Female	Black
	Percy	24	Female	Black
	Riekert	22	Male	White
	Babyboy	21	Male	Black
	Palesa	21	Female	Black
	Tshepi	25	Female	Black
	Teller	26	Male	Black
	Jade	22	Female	Black
	kirsten	21	Female	Black

The participants in this study were all South Africans living in Potchefstroom in the North-West Province at the time of the interviews. The interviews were conducted with a total of 27 participants. Of the 27 participants, 15 identified as female and 12 as male; and they were from a number of different Pentecostal churches. Fifteen interviews were conducted in individual interviews, and 5 were focus groups. The youngest participant was 20 years of age, and the oldest was 28. The researcher did not ask participants about their sexual identities because it was deemed personal and might have had ethical implications. However, in hindsight this had implications on the overall argument. The following section focuses on the ethical considerations which guided this study from its inception.

3.4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics in research have become about protecting those involved in the study – participants in particular (Flick, 2009:36). Throughout the years, numerous ethics committees such as the British Psychological Society (BPS), American Sociological Association (ASA), and the Social Research Association (SRA), to name a few, have made the informed consent a requirement in research. It was made mandatory to protect participants and the information obtained from them and also to avoid harming or invading their privacy or deceiving them (Flick, 2009:37). Before collecting data, it was important for participants to give their consent to voluntary participation in the study. This was done by providing participants with a sheet of information on the research and a written consent form they were requested to sign. It was explained to participants that voluntary participation also meant that, during the data collection process, they could choose to pull out of the study at any point should they wish to do so. Participants could also choose to withdraw some of the data collected from the research (BPS, 2014:15). In this case, participants were also informed about the nature and purpose of the study beforehand. In addition, participants provided written consent for the interviews to be recorded so they could be transcribed later on for data analysis.

After getting voluntary consent from prospective participants, they should also be guaranteed their confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity to protect their identity and information (Flick, 2009:40; Rahman, 2017:107). This confidentiality comes in the form of safeguarding “information obtained from and about participants during” data collection and the results, unless stated otherwise in advance (BPS, 2014:22; Rahman, 2017:107). Given the sensitivity concerning religion and sexuality, the principles of confidentiality and privacy (as stated in the Informed Consent) are of utmost importance. When conducting research, areas of focus such as religion and sexual practices, have been considered sensitive because they pose an intrusive threat (Dickson-Swift *et al.*, 2008:2). A common concern of some participants in this research was that other people from their churches would know that they had participated in this study. They were concerned because they did not want people to think that their perspectives on the topic of religion and sexuality represented the perceptions of their church as a whole. In such cases, it was essential to guarantee participants privacy and that both their information and the data collected would be handled with confidentiality. This extended to anonymity ensured by the use of pseudonyms chosen by participants to conceal their identities. However, not all participants wanted to use aliases. Those who wished for their

real names to be used or appear in the research were granted that opportunity. To further ensure that participants were protected, the names of their churches were also withheld from this study.

When conducting research, it is paramount that the participant's rights should be respected and be treated with dignity. This is according to the research ethics, which define a set of "moral principles guiding research from its inception through to completion and publication of results" (BPS, 2014:4-5). To protect both participants and the institution of the North-West University (NWU), the NWU's Ethical Practices Protocol (Appendix A) was implemented to guide this research process. Ethics clearance was obtained before commencing with the data collection. The following ethics clearance number was assigned to this study: **NWU-00762-A7**.

3.5. CONCLUSION

The objective of this chapter was to determine the relevant research design and methodology for studying the religious discourse of homosexuality in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. The aim of this study, as stated, influenced the meta-theoretical stance that was taken. The philosophical assumption of this study was informed by qualitative research, and thus adopted the socially constructed notion of reality and the interpretivist approach to knowledge. Under the research methodology, the sampling methods – purposive and snowball – were chosen to recruit participants for the study. Data was collected from 27 consenting participants using individual and focus groups as instruments of data collection. Throughout this process, the researcher took into account the ethical considerations of conducting research. The participants signed an informed consent form and agreed for the interviews to be recorded.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (Chapter 3) presented the research methods of this study. The findings discussed in this chapter are from the data analysis of 20 interviews, conducted with 27 consenting participants. This chapter presents what these interviews revealed about the perspectives of homosexuality held by young adults in Pentecostal Churches in Potchefstroom. The aim of the chapter is to address two of the research objectives. The first objective was to elaborate on the sexual subjectivities facilitated or inhibited by the religious discourses surrounding (homo)sexuality. The second objective was to explore alternative religious discourses on sexuality. The results are discussed under different themes and subthemes that emerged as participants shared their views on sexuality and homosexuality.

The first section of this chapter focuses on the subject around participants' definitions of sexuality. What stood out here was how almost all of the participants defined sexuality heteronormatively. Their descriptions of sexuality were based, among other things, on a binary conceptualisation of gender, sex, and an essentialist view of the role of biology. The second section of the chapter discusses participants' discursive constructions of homosexuality. This includes participants' general views of homosexuality, as well as how they constructed LGBTIQ+ people. On the one hand, the researcher learned that LGBTIQ+ people were constructed by some as sinners and rebels, and by others as lost, deceived or in denial. Both these discourses invalidated any lesbian, gay, or queer identity. The third section of the chapter deals with alternative discourses. Although most participants constructed homosexuality negatively, a few participants expressed changing attitudes towards homosexuality. This shows that, even though heterosexuality is still constructed as the only acceptable sexuality, alternative discourses are also emerging.

4.1. DEFINING SEXUALITY

4.1.1. Sexuality before and after finding Christ: Nash's story

Consider the following quote by Nash, one of the research participants, describing how her Pentecostal church influenced her understanding of sexuality:

...First and foremost, my personal story in regards to sexuality is, there was a time in my life where I also questioned how I want to express and experience my own

sexuality. And at that time I was very young, so very explorative [...]. I had encounters with other female friends, and we were very curious, and one thing led to the next whereby we were talking or discussing certain views on, or rather, just the idea of what it means to be a female you know [laughs], and also what it means to, um, like another female [...]. So that time I thought, ‘What if I’m actually bi?’ [...]. I never shared this with anyone, because it’s kind of like a taboo, there’s a stigma attached to it, you don’t speak about these things [...]. So I kept it to myself, and I thought, ‘ah, you know, I’m going to explore the idea thereof’. Then when I became, I think about 16, 17 [...], that’s when ministry, church, um, my religious beliefs came in, and they started to shape and form my understanding of what I believe now today, what it is to be, you know, sexual and be a woman thereof. So basic that was my journey [...], why I believe personally there’s a male and female right according to the Biblical perspective, God made them male and female, and that also ties in with the ministry I am affiliated with.

The first formal interview was conducted after a trial of four mock interviews with Nash, a participant who was keen to share her personal story about her sexuality and her general views on sexuality. Nash was the only participant who volunteered to share accounts of her personal sexual development and exploration at the start of the interview. Nash’s narrative touches on some of the main points that will be discussed in this chapter, and as such, the researcher uses it as a point of reference throughout the chapter. The discussion with Nash commenced with her providing a timeline of how and what influenced her current beliefs. From Nash’s narrative, it is clear how religion shaped her perceptions of sexuality. This shift is apparent in how Nash went from being curious, explorative, and at some point even considering herself bisexual, to believing that heterosexuality is the only sexual identity that is accepted and should be celebrated. What was also clear was that any sexual identities other than heterosexuality were still considered taboo, and therefore silenced. For instance, Nash noted that the thought of being bisexual had crossed her mind; however, she never shared this with anyone as “...it’s kind of like a taboo, there’s a stigma attached to it, [so that] you don’t speak about these things”. Discourses that construct sexualities other than heterosexuality as taboo or sinful, especially in religious institutions, can be traced back to the 18th and 19th centuries (Oosterhuis, 2001:28 & 42; Foucault, 1978:30). Today the subject of sex is still associated with a sense of secrecy, as described by Nash. As in the 19th century, young people still find it difficult to talk about issues of sex with older people. It is also related to the assumption that children do not have a sexuality and, therefore, should not talk about things related to sex (Rubin, 2011:158; Foucault, 1978:4).

Nash was not the only participant whose perceptions of sexuality had been affected by

Christian beliefs. James and Tbell also explained how their lives had changed when they became Christians. They both pointed out that their opinions of sex were different before and after they were ‘saved’⁶. For instance, James said that, before he was ‘saved’, he “never felt that it was a problem to actually sleep around with women”. He said that it was only after he had been ‘saved’ that he understood God’s intention that pre-marital sex was wrong. Tbell shared a story almost similar to that of James. Tbell explained her experience by asserting, “it’s not until I came to Christ that I understood the concept of sex. And I understood that sex is not just the physical aspects”. She further stated that it was only after she became a Christian that she understood why God intended for sex only to be exercised within the context of marriage. According to Tbell, sex is designed for marriage because every time you have sex with someone, you become emotionally attached to that person. She calls this a soul tie. Tbell stated that a soul tie could be detrimental in that “some girls get so abused in relationships, and they stay there” and she sees this as a result of being attached to the person they had sex with. From Nash, James, and Tbell’s personal experiences, it is clear how their Christian beliefs influenced their perceptions of sexuality. Furthermore, it is clear how discourses are responsible for the construction of meaning, they are communicated through various channels and become real (Clarke, 2005:149). From the discussion above, the following is clear. Religious discourses have produced meanings in the lives of these participants. They have created meaning through their established sexual standards, which participants have internalised and conformed to. This includes acknowledging heterosexuality as the only legitimate sexuality, and sex as an activity reserved for the context of marriage. As Christians, participants aspire to live by these rules. The fact that they had different views before and after being saved, show how meaning is constantly reconstructed and that a new context can produce new meanings in people’s lives. It also shows how institutional discourses promote certain identities and invalidate others.

In trying to understand Christian participants’ perspectives of sexuality and homosexuality, the researcher realised early on that participants regarded religious text, mainly the Bible, as a source of their beliefs. Most participants mentioned in one way or another that they consider the Bible the Word of God. It provides guidance for living their lives and influences their

⁶Being ‘saved’ is a process that requires a person to “confess that they are a sinner in need of a Savior, repent from that sin, acknowledge and believe that Jesus is the One Savior who can take away their sin (because of His deity, and his death and resurrection), believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah, receive the Holy Spirit to guide them in daily life” (Devlin, 2020).

perspectives on things. Nash, Kirsten, Michelle, and Babyboy all indicated that they believe in the authority of the Bible and that everything in the Bible is the truth. According to Nash, everything in her church is tied to the (biblical) scriptures as they “believe in the authority of the scriptures as it stands ‘inerrant and infallible’”. She explained that Scripture is infallible as it has been tried and tested and, for these reasons, her church believes that everything in the Bible is the truth. When it comes to sexuality, Kirsten said,

I think within Christianity, I mean, the Bible being the foundation of faith and what we build our lives on, there are certain verses and chapters in place in the Bible where it speaks about sexuality, and it speaks about how to live your life. I feel like the Bible is literally a manual on how to live your life.

In the following section, participants’ definitions of sexuality are discussed in more detail.

4.1.2. Heteronormative definitions of sexuality

The theme used to guide the discussion in this section centres on participants’ understanding of sexuality. To gain more insight into this, the first question in the interview schedule was aimed at getting a general idea of how participants conceptualised sexuality in a Christian context.

As Christians, participants’ understanding of sexuality was informed by the Bible; hence, they generally defined sexuality heteronormatively. As indicated in Chapter 2, heteronormativity is the idea that a man should only be with a woman and vice versa (Rich, 1980:632). It is considered the norm according to which heterosexual relationships, marriage, and sexual practices are valued; alternative sexuality, such as homosexuality, is regarded as unnatural. Referencing the Bible, more than fourteen participants defined sexuality in Christianity as being heteronormative in a number of ways. First, these participants mentioned that, according to the Bible, God created a man and a woman. For instance, Nash’s understanding of sexuality is “there is a male and a female” with “reproductive organs, and then that communicates what their sexuality [is]” and “they may only be attracted to one another, heterosexually”. Statements similar to the one made by Nash are heteronormative in that they assume that only people of opposite sexes can be attracted to each other.

Percy, Zorro, Abbe’Gayle, Bossy, Jane, and Allison all mentioned that messages about sexuality are communicated during sermons. Most participants mentioned that their churches hold occasional sermons where they cover topics on dating and Christian sexual ethics. Teller

noted that sexuality in these sermons is addressed when the pastor talks about marriage between a man and a woman. There is an assumption that, eventually, people in heterosexual relationships will get married and then have children. This argument was emphasised by Nash, who claimed that, “being heterosexual means you eventually have a family. I mean, you raise your kids in that space”. According to Riekert, heterosexuality is the natural order of things and that it is in favour of procreation. Amo noted that his pastor “would basically say that a woman is made for a man, you understand, so men with men, woman with woman, no”. This message assumes that all women want to be (or should want to be) with men and that all men want to be (or should want to be) with women. The belief that a woman is made for a man is also an essentialist view because it communicates the idea that people are born with a particular sexuality that cannot be changed (Volger, 2016:864; Honeychurch, 1996:344; Rubin, 2011:149). Bossy also noted that the sermons encourage unmarried members to abstain from sex until marriage. Thus, these sermons communicate the importance of abstinence until one is in a heterosexual marriage. Francis (2019:774) had similar findings in the South African school context. As with this study, he found that the curriculum for sex education in schools is largely heteronormative. The discourse mainly focuses on the dangers of sex, such as, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Teachers encourage students to abstain from sex until heterosexual marriage. Similar to the discourse in churches, the sex education in schools assumes that all students are heterosexual, and therefore overlook non-heterosexual students and their experiences. Francis (2019:776) further found that the sex education reinforces normalised sexuality and gender categories.

The discourses in these sermons do not acknowledge or accept queer identities as legitimate or accepted sexual identities. According to Abbe’Gayle and Jane, the sermons also cover the topic of sexual immorality. Here, sexual immorality is considered any type of relationship that is not heterosexual, and sexual relationships that take place outside of heteronormative marriages. The messages communicated through sermons confirms what Clarke (2005:158) has put forth, which is that discourses allow institutions to produce identities and categorise people. Institutions responsible for the production of these discourses – with the Pentecostal Church being one such institution – have the power to create dominant discourses, which can produce identities desired by institutions (Spargo, 1999:13; Namaste, 1994:222). The influence of institutions and the power of dominant discourses can be seen in how most of the participants’ definitions of sexuality were almost identical, and they agreed with the messages they reported hearing in church. From the data, it is also evident which sexual subjectivities

are possible and which ones are inhibited by religious discourse.

4.1.3. Justifying heteronormative views

Participants' reasons for defining sexuality heteronormatively can be grouped into two categories that are both justified from the Bible: the first one is biology and the second one is based on feminine and masculine gender roles. These are essentialist views of sexuality.

a) Biology

The majority of participants defined sexuality as being heterosexual and corroborated their definition with biology or religion or, in some cases, both. Participants used words such as “traditional” (Bossy), “natural” (Palesa), and “biological” (Teller) to define sexuality heterosexually. According to Riekert, Christians believe in heterosexuality because of the biological differences between men and women, which complement each other and lead to reproduction. For Palesa, this meant a “natural-born man” and a “natural-born woman”. She explained this by saying that “natural-born” refers to the sex someone was assigned at birth (whether someone was “born a girl or a boy”), and that this definition does not include transgender persons, “like a man who turned himself into a woman”. Thus, only people whose sex from birth matches their gender, denoting cisgender identities, are accepted. These definitions of sexuality are based on biology and religion, which, in this context, reinforce each other. The definitions are biological in that they link the reproductive organs of the sexes to sexuality, and they are religious because they are influenced by Christian beliefs. The participants confirm claims by De Oliveira *et al.* (2013:1476), and Samelius and Wagberg (2005:15-16) that the sexual norms of heterosexuality and Christianity both rely on a fixed biological binary of sex and gender. Thus, heterosexuality is the only acceptable and normal sexuality in Christianity, and the reasons for this are based on fixed biological ideas about males and females. This is an essentialist view of biology that informs an essentialist view of sexuality.

b) Gender roles – feminine and masculine

The second reason for participants' heteronormative definition of sexuality was the idea of men and women being created differently and for different roles, as pointed out by Chris. Christianity, as Nash stipulated, has “strong views concerning the masculine aspect of [...] men and the feminine side of [...] women [from which] we encourage womanhood and

manhood”. These ideas are based on gender concepts that portray women as feminine and men as masculine (Sumerau & Schrock, 2011:100). In these gender roles, women are described as submissive in their roles and have to be supportive of men who are leaders, as Bossy explained. This was reinforced by Babyboy, who claimed that the Bible stated that “women submit under your husbands”. These views promote compulsory heterosexuality in that men and women are expected and encouraged to embody characteristics traditionally associated with their masculinity and femininity (Seidman, 2009:23; Bem, 1995:330). This links to the critiques of gay liberationists and lesbian feminists against the fixed ideas about gender that result in compulsory heterosexuality.

These views have implications for people who portray traits typically associated with the other sex, as they may unsettle people who see heterosexuality as the norm. For instance, Abbe’Gayle recalled how, when her gay cousin acted in ways that were not considered masculine, “[...] people would really look at him differently, especially in the church”. Individuals such as Abbe’Gayle’s cousin tend to draw attention because they do not embody the expected traits of their genders. This was also obvious when Nash mentioned a male individual at her church, whom she said was “feminine in his mannerisms” and immediately called into question whether he was “confused about his sexuality or because of the way he expresses himself is like a woman”. According to Nash, he is an “anomaly; he is different in the way he is acting”.

Relying on the sex/gender binary, these perceptions of sexuality are limiting as they assume that there can only be two genders that follow from sex (Butler 1999:10). They further exclude individuals who identify as LGBTQI+ because they do not conform to the norms of heterosexuality, which are inherently valued by Christianity. The exclusion of gays and lesbians legitimised what Rich (1980:632) and Rubin (2011:152) call compulsory heterosexuality. Seidman (2009:23) describes this as a system of stratifying and regulating standardised norms of heterosexuality. According to Butler (1990), the concepts that have been discussed, namely compulsory heterosexuality and heteronormativity, are responsible for the marginalisation of alternative sexualities while promoting heterosexuality and gender binary roles. Heterosexuality is mandatory in that it assumes that people are attracted to the opposite sex (Rich, 1980:632), and fails to recognise the experiences of gays and lesbians and other non-normative sexualities.

Heterosexuality, compulsory heterosexuality, and Christian sexual values have similar ethics

of what is considered acceptable and unacceptable sexual behaviour-and-identity, and the context in which they are supposed to occur. This construct puts heterosexual men at the top of the hierarchy as leaders, as explained by Bossy and Amo, and not transgender men, as indicated by Palesa. This is reiterated in a statement like “women are made for men” by Amo. Heterosexual men are followed by heterosexual women, and then everyone else is at the bottom. The same applies to sex as heterosexual penis-in-vagina sex in marriage as the only type of acceptable sex. This hierarchy places gays and lesbians and women at the bottom where they experience social oppression in their roles as the subordinate other (Seidman, 2009:19). For those reasons, Seidman has identified heterosexuality as a social institution responsible for the subjugation of gays and lesbians.

Participants’ discursive constructions of homosexuality and ‘homosexuals’ are discussed in the next section.

4.2. CONSTRUCTIONS OF HOMOSEXUALITY

The themes and subthemes discussed in this section include participants’ general views of homosexuality, as well as their constructions of LGBTQI+ people. While heterosexuality was constructed in a positive way, using sex and gender binaries with the two genders matching the two sexes, homosexuality was framed as negative. However, homosexuality was also not uniformly constructed by participants, which shows that even within this sample it was composed differently.

4.2.1. General views and definitions of homosexuality

Following the above heteronormative definitions of sexuality and its justification in the Bible, sexualities that were different to the biblical norm were overwhelmingly defined as negative and in opposition to heterosexuality. Homosexuality was seen as “unnatural”, “abnormal”, “does not look good in public”, as “weird”, “disturbing”, and “disgusting”.

The participants’ general views of homosexuality were not favourable. For instance, Nash noted that, as her views on sexuality were informed by her Christian beliefs, “a romantic relationship between a male and a male, and a woman and woman, I cannot resonate with [it], it does not sit well with me”. Nash was not the only participant who mentioned in some form or other that she disapproved or disagreed with homosexuality. Gaomphe, Chris, and Babyboy said that they were against it or objected to such relationships. Zorro’s disapproval

of homosexuality goes back to procreation and how it is not possible in a same-sex relationship. Amo objected to such relationships stating that, on religious grounds, it is weird and disturbing when same-sex people are affectionate in public. Allison described homosexuality as “not being natural”, and for Siya, it was “disgusting”. These views go back to the notion that heterosexuality is the natural and accepted sexuality, while homosexuality is its opposite.

During the interviews, it was common for participants to compare and frame homosexuality in relation to heterosexuality. Nash, Kiprop, Palesa, Babyboy, Tshepi and Teller asserted that homosexuality did not make sense. Palesa, like Nash, raised the issue of sexual organs being incompatible. Both Palesa and Nash were trying to make sense of how people in gay and lesbian relationships have sex. According to Nash, one of the things that did not make sense about homosexuality was the sexual experience of gays and lesbians. Nash explained her confusion by remarking that lesbians and gays have to use “vibrators in order to have a sexual experience that is similar to a heterosexual relationship, right, it keeps going back to that”. Palesa also compared the same-sex sexual experience with heterosexual experiences questioning whether sex was “the same with a boy and a boy and with a boy and a girl, like do you still just feel like, ‘oh my gosh, this is amazing’ while doing it with a boy, you know, while you are a boy?” For Kiprop, queer sex was a problem because the creation of sex toys, used by queers, was against the will of God. Here, heterosexual sex was constructed as “natural” and queer sex as “artificial”. The constant comparison between queer and heterosexual sex had to do with participants’ ways of thinking about sex in a heteronormative way. Participants kept mentioning the incompatibility of sexual organs in queer sexual experiences. They only recognised heterosexual sex – specifically, penis-in-vagina – as the only legitimate intercourse. This was clear when Palesa indicated that “a penis was supposed to be in (pause) you know, so now that it’s in another thing”. Participants viewed sex as a binary that is fixed and that the two opposites are compatible with each other. This is seen as proof that heterosexuality is the only natural and accepted sexuality.

Homosexuality was also consistently defined against heterosexuality. These views are based on the assumption that gays and lesbians want to fit into the heteronormative world. In the previous section, for instance, participants defined sexuality heteronormatively in several ways. One of the standard definitions of heterosexuality was that it meant getting married and having children. Thus, getting married and reproducing was seen as a characteristic of a

heterosexual sexual relationship. Taking into account the participants' views of what heterosexuality means, Mbisi (2011:22) argues that in South Africa, marriage, particularly heterosexual marriage is a heteronormative marker. There is an assumption that people who get married are heterosexual or that heterosexual people have the desire to get married and then have children. Those who do not, have their sexualities questioned and there are concerns that they might be gay.

Participants questioned gays' and lesbians' reasons for having children. Consider Babyboy's statement, "if it's so natural, and this is how God made you to be, and you only have sexual feelings towards the same gender; why do you have gay people that have kids?" Here Babyboy questions whether being gay is natural because if it is, it does not make sense for gays and lesbians to want something (children) that is meant for people who identify with heterosexuality. Similar arguments were made by Teller and Tshepi. According to Teller, gays and lesbians who have children are reverting to their primitive need to multiply. Tshepi further stated that gays and lesbians have children because they can feel the void of creation. Thus, homosexual experiences were seen as attempts to mirror heterosexuality, which was seen as always linked to the need to reproduce.

Although the general construction of queers was negative, there were some alternative constructions. Jade, Abbe'Gayle, and Kim did not seem to disagree so strongly with same-sex romantic relationships, but they still gave subtle hints that there might be something wrong with it. For instance, Jade stated that "for me to see such people it's like I don't even know how to put this, like love in general, it is amazing, it is beautiful. So I would get to look at it that way of how beautiful it is". Jade also mentioned that this is not something God wants, but they (gays and lesbians) might be "going through something". Abbe'Gayle expressed her thoughts in a similar manner and further stated that, "we can only love a person and then maybe, maybe along the line they'll see that maybe they are wrong and stuff like that". Here Jade and Abbe'Gayle were saying that they chose to focus on how people love one another. However, they also implied that there was something wrong with lesbians and gays. Again, homosexuality is delegitimised as a sexuality (Tamale, 2014a:176). These views are rooted in religion, which has a history of disregarding homosexuality as legitimate sexuality (Tamale, 2014a:176). One way of delegitimising homosexuality is by representing it as a choice. In the next section, the discursive constructions of homosexuality are discussed in more detail.

4.2.2. Constructions of queers

From the data, two interpretations of the figure of ‘the homosexual’ emerged. The first was the perspective of lesbians and gays having made a choice to be homosexual; sinners rebelling against God, associated with negative stereotypes like paedophiles, and committing a sin ‘that leads to death’. It constructed lesbians and gays as having agency and actively choosing homosexuality and choosing against God. The second type construed lesbians and gays as ‘lost’ or deceived. Because they are viewed as victims of their circumstances, this construction suggest that they are without agency. It was also expected that Christians should help them by showing them the right way.

a) The Sinner

The most common construction of homosexuality among participants was that homosexuality is a sin and that LGBTIQ’s are sinners. A sin, according to Tbell, can be defined as “missing the mark, what mark? Mark of me being holy, being good, and everything”. For Nash, sin means to “fall short of the standard of glory, you’re no longer where the standard of glory [is] that God expected mankind to be”. Tbell and Nash’s comments reiterate how heterosexuality is discursively constructed as good and moral, and the standard all other sexualities are measured against. Alternative sexualities and identities are, therefore, constructed in relation to heterosexuality and displayed as bad and immoral.

Many participants mentioned that homosexuality is no different from other sins mentioned in the Bible. However, the sin of homosexuality was often compared with other sins, but participants did not compare it to ‘softer’ sins from the bible such as envy or not honouring one’s parents, but with offenses such as stealing, murder, and adultery. For instance, Chris stated that, “homosexuality is seen as a sin, just like murder, just like, what can I say, premarital sex”. Michelle went on to say that, “God disapproves of homosexuality, adulterers, liars”. And for Tbell and Palesa, being gay was a sin just like stealing or watching porn. So, even though many participants said that queers were sinners just like everyone else, the sins they chose to equate it with implied that it is a “more serious” sin. Some participants were more direct, saying that homosexuality is the worst type of sin. According to Palesa, “a lot of people say ‘all sins are the same’, [but] all sins are not the same. God forgives the same, but also it says in the Bible that some sins lead to death, the first one is sexual immorality”. She explained by saying that sex was intended to be between a married man and woman.

Therefore, adultery, homosexuality, or anything outside of this context is sexually immoral. Tshepi justified her reason by saying that homosexuality is seen as “sinning against your own body” and that the Bible’s punishment for homosexuality is death.

Nash further stated that sin was an act of rebellion, as gays and lesbians are seen as dissenting against God. Hence, LGBTQI+ people deliberately choose to offend God (Stearns, 2009:44). This view is reinforced by drawing on the story of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament as evidence of God’s disapproval and gay people’s rebellion against God. According to Nash, the story of “Sodom and Gomorrah is the first account in the Bible where we see God’s judgment or view or perspective on how does He take homosexuality, and clearly, He destroyed it by fire”. For most of these participants, people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah engaged in same-sex practices, and as a result, God destroyed it because He forbade men from laying with other men. According to Kim, this is because in a Christian context, “gays and lesbians, they [the church] tell you it’s against the law, men may not lay with men”. Adding to this, Jade claimed that a “woman cannot lay with a woman because then they will commit, you know, an abomination”. God’s reaction in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is one of anger and judgement and His reaction to it is destruction by fire. This reinforces the notion that being queer is a choice to rebel against God by framing it as an ‘abomination’.

In this framing of homosexuality, being queer was linked to paedophilia and harming children. For example, Lamar recalls being in church at some point and hearing the preacher saying that homosexuals are recruiting “because Satan is coming”. It is also not uncommon for religious people to associate homosexuality with paedophilia. According to ASSAF (2015:34), same-sex orientation has been considered something that a person can be recruited into using molestation. To elaborate, Nash thought that homosexuality “branches down to children”. She stated that, in such scenarios, children are forced to perform sexual acts with older men. Some religious leaders have made similar claims in other churches. For instance, pastor Oscar Bougardt made news headlines for claiming that “99% of paedophiles stem from homosexuality” (Baird, 2017).

In this discourse, identifying as gay, lesbian or queer is tantamount to rebellion against God and suspected sexual predation. This makes it a very unlikely choice of identity, especially with heterosexuality as the only good and moral choice. This is how power operates through discourses – by framing it in a way that makes people reject it. This presents challenges for

Christian gays and lesbians as they try to strike a balance between two seemingly warring identities. For many participants, these two identities cannot coexist. For Nash, gay Christians would have to define what it means to be gay and to be Christian. According to Nash, being Christian would mean, “they are born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and they stand on the word as their last authority” and being gay means that, “they choose to be homosexual, and they have a partner of the same sex”; they cannot claim to be both at the same time. This statement was reinforced by Tshepi, who argued that, “if you are a girl and then you are attracted to another girl, then you are not a Christian” because you are not following Christian norms. These arguments are supported by a study conducted by Yip (1997:113) in which he found that gays felt that they had to choose between their Christian and sexual identities. Christian sexual ethics rejects homosexuality, which may result in gays and lesbians distancing themselves from churches, as they feel rejected.

The discourses in this discussion constructed homosexuality in a negative light. Homosexuality was described as a sin, unnatural, and linked with paedophilia. Homosexuality was continuously defined against heterosexuality, which was framed as the natural and accepted sexuality. What stood out was that homosexuality was defined as a sin because it was different from heterosexuality, but it was also considered an act of rebellion. Queers were rebellious as they were dissenting against what was acceptable and natural. Participants were harsh in their construction of LGBTIQ+ people as rebellious sinners. For example, homosexuality was associated with paedophilia in two ways. First, older men forced young children to have sex with them and second, paedophiles recruited children to be gay or lesbian. In this discourse, rebellious sinners were expected to “repent” and “turn to God”.

Participants’ general views and definitions of homosexuality mostly constructed homosexuality as the opposite of natural. While, for most participants, heterosexuality connoted the natural sexuality a person is born with, homosexuality was perceived as something a person comes to acquire. When the topic of homosexuality as a choice came up in conversations with participants, Palesa and Allison, for instance, argued that a person is not born gay. Some participants stated that heterosexuality was natural; Babyboy indicated that he did not recall ever “having to make a choice” because heterosexuality came naturally. Palesa argued that gays and lesbians had to think about their sexuality. The participants’ definition of sexuality has been challenged by queer theory which argues that identities are

“cultural and historical constructs” (Berger, 2009:662; Watson, 2005:70). Feminists have also used these same arguments as counter-arguments to prove that heterosexuality is not natural (Seidman, 2009:18). They argued against the assumption that heterosexuality is natural or that it had to do with individual desires. Lesbian feminists claim that, in as much as homosexuality is a social construct as some participants have indicated, heterosexuality is also a social construct. By arguing that same-sex orientation is a choice influenced by the environment and other factors, participants are essentially assuming and acknowledging the position that sexuality is a social construct. However, participants’ perceptions of a social construct differed from the feminist argument mentioned above. This social construct is only limited to homosexuality, as participants have assumed an essentialist perspective in their views of heterosexuality. This perspective sees sexuality as innate, fixed, and binary, which fits with religious beliefs.

Some of these religious beliefs about sexuality might be imposed. For instance, Riekert mentioned that if you are a Christian, “then, you believe that homosexuality is wrong”. In Riekert’s case, heterosexuality is imposed through the construction of homosexuality as an unacceptable sexuality. This was one of the dominant discourses, in which homosexuality was regularly described as the ‘other’. Religious discourses constructed it as the opposite of what is acceptable, and as a Christian, you have to reject it. For people who identify as LGBTQI+, this serves as a reminder that they cannot be Christian as well. Here, heterosexuality is maintained by presenting it as the only sexuality that meets Christian standards. For lesbian and gays who identify as Christians, Allison stated that their “salvation becomes questionable”. The researcher witnessed this personally during an interview with Tshepi and Teller. As her beliefs and sexuality also came into question, the researcher was asked what her views on religion and sexuality were. When she answered that she did not see anything wrong with queer Christians, she was asked whether she was a Christian and whether she was homosexual. Participants wanted to understand how someone can claim to be a Christian and not have a problem with homosexuality.

b) The Lost Sheep

Some of the participants did not primarily construct lesbian and gays as rebellious sinners. Their discourse rather constructed LGBTQI+ people as being deceived, in denial, or lost. The participants’ choice of words indicated that somehow they did not think that lesbian and gay people were at fault, as they did not have control over their sexual identities. This view of

lesbian and gays as hapless “victims” assumes that they are without agency. In this discourse, queers have been deceived and became gay or lesbian because of the reasons discussed below. Consider the following quote by Chris, as he argues that one of the reasons people become gay is due to growing up without a male role model:

Actually, that was part of the conversation that I mentioned earlier with my friend, but I do believe that at some point, I'm going to use somebody from where I'm from. He is gay, and when you look at, I'm not saying this is the only factor, because it will be ignorant to say this is the only reason, you understand? But there is a guy - he grew up in a household where there were no males at all, no male authoritative figure, so he turned out gay. And for me and my belief, I've seen a lot of people that are like him that turned out gay, and it just means for me, it's like when you're little, I'm going to make an example, when I was a small kid, you know, I wanted to imitate everything my dad does. You know, even sometimes, you see little children walking in their dad's footsteps and trying to imitate everything their dad does. Because why, you see your dad, and how he is a male, how he looks like you and how he's built like you and in that way, you imitate that. And the same for females, I guess. Which is not always the case. I want to highlight that it's not always the case, but in a household where you would as a kid, try to look at something to imitate, how does a person behave because if he sees people that are all female, so he starts to think, how does a person behave. And doesn't necessarily see male or female, you understand.

Interpretations similar to that of Chris were expressed by Babyboy, Palesa, Bossy, Amo, Kirsten, Gaomphe, and Allison. These participants asserted that the lack or absence of a particular role model could influence a person's sexuality. Most participants used the example of a boy growing up in a home surrounded by females. They argued that the boy might come to see and adopt female behaviour. Babyboy explained it as follows, “if you let an eagle grow up with chickens, it's going to think it's a chicken”. He was implying that people model the behaviour around them. This idea that homosexuality is a result of one's environment suggests that queer people have no choice as to their sexuality. It does so by assuming that LGBTQI+s are victims of their environments, which determines their sexuality.

Several of the participants in this study had assumptions about how people ‘turn out’ gay. These assumptions typically constructed LGBTQI+s as being deceived into thinking that they were born gay or lesbian. Some participants believed that gay Christians are “in denial” (Tshepi) or “deceived” (Allison). According to Riekert, the beliefs of LGBTQI+s are misguided, as they have managed to somehow justify to themselves that there is nothing wrong with being gay. These arguments show how religious discourses accommodate some sexual subjectivities while inhibiting others. It shows how certain choices are taken for

granted as being right while decisions like homosexuality are questioned. Riekert had several theories – his words were that the “possibilities could be endless” – for instance, “one can argue that, you know, someone can be born with hormone imbalances and all that and then they tend to lean towards the homosexual side, or they can have negative experiences”.

Kirsten, Percy, Jade, and Palesa also shared some of Riekert’s views. Participants’ views of homosexuality were based on their perceptions of homosexuality as a matter of choice or a struggle that gays and lesbians are going through. Homosexuality was considered less of a choice than the consequence of an event or circumstances. These circumstances that ‘turn’ people gay can be found in the environment they grew up in or be the result of a traumatic experience. For Riekert and Percy, people choose homosexuality as the result of a traumatic experience. Percy claimed to know people who were “exposed to homosexuality from being raped by a same-sex individual”. Riekert further explained that, when someone has a negative experience such as being raped, they might find it difficult to reconcile and identify with the opposite sex. Again, being queer is perceived as the inevitable consequence of a tragic event. Hence, free will was never a factor; the person “automatically” became homosexual after falling victim to an external, traumatic event.

Kirsten and Jade believed that people become gay or lesbian after suffering emotional hurt in a relationship. The “negative experience” may have stemmed from a failed relationship. Jade suggested that some women “have the mentality [that] guys would always hurt them”, so they become lesbians to avoid getting hurt. Rich (1980:632) has challenged these assumptions that women choose to become lesbians because they are bitter towards men. Even though framing LGBTQI+s as lost or deceived appears to be less harsh than constructing them as rebellious and paedophiles, it is still a very harmful discourse. These assumptions deny gays and lesbians the authenticity of their experiences and choices. Furthermore, these arguments about the origin of homosexuality keep reinforcing heterosexuality as the norm, because people only seek to understand the origin of homosexuality while heterosexuality goes unquestioned. Based on that assumption, participants further believed that lesbian and gay people could be saved from their sexual orientations. Other participants explicitly expressed that Christians should help and save them.

c) Restoration: From gay to straight

The participants’ discursive construction of LGBTQI+s as being deceived and lost led some

of them to conclude that some form of restoration could take place, which would allow LGBTQI+s to identify with heterosexuality. Participants believed that restoration is possible because, according to them, people are not born homosexual; it is something they choose. Riekert, for example, described homosexuality as something a person is doing, and James called it spirit. These participants did not define homosexuality as an identity or who a person is, but rather as something that gays and lesbians engage in, unlike heterosexuality. For these participants, there is only one sexuality; heterosexuality. Therefore, a gay or lesbian identity is ‘impossible’. Also, consider the following quote by Palesa: “I tried to understand it, but I’ve also heard proof of somebody that was attracted to a girl, she was a lesbian and then she became born-again, and she turned, she actually has a husband now and kids”. Stories such as these were commonly shared by participants: they either knew of someone who used to be gay or lesbian and is now heterosexual, or they had heard testimonies from other people. Participants did not seem to have any stories about gays and lesbians who did not ‘repent’ but left the church. They also did not seem to wonder about how long such a person remained ‘saved’, or whether the converted homosexual reverted back after being ‘heterosexual’ for a while.

Nash mentioned that she had found females attractive at some point in her life, and shared the story of when she stopped. She claimed that she had “found God” and “went through a transformative phase”. She describes this change as a miracle. Nash noted that she continuously read the Bible and had conversations with other believers who cared and understood her history, and a restoration took place. Nash says, “they began to engage with me on the level at which it was more satisfying for me to be a woman than [the] complications of being a woman in love with a woman”. Some of these complications, she says, would have been “deciding how to have the best sexual experience with a woman”. The complications Nash was referring to were about the physical logistics of sex, e.g., resorting to a vibrator (sex toy) “in order to have a sexual experience that is similar to [that of] a heterosexual relationship”.

According to Nash, what had also helped with the ‘transformation’ was the story of her best friend who used to be a lesbian. Nash mentioned that her friend, like her, shared a story about how she had felt convicted. She says her friend had “a girlfriend and thought she was going to marry a woman and now she’s married to a man and has kids”. Abbe’Gayle, Jade, and Allison related similar stories and mentioned that some of those people who had believed that

they were lesbians had shared testimonies about how they had been deceived. Tshepi and Nash explained that this was the reason why gays and lesbians were accepted in some churches; they were hoping to change them. This means that in some churches, gays and lesbians are accepted on the condition that they will change. This paints the queer identity and sexuality as something that can be changed, something that is “broken” and can be fixed. It demonstrates that constructionist positions can also be conservative.

Perhaps one of the reasons some churches may be seeking to “restore” gays and lesbians, especially those who identify as Christians, may be because of the conviction that gays cannot be Christians. There were some disagreements among participants about whether someone could be both Christian and identity as LGBTQI+ at the same time. Participants generally believed that someone could not be queer and Christian at the same time, as maintaining the two identities would cause some internal conflict. Chris felt that a person could be homosexual and a Christian; however, he believed that – eventually – they would become conflicted and would have to decide. According to Bossy, this turmoil would be caused by the contradiction between their identity and their Christian beliefs. Therefore, LGBTQI+s can only be Christian and homosexual up to a certain point. Nash, Michelle, Babyboy, and Palesa agreed that the Christian truth would be gradually revealed, and gays and lesbians would have to choose between their LGBTQI+s identity and Christian identity. Furthermore, these participants believed that it was the role of God and other Christians to help and gently correct them. Some participants believed that homosexuality can be corrected.

When it came to the acceptance of gays and lesbians by Christians and churches, participants’ responses could be grouped into two sub-themes. In the first group, participants were harsh, saying that homosexuality is not accepted by Christians, and should never be accepted. The second group of participants argued that it was important to “love the sinner, but hate the sin”. Participants who were against the acceptance of queers had varying reasons as to why homosexuality should not be accepted. According to Riekert, the majority of Christians do not accept gays and lesbians. Tshepi noted that gays and lesbians should never be accepted. According to her, “if you are a Christian, you never accept”. Most of the participants’ reasons had to do with what has already been discussed thus far: homosexuality is a sin, heterosexual relationships are the norm, and there is no reproduction in same-sex relationships.

According to Nkosi and Masson (2017:72), Christianity has been fighting the acceptance of

homosexuality for the past centuries. African cultures and conservative religious members have objected to the toleration of gays. For African leaders, this is because homosexuality is not seen as part of the African identity (Ward, 2013:410; Nkosi & Masson, 2017:75). This notion of homosexuality being un-African was also highlighted by James, who came from a Zulu background: he “thought if you’re gay you actually don’t belong in any social group”. He further noted that, from a cultural point of view, homosexuality is something despicable and shameful. James went on to say that, when he became a Christian, his attitude towards gays softened as he came to the realisation that God sees gays as being lost. Although he still does not accept homosexuality, his claim that his faith made him more tolerant refutes assertions by Nkosi and Masson (2017:72) that Christians have been fighting the acceptance of homosexuality.

The idea that homosexuality is un-African has been challenged by Tamale (2014b), who argued that it is Christianity and homophobia that are un-African, rather than homosexuality. This is a misconception that both Christianity and African cultures have about homosexuality. According to Dlamini (2006:130), it was during colonisation that Christianity began disregarding homoerotic behaviours in Africa, as they did not see its value. Tamale (2014a:154) also argued that many of the pre-colonial African sexualities, including homosexual acts, were not seen as deviant until Christianity labelled them as such. Therefore, homosexuality was not imposed on African cultures; Christianity and homophobia, on the other hand, were. Gunda (2017) blames churches for the discrimination against homosexuality, stating that some pastors are aggressive in their views of homosexuality. This destructive approach poses a threat to LGBTI human rights. This lack of understanding was also made evident in the Hate Speech Bill that KZN pastors protested against (Rickard, 2015). The pastors involved were protesting against what they claimed was their right to decide whether or not they wanted to accept LGBTQI+ people (Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013:267). Other pastors were arguing that homosexuality is condemned in the Bible (Mngoma, 2017).

Even so, some participants were less harsh and believed that gays and lesbians should be accepted by Christians. The acceptance of gays and lesbians is anything but simple; even though all participants who took part in this study identified as Christians, one would think that they would have similar opinions. However, that was not the case. Even though Tshepi mentioned that gays and lesbians should never be accepted, she also pointed out that the aim

is not acceptance but rather to love them. What Tshepi was implying here is similar to the concept of “love the sinner, hate the sin”, which is full of contradictions in itself because it implies loving someone but not accepting their sin – which in this context is their gay or lesbian identity.

When asked whether churches should contribute to the tolerance of sexual diversity, most participants replied from the commonly held position among Christians, which is to “love the sinner, but hate the sin”. Percy’s answer to the question of accepting gays and lesbians summarised the notion of “love the sinner, but hate the sin”: “it is the act that God says we should not accept, not the person; the person we love”. When interpreted, the quote means people who identify as LGBTQI+ are distinguished from their behaviour or are separated from their sexuality. In a Christian context, this position means accepting gays and lesbians but not their sexuality. Participants such as Jane, Nash, and Palesa did acknowledge that it is possible to find someone of the same sex attractive; however, acting on those desires is not justified. Percy, Jane, Nash, Palesa, Teller, and Tshepi’s justifications for their position are motivated by their belief that, in a Christian context, sex is confined to heterosexual marriage. LGBTQI+s, including Christian ones, may find the statement of “love the sinner, but hate the sin” problematic. It is contradictory to claim to love someone and still disagree with a part of who they are, especially something as significant as their identity. Even though the intention might be honourable, this can also be perceived as a form of subtle homophobia considering how some participants have indicated that gays and lesbians feel judged and that they have to deal with constant stares from other Christians. This also makes loving homosexuals almost seem like an obligation, as a Christian because their religion tells them to love their neighbour as they love themselves.

From the discussions thus far, it is evident that most of the participants still hold strong heteronormative ideas. However, a few alternative discourses emerged from the interviews and these are discussed below.

4.3. ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSES: THE GAY CHRISTIAN

Although homosexuality and queer identities were overwhelmingly constructed as negative, some alternative discourses emerged in the interviews. This theme discusses the changing attitudes some participants expressed towards homosexuality. After the discussion above on the tolerance of sexual difference, the researcher identified the Constitution, generational gap,

and liberal churches as signs of changing attitudes.

Perspectives on homosexuality have not changed drastically in recent years. The majority of Christians (like the participants in this study) still hold heteronormative ideas (Gunda, 2017). Changing people's views of homosexuality might be challenging, especially since the beliefs of many Christians are informed by the Bible. Even so, there were some participants whose views of homosexuality differed markedly from that of the other participants. While most participants believed that homosexuality is against Christian standards, Abbe'Gayle felt that everyone should be treated with equality, regardless of their sexual preferences.

Amo also recalled a case study he had had to analyse for an assignment. The case study was about a choir conductor who was fired from his position by his church after announcing that he was gay. According to Amo, he concluded his case study by stating that the church had no right to fire the choir conductor because of his gay identity. He mentioned that his conclusion was informed by the Constitution, as we are no longer governed by the Church. This shows that the recognition of gay and lesbian rights by the law plays a vital role in protecting the rights of LGBTQI+ individuals. Even though some people may be against the acceptance and toleration of sexual diversity, the Constitution makes it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of religion or sexual orientation (Ward, 2013:410). Amo's statement also shows the importance of education in terms of LGBTQI+ issues. This was echoed by Samelius and Wagberg (2015:14), who affirmed that the recognition of LGBTQI+ human rights makes it easier to protect them.

Simone, Bossy, and Gosiame identified the generational gap as a factor in the acceptance and toleration of gays and lesbians. According to Simone, "the old generation [is] more judgmental towards a person [...] who is gay or lesbian than I think the younger generation; [they] are more open to accept the person who is gay or lesbian". Bossy and Gosiame also had similar thoughts. For Gosiame, it is the older generation, including pastors, who find it problematic. Bossy also added that, as a Christian, he has gay friends and he loves them just like everyone else. Yip (2011:11) reiterated the opinion of participants by stating that millennials are more accepting of sexual diversity. Furthermore, a report published by The Other Foundation (2016), showed that South African attitudes to homosexuality have been changing. For instance, more people support same-sex marriage. This change could be influenced by a number of factors, including human rights discourses that are supported by the Constitution.

Even though the majority of participants were against the acceptance and toleration of sexual diversity, Bossy, believed that churches should contribute to an understanding of diversity. He maintained that a “conversation should be extended towards them, and I think it should be had where gay people are being reached out, you know. So it's like, we say, yes come as you are but then not anyone, I've never, I've never seen anyone inviting a gay person to church”. He thinks that “if homosexuals can feel like they can leave our churches and go start their own, I think we're missing the point”. Abbe'Gayle added that churches could contribute to sexual diversity by stopping discrimination. She mentioned that they could have sermons on homosexuality “because people hate things that they don't understand”. She also suggested doing surveys on how gays and lesbians experience church and how they could be further accommodated and “get to know them beyond their sexuality”.

The change in attitudes from churches that Bossy and Abbe'Gayle referred to is already underway. Whereas religion has been used to marginalise gays and lesbians, more liberal churches are preaching against the notion that God rejects homosexuality (Nkosi & Masson, 2017:78). The Good Hope Unity Metropolitan Community Church in Cape Town is an example of a liberal church where LGBT members can have a spiritual life without feeling judged or rejected (Nell & Shapiro, 2011:45). These liberal churches believe that the supposed association of homosexuality with sin in the Bible does not consider context. They further argue that the initial meaning of homosexuality does not come from Christianity. In addition to liberal churches, organisations, such as IAM and Other Sheep have also been working with LGBTQI+ communities in religious settings. The Other Sheep works with religious leaders and offers alternative interpretations of the Bible (Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:34).

Alternative religious discourses of sexuality are becoming more visible. People who have been marginalised by compulsory heterosexuality are challenging the discourses and institutions that have contributed to their experiences as “the Other”. For example, in 2015, Ecclesia de Lange, a lesbian Methodist Church Minister, took her church to the South African Constitutional Court after she was suspended for announcing her intentions to marry her partner. Even though the court ruled against her, stating that she had to comply with the laws of the Church, this shows that people, including those who hold higher positions in their churches, are standing up and challenging the dominant religious discourse on sexuality. In the same year, The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) also made headlines when it announced

its plans to support gay marriages and the ordination of gay ministers. This was a huge milestone, considering that the DRC is known for being conservative, particularly when it comes to same-sex relationships (Ngubane, 2015). Similar to De Lange's case, the DRC decision did not have a happy ending, as it overturned its decision later on. Regardless of this, churches seem to be debating LGBTQI issues and there is growing support in the church for people who do not identify as heterosexual. This case was revisited in 2018 when the DRC was taken to court for going back on its decision to support same-sex marriage (Collison, 2018).

Recent progressive developments include the announcement by the Methodist Church that it now welcomes LGBTQI+ people. Furthermore, the church stated that it recognises LGBTQI+ rights, including the right to get married (Lindeque, 2020). Another progressive step came from Pope Francis of the Catholic Church. He appeared in *Francesco*, a documentary released in October 2020, where he stated that, "homosexual people have the right to be in a family. They are children of God" (CBC News, 2020). This is not only a huge step on the part of the church, but for LGBTQI+ people around the world – to be recognised by the leader of one of the biggest churches in the world.

Challenging institutions of power and heteronormativity confirms the opinions of Watson (2005:71) and Spargo (1999:21-22), that power does not exist without resistance. These authors proposed that those whose sexual identities were labelled as deviant might find a collective voice. The growing number of liberal churches for LGBTQI+ individuals can be seen as a direct challenge and resistance to the dominant religious discourses of homosexuality. These churches are going against the norm and the laws of heteronormative churches that may be experienced as exclusive by gays and lesbians. LGBTQI+ churches are introducing counter normative discourses by disrupting the hegemonic religious discourse of heterosexuality. And LGBTQI+ churches can free themselves from repression (Foucault, 1978:5; Volger, 2016:859).

4.4. CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the dominant religious discourse of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal Churches in Potchefstroom. From the analysis, the researcher reached the following conclusion. First, it was necessary to learn participants' definitions of sexuality. Participants' descriptions of sexuality were heteronormative in that they focused on the

differences between men and women. For instance, these differences highlighted sex, gender, and biology. Heterosexuality was described as natural and the accepted sexuality. Participants also indicated that non-heterosexuality did not meet Christian sexual norms.

The themes and subthemes discussed were also informed by the following research objectives: First, to elaborate on the sexual subjectivities made possible or inhibited by religious discourses surrounding (homo)sexuality. Religious discourses constructed homosexuality and LGBTQI+ identifying people as sinners and as being deceived. Homosexuality was generally constructed negatively, and as a choice (unlike heterosexuality) that could be corrected. Second, to explore alternative religious discourses on sexuality. This objective discussed a theme aimed at addressing the nature of changing attitudes and alternative discourses of homosexuality. Even though the majority of participants held heteronormative beliefs, some participants emphasised equality and the role of the constitution.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. INTRODUCTION

To conclude this research, this final chapter offers concluding remarks on what was discussed in each chapter. This is done by highlighting the specific research objectives that were set. The remarks also include a summary of the findings, and recommendations for future studies are included.

5.1. CONCLUDING REMARKS: CHAPTERS AND FINDINGS SUMMARY

This study set out with the main objective of investigating the dominant discourses on homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. The research also included sub-objectives, which were addressed in each chapter. The objective of Chapter 2 was to state what literature and theorists have found about religious discourses of homosexuality. In Chapter 3, the objective was to employ the most appropriate methodology when studying the religious discourse of homosexuality in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. Lastly, the objective of Chapter 4 was to elaborate on the sexual subjectivities made possible or inhibited by religious discourses surrounding (homo)sexuality; and to explore alternative religious discourses on sexuality.

The first chapter served as an introduction to the study and provided arguments as to why such a study was necessary. This was done by first acknowledging that both sexuality and religion can play critical roles in a person's life (Zuckerman & Manning, 2005:1; Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:5; Verona, 2011:190). This chapter argued that Christian discourses have the power to produce sexual discourses and sexual identities it deems acceptable. As a result, some of these discourses have contributed to the discrimination experienced by LGBTQI+ people. For instance, Christian discourses in South Africa have associated homosexuality with HIV and AIDS, paedophilia and referred to it as deviant (Bartelink & Meinema, 2014:7; Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010:850; Alvare, 2015:485; Msibi, 2011:55; Baird, 2017). The researcher also took into account that religion is a broad field with many differences, and narrowed down the locus of the study to Pentecostal Christianity, and how its discourses influence young adults' perceptions of sexuality and homosexuality.

Chapter 2 provided both the literature review and a queer theoretical positioning of the study. The first part focused on the literature review. It highlighted the history of same-sex practices

in Africa and South Africa, tracing it from pre-colonial times. The literature addressed one of the commonly held misconceptions about homosexuality, which is that it is alien to the continent and that its origin is linked to colonisation. It argued that homosexual practices existed on the continent long before colonisation or Christianity was present (Dlamini, 2006:129; Gunda, 2017). The literature showed how the negative construction of homosexuality, by institutions of power such as religion and law, have contributed to the experiences of LGBTQI+ people in South Africa. It also shed some light on the progress South Africa has made in terms of making LGBTQI+ issues more public through awareness and the role of the Constitution in this. The Constitution of South Africa (1996) protects LGBTQI+ rights; however, more needs to be done as sexual minorities are still discriminated against in the country.

The second part of Chapter 2 addressed one of the objectives of the study: to state what theorists have found about religious discourses of homosexuality. The section firstly discussed how sexuality is viewed in terms of either essentialism or constructionism (Volger, 2016:864; Honeychurch, 1996:344). Essentialism is based on the idea that sexuality is innate and fixed while constructivism, which this study argues in favour of, sees sexuality as a social construct. The works of gay liberationists and lesbian feminists in their studies of sexuality and their contribution to a constructionist understanding was discussed. The critique of these contributions, as well as the work of Foucault – who argued that institutions of power were responsible for the construction of sexual discourses and sexual identities – was discussed before identifying and discussing queer theoretical principles.

A queer theoretical argument was adopted as it has the appropriate tools to evaluate heteronormative standards of Christianity. As mentioned, the theory developed from the work established by Lesbian and Gay Studies, which attempted to address some of the inequalities experienced by LGBTQI+ people. It was also influenced by the works of poststructuralists and scholars, such as Foucault and Butler (Green, 2007:28; Jagose, 1996:2; Schippert, 2011:67; Seidman, 2009:24). In this study, the works of these scholars were discussed to provide the background for the history of sexuality, specifically how some sexual categories are valued more than others. Their work was also important because it explained how institutions of power (religion, medicine, psychiatry) played critical roles in how modern sexual categories came to exist.

The researcher's use of queer theory was thus motivated by the desire to comment on and

deconstruct these ideas of a natural sexuality or sexual categories. For the most part, Christian discourses of sexuality are still dominated by heterosexuality and they still exclude LGBTQI+ people. Major religions, including Christianity, are heteronormative in that they only recognise an opposite sex relationship as being legitimate (Zuckerman & Manning, 2005:8; Mashau, 2011). By adopting a queer theoretical position, this study was able to assess heterosexuality by showing how Christian discourses construct heterosexuality as the only accepted sexuality. As Christianity values heterosexuality, it was necessary to adopt a paradigm that could successfully criticise heterosexuality, but that would also offer alternative discourses. While religious institutions are guilty of taking heterosexuality for granted as the norm at the expense of alternative sexualities, queer theory argues that what accounts as sexuality is a social construct (Namaste, 1994:221; Mottier, 2012:31; Berger, 2009:662). This challenges Christian discourses that assume that sexuality is naturally given.

The theory (discussed in Chapter 2) informed the ontology (constructivism) and epistemology (interpretivism) of the research, as well as the chosen research methods and designs, discussed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3). The objective of Chapter 3 was to determine the relevant research design and methodology for studying religious discourses on homosexuality in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. A queer position advocates for diversity, and believes in the construction of and the existence of multiple realities; people construct their own realities. Because of these assumptions, this study employed a qualitative research design and methods because of its approach to the study of social reality and knowledge. Purposive and snowball methods were used to select participants. The researcher conducted mostly individual interviews and focus groups as methods of gathering data. The data was collected from 27 young adults from different Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom. The researcher adopted a semi-structured approach to conduct interviews. Thematic analysis was chosen as a method to analyse the generated and transcribed data, in which codes and themes are produced to systematically organise data. Before concluding, this chapter also provided the criteria information used to select participants and the ethics that guided this research process.

Chapter 4 discussed the research findings. As the main research objective was to understand the religious discourses of sexuality and homosexuality, it was important to first understand what sexuality meant to the participants. As such, the findings chapter began with a section dedicated to participants' definitions of sexuality. This chapter was also organised according

to themes and subthemes that emerged during analysis. It became clear early on from talking to participants just how much religious discourses had shaped their ideas about sexuality. For instance, it was noticeable how participants' ideas about what constituted 'natural' changed after they started affiliating with their churches. These differences were not only noticeable when it came to their assumptions about heterosexuality but also when they would talk about when it was appropriate to practice their sexuality. The language that was used by most participants to define sexuality pointed to married heterosexuality.

For example, participants often mentioned the biological and gender differences between men and women. Within Christianity and according to heterosexuality, these biological and gender differences are supposedly fixed (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2013:1476; Samelius & Wagberg, 2005:15 & 16). In Christianity, this is also determined by the sexual ethics used to communicate what is accepted and what is forbidden (Hunt & Jung, 2009:158). Most participants expressed that sex should only take place in a married relationship between a husband and his wife. According to Burchardt (2011:669), and Bartelink and Meinema (2014:17), this is because most Pentecostal Churches in South Africa encourage young adults to abstain until they get married. These beliefs, which were shaped by Christian discourses, further led participants to define sexuality in biological terms (De Oliveira *et al.*, 2013:1476; Samelius & Wagberg, 2005:15 & 16). Thus, biological and Christian standards of sexuality were reinforcing each other; both emphasised the union of a man and a woman because of their biological differences.

The participants' definitions of sexuality suggested heterosexuality. Most participants made it clear that religious discourse influenced their perceptions of homosexuality and of sexuality in general. Participants explained that that homosexuality is not natural and that gays and lesbians were going against God's intentions. This confirmed the argument that institutions such as churches have the power to produce a desired discourse. Religious institutions uphold heteronormativity by continuously constructing heterosexuality as the only accepted sexuality and by telling Christians that other forms of sexualities should not be accepted. In this chapter, queer theory contributed to the understanding of religious discourse and sexuality by showing how discourses are used to normalise heterosexuality while rejecting alternative sexualities as sin and unnatural.

Additionally, the following two objectives were discussed in this chapter. The first objective intended to elaborate on the sexual subjectivities that were made possible or inhibited by

religious discourses of (homo) sexuality. The sexual subjectivities made possible by religious discourses were heteronormative. Participants constructed heterosexuality as natural, good, moral, and the only accepted sexuality. Homosexuality and other sexualities, on the other hand, were constructed as bad, sinful, and immoral. Alternative sexualities were invalidated in these discourses. By denying non-normative sexuality, heterosexuality was reinforced as normative. During data analysis, it became clear that participants had constructed homosexuality in two distinctive ways. Put in simple terms, queers were mainly constructed negatively. However, participants framed homosexuality as consequence of an individual's sinful and rebellious choices, or because of their traumatic circumstances.

In the past, science or medicine saw homosexuality as a pathology; in Christianity, homosexuality was associated with sin. Today, religious discourse continues to construct gays and lesbians as sinners, and Christians accepts it as the truth. Religious conversations have continuously described homosexuality as a sin-induced sexuality, as something that God does not approve of, while celebrating heterosexuality. What this has done is to tell people that only heterosexuality is accepted, inhibiting alternative sexualities in the process. Homosexuality was commonly constructed as a sin for some of the following reasons. The typical reason was that LGBTQI+ identities were not considered 'natural', like heterosexuality. The second popular response was that homosexuality did not result in procreation. And last, it was not perceived to be any different from murder, lying, stealing, and for some participants, it was the worst possible sin.

On the other hand, when participants did not construct homosexuality so harshly, they perceived LGBTQI+s as being deceived, or lost; they were seen as victims of their circumstances. Here, homosexuality was constructed on the premise of 'nature vs nurture'. This construction of homosexuality has a long history and there are numerous studies that have been dedicated to exploring the assumption that homosexuality is a matter of choice (Seidman, 1994:169; Spargo, 1999:27; Victoria *et al.*, 2010). These studies were aimed at explaining the origin of homosexuality because there is a belief that its inception is different from race or biological sex. Various participants attempted to explain how people become gay or lesbian. For instance, according to Riekert, it could be caused by a hormone imbalance or because of a negative experience.

On the other hand, participants such as Kirsten, Percy, and Jade believed that being gay or lesbian was a matter of circumstances that people go through. These circumstances could be

traumatic experiences that cause a person to become gay or lesbian, such as being raped or being hurt in a previous relationship. Rich (1980:632) has rejected this notion that women are lesbians because of their bitterness towards men. These assumptions are also problematic because they perpetuate the strongly held belief within Christianity which sees heterosexuality as the standard. Furthermore, these assumptions take away the agency from gays and lesbians as they insinuate that LGBTQI+s identities are products of their experiences rather than something they choose. When asked if heterosexuality could also be the result of experiences or socialisation, participants were quick to reject that notion; in their minds, it only applied to homosexuality. The claims made by participants have not been supported by scientific research as no evidence suggests that a single factor, either genes or hormones, or external factors, such as social and cultural influences, can determine one's sexual orientation (ASSAF, 2015:41).

The participants' way of thinking has been problematised by the work of Butler. Participants constantly stripped gays and lesbians of their actions. While Butler argued that gender is performative, participants did not see how sexuality was a result of gender performativity. Thus, they did not recognise that identity was formed through actions. This could be a result of how heterosexuality has been normalised as something inherent rather than how a person behaves. From the participants' religious point of view, people are born heterosexual, however, due to different circumstances as previously mentioned some people become gay or lesbian. According to Butler, sexual categories, heterosexual or homosexual, are based on gender performance. Therefore, sexual identity cannot be separated from what one does. While participants thought that gays and lesbians' behavior was deviant from the established norm, they did not realise that heterosexuality is also performative in that people have to behave or act according to gender socialization. That is, due to gender socialization, people learn how to behave heterosexually (Watson, 2005:68; Jagose, 1996:84; & Lloyd 2005:25). As LGBTQI+s were constructed as being deceived or lost for identifying as LGBTQI+s, their Christian identity was a site of scrutiny for participants who did not think that gays and lesbians could be Christians. According to Tshepi, the moment someone is attracted to someone of the same sex, they are no longer Christian because they are not following established standards. This was found to be true in a study conducted by Yip (1997:113 & 115). Yip found that gays and lesbians are sometimes forced to choose between one of their two identities, Christianity or being LGBTQI+. Yip's study was conducted more than two decades ago; however, this is still true decades later. However, it is worth noting that

some participants (Chris and Bossy) disagreed with claims that gays and lesbians cannot be Christians. Even when some participants thought it was possible to be queer and Christian, they believed that maintaining the two identities would be challenging, as they would be in conflict with each other. This is because, as mentioned, Christian beliefs reject homosexuality.

What is clear here is, when it comes to sexuality, Pentecostal Christians in this study still upheld heterosexuality as the standard. In this sense, anyone who does not identify as heterosexual or is not in a heterosexual relationship, is not entirely free to express their sexuality. The way homosexuality was constructed by participants also showed which sexual subjectivities are made possible through religious discourse. For instance, most participants constructed heterosexuality as the norm and constructed homosexuality as a sin, choice, or result of deception. For LGBTQI+s, their sexualities are inhibited and they are not fully accepted as Christians. This is because some people do not think a person can identify with the two identities simultaneously. However, the number of churches that embrace sexual diversity is growing. This means that, increasingly, LGBTQI+s no longer have to find themselves in situations where they have to choose between their Christian and sexual identities. What was also clear from this analysis was that within the participants' churches, sexual agency was restricted. It is restricted in that people are not free to express any sexualities other than heterosexuality.

One of the themes that emerged in the conversations and during data analysis was the notion of acceptance. The theme reported on the different ways in which participants expressed their perceptions of acceptance and their general impression of how they thought gays and lesbians were accepted in churches by other Christians. Participants made it clear that Christianity accepts everyone. However, anything that is considered a sin, including homosexuality, murder, and lying, is unacceptable. Therefore, Christians accept gays and lesbians, but their sexuality is not accepted. Sexuality is a major part of people's identities and, hence, rejection of their sexuality constitutes rejection of the person (in contradiction to what participants claimed).

The majority of Christians who reject gays and lesbians do so because the Bible does not encourage homosexuality, as it is perceived as failing to meet the heterosexual standards of Christianity. According to Nash and Chris, churches that accept LGBTQI+ members have a secret agenda: they are hoping that, as Christians, LGBTQI+ people will come to realise that

there is something wrong with their sexuality and then, hopefully, become heterosexual. The concept of “love the sinner, hate the sin” was also quoted by several participants to explain how they and other Christians accept or tolerate gays and lesbians while rejecting sexual diversity. This concept, according to Tshepi, meant co-existing with someone. While participants may not see anything wrong with this concept, gays and lesbians find it problematic because Christians are essentially claiming to love gay and lesbian people, while at the same time rejecting a big part of who they are, which is their sexual identity.

This chapter concluded with the second sub-objective: to explore alternative religious discourses of sexuality. While this chapter succeeded in showing that participants’ perceptions were influenced by their Pentecostal Churches and that participants held heteronormative ideas in their religious discourses, this chapter was also able to report on alternative discourses. The majority of participants expressed their dislike towards homosexuality for several reasons. As such, alternative discourses were taken as a sign of changing attitudes towards homosexuality. Counter discourses were seen when Amo, for instance, referenced the Constitution of South Africa (1996). For example, Amo, even though he had stated that being gay or lesbian looks bad in public, also mentioned that people should not be discriminated against because of their sexuality. This shows the importance of having a constitution, as it can be used to prevent or address forms of discrimination and it also makes it possible to protect LGBTQI+s (Samelius & Wagberg, 2015:14). Abbe’Gayle also expressed a thought emphasised by the Constitution, which is to treat people with equality despite their sexual orientation. The statements made Amo and Abbe’Gayle also serve as examples of how discourses are changing and how people are actively engaging with the discourses produced by institutions. This changing discourse was also noted in the Progressive Prudes Report published by The Other Foundation (2016:4). According to the report, attitudes towards alternative sexualities were slowly changing to be more positive. For example, more people accepted same-sex marriages.

Alternative discourses were also visible among the participants in the following ways. For instance, Bossy believed that churches had a role to play in tolerating sexual diversity. He also stated that churches must be doing something wrong if gays and lesbians see the need for their own churches. He explained this by saying that churches should be places where everyone feels welcome. Abbe’Gayle noted that the solution would be to ensure that discrimination against LGBTQI+s did not take place in churches. Discrimination happens

due to the lack of understanding, as people are likely to hate something they do not understand. This highlights the importance of education that could take place through sermons about homosexuality.

Other participants stated that the younger generation was more accepting and tolerant of gays and lesbians. They believe that sexual diversity is more acceptable for millennials, with the older generation perceived as being more judgemental. The growth of liberal churches is also accompanied by counter normative discourses of heterosexuality. Churches, such as, The Good Hope Unity Metropolitan Community Church in Cape Town has made it possible for LGBTQI+ people to retain their identities while still maintaining their Christian identity. This is important, as the majority of churches in the past have not been able to fully accept them. This will ensure gay and lesbian members freedom over their sexual agency.

More recent developments could be seen from the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church. In the past, both these churches disregarded gay and lesbian rights. Furthermore, they both objected against same-sex unions. However, in 2020, Pope Francis of the Catholic Church publicly acknowledged LGBTQI+ rights, and the need for gays and lesbians to have families and to receive legal benefits (CBC News, 2020). The Methodist Church also announced that it now welcomed LGBTQI+ people in their churches and supported same-sex marriage (Lindeque, 2020). In 2020, there have also been further changes from religious institutions, such as in the Methodist Church and the Catholic Church. The Church went on to recognise LGBTQI+ rights, including the right to get married. These progressive developments also show how religious discourses of homosexuality are becoming more positive.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

During the data collection process, some participants expressed the need for more conversations about Christianity and sexuality. Some stated that churches should extend this conversation to the topic of alternative sexualities. Perhaps in the future, a study seeking to investigate the religious discourse of sexuality could be extended to involve more people in churches, especially people who are in positions to facilitate such discussions. Additionally, young adults in churches may be willing to get involved with organisations such as IAM and Other Sheep. Thus, future studies could also look into how supporting and strengthening established intuitions that work with LGBTQI+ communities in religious settings, such as

IAM and Other Sheep, could contribute more to alternative and positive discourses on homosexuality. Research could also look into how to get more churches involved with these movements so that people (especially religious ones) could have a better understanding of religious discourses on homosexuality.

As one of the participants noted, people tend to fear what they do not understand. Research with organisations such as IAM and Other Sheep could be used to facilitate open conversations. This could possibly address some of the misconceptions within Christianity that Christians believe to be true about homosexuality. These include talking about homosexuality as an illness or a state of being deceived that can be cured through prayer. This can also help to address some of the discrimination against and the exclusion of LGBTQI+ individuals in churches and the rest of South African communities.

A second recommendation would be taking into account that South Africa is a multi-religious country; therefore, it would be worth exploring sexual discourses in other religions. Just as there are not many studies dedicated to researching Christianity and homosexuality, there are even fewer studies focusing on the LGBTQI+s from other minority groups (Samelius & Wagberg, 2015:38). For instance, Muslim LGBTQI+ hardly receive any attention. This would be an opportunity to learn about how other religions have constructed LGBTQI+ people.

5.3. FINAL SUMMARY

This research set out to explore the dominant religious discourse on homosexuality. The researcher was interested in talking to young adults in Pentecostal churches to find out what their perceptions on homosexuality were. This was done with the intent to discover whether Christianity maintained its heteronormative views and, if so, to explore the existing alternative discourse on homosexuality among Christians. While the majority of Christians still seem to consider heterosexuality the only acceptable and natural sexuality, there is a small percentage of Christians who accept gays and lesbians. Counter normative discourses are important because they disrupt normative discourse.

South Africa has come a long way in terms of recognising and accepting LGBTs. While this study succeeded in showing that religious discourses are dominantly heteronormative, Francis' (2019) study has shown that this is also the case in schools. It is possible to say that major institutions in South Africa still regard heterosexuality as the only normal sexual identity. On the other hand, this study along with Francis (2019) have shown that young people are engaging with the discourses they have been exposed to, some of which discriminate against gays and lesbians, and they are choosing to go against those discourses. Additionally, the growing number of people who are tolerant of LGBTQI+ people has been increasing over the years, especially among young adults. In South Africa, the Constitution has had a positive impact on people's attitudes by encouraging them to treat each other with respect and equality, despite different religious beliefs, sexual orientations and races. However, it is clear from the analysis that people's attitudes towards LGBTs do not always reflect the Constitution.

LIST OF SOURCES

- Abbott, D.M., Harris, J.E., Mollen, D. 2016. The impact of religious commitment on women's sexual self-esteem. *Sexuality and Culture*, 20: 1063-1082.
- Aldridge, A. 2013. Religion in the contemporary world: A sociological introduction. UK: Polity Press.
- Alhojailan, M.I. 2012. Thematic analysis: A critical review of its process and evaluation. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1): 39-47.
- Armstrong, E.A. & Cragg, S.M. 2006. The making of the Stonewall myth. *American Sociological Review*, 71: 724-751.
- Arthur, M.M.L. 2015. National Organisation for Women (NOW). http://www.glbqtarchive.com/ssh/nat_org_women_S.pdf Date of access: 01 Dec. 20.
- ASSAF (Academy of Science of South Africa). 2015. Diversity in human sexuality: Implications for policy in Africa. <https://www.assaf.org.za/files/8-June-Diversity-in-human-sexuality1.pdf> Date of access: 06 Aug. 18.
- Babbie, E. 2013. The practice of social research. 13th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2001. The practice of social research. Oxford University Press.
- Bailey, D.O. 2016. Setting a research question, aim and objective. *Nurse Research*, 23(4): 19-23.
- Baird, H. 2017. Is this the truth behind Oscar Bougardt's accusations? <http://www.gaysaradio.co.za/truth-behind-oscar-bougardts-accusations/> Date of access: 01 Mar. 18.
- Bartelink, B. & Meinema, E. 2014. A mapping on sexuality, human rights and the role of religious leaders: exploring the potential for dialogue. <http://www.religion-and-development.nl/documents/publications/human%20rights%20sexuality%20and%20religious%20leaders.pdf> Date of access: 29 Aug. 17.
- Basit, T.N. 2003. Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis.

Education Research, 45: 143-154.

Bateman, G.W. 2015. Gay Liberation Front. http://www.glbqtarchive.com/ssh/gay_liberation_front_S.pdf Date of access: 23 Nov. 20.

Beck, U. & Beck-Gernsheim, E. 1995. *The normal chaos of love*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bem, S.L. 1995. Dismantling gender polarisation and compulsory heterosexuality: Should we turn the volume up or down?. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 32(4): 329-334.

Berg, B. L. 2009. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 7th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Berger, S. 2009. Production and reproduction of gender and sexuality in legal discourses of asylum in the United States. *Journal of women in culture and society*, 34(3):659-685.

Bloomfield, J. & Fisher, M.J. 2019. Quantitative research design. *JARNA*, 22(2): 27-30.

Boeije, H. 2010. *Analysis in qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Bompani, B. & Brown, T. 2015. A “religious revolution”? Print media, sexuality, and religious discourse in Uganda. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 9(1): 110-126.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Quantitative Research in Psychology*, 3: 77-101.

Brown, T. 2014. South Africa’s gay revolution: The development of gay and lesbian rights in South Africa’s constitution and the lingering societal stigma towards the country’s homosexuals. *Elon Law Review*, 6: 455–477.

Bryman, A. 2012. *Social research methods*. 4th ed. NY: Oxford University Press.

Butler, J. 1999. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. NY: Routledge.

CBC News. 2020. Pope Francis endorses civil union for gay couples in new documentary. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/pope-documentary-gay-rights-1.5770754> Date of Access: 26 Nov. 20.

Chambers, D. 2012. *A Sociology of Family Life*. London: Polity Press.

- Christiansen, E.C. 2016. Substantive equality and sexual orientation: Twenty years of gay and lesbian rights adjudication under the South African constitution. *Cornell International Law Journal*, 41: 565-615.
- Clarke, A. E. 2005. *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. California: Sage Publications.
- Cochran, J.K., Chamlin, M.B., Beeghley, L. & Fenwick, M. 2004. Religion, religiosity, and normal sexual conduct: An application of reference group theory. *Sociological Inquiry*, 74(1): 102-127.
- Cock, J. 2010. Essay: Engendering gay and lesbian rights: The Equality Clause in the South Africa Constitution. (In Hoad, N.W., Martin, K. & Reid, G. eds. *Sex and politics South Africa*. CT: Double Storey Publishers p. 188-209).
- Collison, C. 2018. Rights commission, anti-queer Christian author enter into settlement agreement. <https://mg.co.za/article/2018-07-19-rights-commission-anti-queer-christian-author-enter-into-settlement-agreement> Date of access: 20 Jul. 18.
- Conway, D. 2004. All these long-haired fairies should be forced to do their military training. Maybe they will become men. The ECC, sexuality, citizenship, apartheid and military conscription in apartheid South Africa. *South African Journal on Human Rights*, 20 (2): 207–229.
- Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. 2018. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. California: Sage.
- Davies, J. 1997. Sex these days, sex those days: will it ever end? (In Davies, J. & Loughlin, G. eds. *Sex these days: Essays on theology, sexuality and society*. England: Sheffield academic press. p. 18-34).
- Davis, R. 2017. Analysis: The gospel according to Angus Buchan. https://www.daily-maverick.co.za/article/2017-04-24-analysis-the-gospel-according-to-angus-buchan/#.Wpg_dehuaUk Date of access: 01 Mar. 18.
- De Oliveira, D.L. 2011. The use of focus groups to investigate sensitive topics: An example taken from research on adolescent girls' perceptions about sexual risk. *Ciencia & Saúde*

Coletiva, 16(7): 3093-3102.

De Oliveira, J.M., Costa, C.G. & Nogueira, C. 2013. The workings of homonormativity: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer discourses on discrimination and public displays of affections in Portugal. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 60: 1475-1493.

De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B. & Delport, C.S.L. 2012. Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions. 4th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Dean, B.A. 2018. The interpretivist and the learner. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies*, 13: 1-8.

Denton, J.M. 2016. Critical and poststructural perspectives on sexual identity formation. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/ss.20175> Date of access: 10 May 2018.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2011. Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. (In Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. eds. The sage handbook of qualitative research. Los Angeles: Sage. p. 1-20).

Devlin, J. What does it mean to be saved?. 2020. <https://www1.cbn.com/churchandministry/what-does-it-mean-to-be-saved%3F> Date of access: 07 Feb.20

Dickson-Swift, V., James, E.L. & Laimputtong, P. 2008. Undertaking sensitive research in the Health and Social Sciences: Managing boundaries, emotions and risks. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dilley, P. 1999. Queer theory: Under construction. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 12(5): 457-472.

Dlamini, B. 2006. Homosexuality in the African context. *Agenda*, 20(67): 128-136.

Don-Solomon, A. & Eke, G.J. 2018. Ontological and epistemological philosophies underlying theory building: A scholarly dilemma or axiomatic illumination – The business research perspectives. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, 6(2):1-7.

Falkof, N. 2019. Sex and the devil: Homosexuality, Satanism, and moral panic in late apartheid South Africa. *Men and Masculinities*, 22(2): 273-293.

- Flick, U. 2009. An introduction to qualitative research. 4th ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Flick, U. 2014. An introduction to qualitative research. 5th ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Foucault, M. 1978. The history of sexuality. Volume 1: An introduction.
- Francis, D. 2019. 'Keeping it straight' what do South African queer youth say they need from sexuality education?. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 22(6): 772-790.
- Francis, D.A. & Reygan, F. 2016. 'Let's see if it won't go away by itself': LGBT microaggressions among teachers in South Africa. *Education as Change*, 20(3): 180-201.
- Fuss, D. 1991. Inside/Out. (In Fuss, D., ed. Inside/Out: lesbian theories, gay theories. New York: Routledge. p. 1-10).
- Galbin, A. 2014. An introduction to social constructionism. *Social Research Reports*, 26: 82-92.
- Geiger, T.J. 2013. Emerging voices: Unpredictable encounters: Religious discourses, sexuality, and the free exercise of rhetoric. *College English*, 75(3): 248-269.
- Gentles, S., Charles, C., Ploeg, J. & McKibbin, K.N. 2015. Sampling in qualitative research: Insights from an overview of the methods literature. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(11): 1772-1789.
- Glaser, B.G. 2016. Open coding descriptions. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 15(2): 108-110.
- Gray, D.E. 2014. Doing research in the real world. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Green, A.I. 2007. Queer theory and sociology: Locating the subject and the self in sexuality studies. *Sociological theory*, 25(1): 26 – 45.
- Gunda, M.R. 2017. How the stigmatisation and bullying of LGBTI people is driven by churches. http://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/dr-masiiwa-ragies-gunda/silent-no-longer_a_21702919/ Date of access: 28 Nov. 17.
- Hakansson, M. 2014. Researching professional perspectives in practice: a pedagogic-ethnographic approach. (In Silva, E.A., Healey, P., Harris, N. & Van de Broeck, P. eds. The

routledge handbook of planning research methods. NY: Routledge. p.182-191).

Han, E. & O'Mahoney, J. 2014. British colonialism and the criminalisation of homosexuality. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 27(2): 268-288.

Hardy, S.A. & Raffaelli, M. 2003. Adolescent religiosity and sexuality: An investigation of reciprocal influences. *Journal of Adolescence*, 26: 731-739.

Holmes, D. & Gagnon, M. 2018. Power, discourse, and resistance: Poststructuralist influences in nursing. *Nurs Philos* (In press).

Holton, J.A. 2010. The coding process and its challenges. *The Grounded Theory Review*, 9(1): 21-40.

Honeychurch, K.G. 1996. Researching dissident subjectivities: Queering the grounds of theory and practice. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(2): 339-355.

Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2008. The alien legacy: The origins of "sodomy" laws in British colonialism. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2008/12/17/alien-legacy/origins-sodomy-laws-british-colonialism#> Date of access: 10 Dec. 20.

Hunt, M.E. & Jung, P.B. 2009. "Good sex" and religion: A feminist overview. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 46(2-3): 156-167.

Hunter, S. 2017. Why the hell did "God's favourite homophobe" Angus Buchan speak at parliament on Friday?. <http://www.2oceansvibe.com/2017/11/28/why-the-hell-did-gods-favourite-homophobe-angus-buchan-speak-at-parliament-on-friday/> Date of access: 01 Mar. 18.

Hurd, I. 2008. Constructivism. (In Snidal, D. & Reus-Smit, C., eds. Oxford handbook of international relations. Oxford University Press. p. 298-316).

Iyayambwa, M. 2012. Homosexual rights and the law: A South African constitutional metamorphosis. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(4): 50-58.

Jackson, S. & Scott, S. 2010. Theorizing sexuality. NY: Open University Press.

Jagose, A.R. 1996. Queer theory: An introduction. NY: Melbourne University Press.

Jaspal, R. & Cinnirella, M. 2010. Coping with potential incompatible identities: Accounts of religious, ethnic, and sexual identities from British Pakistani men who identify as Muslim and gay. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 49: 849-870.

Kaoma, K.J. 2012. Colonizing African values: How the U.S. Christian right is transforming sexual politics in Africa. <http://www.politicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/Colonizing-African-Values.pdf> Date of access: 27 Oct. 17.

Kavoura, A., Ryba, T.V. & Chroni, S. 2015. Negotiating female judoka identities in Greece: A Foucauldian discourse analysis. *Psychology of sport and exercise*, 17: 88-98.

Kivunja, C. & Kuyini, B. 2017. Understanding and applying research paradigms in Educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(5): 26-41.

Lindeque, B. 2020. Methodist Church change stance and affirm the rights of all LGBTQI+ Africans! <https://www.goodthingsguy.com/business/methodist-church-change-stance-and-affirm-the-rights-of-all-lgbtqi-south-africans/> Date of access: 26 Nov. 20.

Lloyd, M. 2005. Beyond identity politics: Feminism, power and politics. London: sage Publications Ltd.

Lyonga, F.I. 2014. Un-African? Representations of homosexuality in two contemporary Nigerian films. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8(1): 97-103.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G.B. 1999. Designing qualitative research. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Mason, J. 2002. Qualitative researching. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Mavhandu-Mudzusi, A. & Sandy, P.T. 2015. Religion-related stigma and discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students at a South African rural-based university. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 17(8): 1049-1056.

May, T. 2001. Social research: Issues, methods and process. 3rd ed. United Kingdom: Open University Press.

McFarland, M.J., Uecker, J.E. & Regnerus, M.D. 2011. The role of religion in shaping sexual frequency and satisfaction: Evidence from married and unmarried older adults. *J sex*

Res., 48(2-3): 297-308.

McIntosh, M. 1968. The homosexual role. *Social Problems*, 16(2):182-192.

Mehra, B., Lemieux III, P.A., & Stophel, K. 2019. An exploratory journey of cultural visual literacy of “non-conforming” gender representations from pre-colonial Sub-Saharan Africa. *Open Information Science*, 3:1-21.

Merriam, S.B. & Tisdell, E.J. 2016. Qualitative research: A Guide to design and implementation. 4th ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass A Wiley Brand.

Mngoma, N. 2017. Pastors challenge ‘hate bill’. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/crime-courts/pastors-challenge-hate-bill-7376774> Date of access: 30 Jan. 18.

Mottier, V. The invention of sexuality. *In Chic, cheque, choc*. 23-38.

Msibi, T. 2011. The lies we have been told: On (homo) sexuality in Africa. *Africa Today*, 58(1): 55-77.

Msibi, T. 2011. They are worried about me: I am also worried. *Agenda*, 25(1): 22-28.

Murray, K.M., Ciarrocchi, J.W. & Murray-Swank, N.A. 2007. Spirituality, religiosity, shame and guilt as predictors of sexual attitudes and experiences. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 35(3): 222-234.

Namaste, K. 1994. The politics of inside/out: Queer theory, poststructuralism, and a sociological approach to sexuality. *Sociological Theory*, 12(2): 220-321.

Natividade, M. & De Oliveira, L. 2013. Threatening sexualities: religion and homophobia(s) in evangelical discourses. *Sexuality, Culture and Politics*, ‘ 600-619.

Nell, M. & Shapiro, J. 2011. Out of the box: Queer youth in South Africa today. http://www.atlanticphilanthropies.org/app/uploads/2015/09/Out_of_the_box_queer_youth_in_South_Africa_Today_0.pdf Date of access: 28 Nov. 17.

Nell, W. 2016. ‘The religious lives of students at a South African university’. *HTS Theological Studies*, 72(1), a3177.

Ngubane, S. 2015. Dutch Reformed Church’s radical gay ruling. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal/dutch-reformed-churchs-radical-gay-ruling-1928889>

Date of access: 14 May 2018.

Nkosi, S. & Masson, F. 2017. Christianity and homosexuality: Contradictory or complementary? A qualitative study of the experiences of Christian homosexual university students. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 31(4): 72-93.

Noy, C. 2008. Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(4): 327-344.

Oosterhuis, H. 2000. Stepchildren of nature: Krafft-Ebing, psychiatry, and the making of sexual identity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Punch, K.F. 2014. Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches. 3rd ed. LA: Sage.

Rahi, S. 2017. Research design and methods: A systematic review of research paradigms, sampling issues and instruments development. *Int J Econ Manag Sci*, 6(2). <https://www.hilarispublisher.com/open-access/research-design-and-methods-a-systematic-review-of-research-paradigms-sampling-issues-and-instruments-development-2162-6359-1000403.pdf>
Date of access: 22 Oct. 18.

Rahman, M.D.S. 2017. The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language “testing and assessment” research: A literature review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1): 102-112.

Rasmussen, M.L. 2006. Becoming subjects: Sexualities and secondary schooling. NY: Routledge.

Retief, G. 1995. Keeping Sodom out of the laager: State repression of homosexuality in apartheid South Africa. (In Gevisser, M & Cameron, E. eds. *Defiant Desires: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*. Chicago: Routledge. p99-111).

Rich, A. 1980. Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. *Women: Sex and Sexuality*, 5(4): 631-660.

Rickard, C. 2015. Gay rights in the church: What will SA’s highest court say?.
<http://www.tradingplaces2night.co.za/carmels-writing/gay-rights-in-the-church-what-will->

sas-highest-court-say/ Date of access: 28 Nov. 17.

Rubin, G.S. 2011. *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader*. NC: Duke University Press Books.

Ryan, F., Coughlan, M. & Cronin, P. 2009. Interviewing in qualitative research: The one-to-one interview. *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 16(16): 309-314.

Saldana, J. 2016. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. 2nd ed. London: Sage Publications.

Samelius, L. & Wagberg, E. 2005. A study of policy and administration: Sexual orientation and gender identity issues in development. [www.sida.se/contentassets/ .../sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity_686.pdf](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/.../sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity_686.pdf) Date of access: 13 Aug. 18.

Samelius, L. & Wagberg, E. 2015. A study of policy and administration: Sexual orientation and gender identity issues in development. http://www.sida.se/contentassets/77a0ee7f307a4ff49fa0514d080748dc/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-issues-in-development_718.pdf Date of access: 28 Nov. 17.

Sarantakos, S. 2013. *Social research*. 4th ed. England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Schippert, C. 2011. Implications of queer theory for the study of religion and gender: Entering the third decade. *Religion and gender*, 1(1): 66-84.

Seale, L. 2006. Zuma's anti-gay comments lead to backlash. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/zumas-anti-gay-comments-lead-to-backlash-295249> Date of access: 17 Feb. 20.

Seidel, J.V. 1998. Qualitative data analysis. <http://eer.engin.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/443/2019/08/Seidel-Qualitative-Data-Analysis.pdf> Date of access: 19 Jan.19.

Seidman, S. 1994. Symposium: Queer theory/Sociology: A dialogue. *Sociological Theory*, 12(2): 166-177.

Seidman, S. 2009. Critique of compulsory heterosexuality. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 6(1): 18-28.

Shipley, H. 2015. Introduction. (In Young, P.D., Shipley, H., & Trothen, T.J., eds. *Religion and sexuality: Diversity and the limits of tolerance*. Canada: UBC Press. p. 3-16).

- Spargo, T. 1999. Postmodern encounters: Foucault and queer theory. UK: Icon Books Ltd.
- Statistics South Africa. 2015. General household survey. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182015.pdf> Date of access: 05 Feb. 17.
- Stearns, P.N. 2009. Sexuality in world history: Themes in world history. NY: Routledge.
- Stein, A. & Plummer, K. 1994. "I can't even think straight" "Queer theory and the missing sexual revolution in sociology. *Sociological Theory*, 12(2): 178-187.
- Stone, J. 2018. The Cape backlash against Angus Buchan continues. <http://www.2oceansvibe.com/2018/02/09/the-cape-town-backlash-against-angus-buchan-continues/> Date of access: 01 Mar. 18.
- Stychin, C.F. 1996. Constituting sexuality: The struggle for sexual orientation in the South African Bill of Rights. *Journal of law and Society*, 23(4): 455-483.
- Sumerau, J.E. & Schrock, D.P. 2011. "It's important to show your colors": Counter-Heteronormativity in a metropolitan community church. (In Bobel, C. & Kwan, S., eds. Embodied resistance: Challenging the norms, breaking the rules. Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press. P. 99-110).
- Tamale, S. 2014a. Exploring the contours of African sexualities: Religion, law and power. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 14: 150-177.
- Tamale, S. 2014b. Homosexuality is not Un-African: It is legalised homophobia, not same-sex relations, that is alien to Africa. <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/4/homosexuality-africamuseveniugandanigeriaethiopia.html> Date of access: 10 Apr. 18.
- Thanh, N.C. & Thanh, T.T.L. 2015. The interconnection between interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods in education. *American Journal of Educational Science*, 1(2): 24-27.
- The British Psychological Society (BPS). 2014. Code of human research ethics. <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/bps.org.uk/files/Policy%20-%20Files/BPS%20Code%20of%20Human%20Research%20Ethics.pdf> Date of access: 15 Oct. 18.

The Other Foundation. 2016. Progressive Prudes Report: A survey of attitudes towards homosexuality and gender non-conformity in South Africa. http://theotherfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ProgPrudes_Report_d5.pdf Date of access: 06 Nov. 17.

Theron, P.M. 2015. Coding and data analysis during qualitative empirical research in Practical Theology. *In die Skriflig*, 49(3): 1-9.

Thomas, D.R. & Hodges, I. 2010. Designing and planning your research project: Core skills for social and health researcher. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Timeslive. 2018. Bless same-sex marriages, pleads retired Anglican archbishop. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2018-06-04-bless-same-sex-marriages-pleads-retired-anglican-archbishop/> Date of access: 06 Aug. 18.

Tongco, M.D.C. 2007. Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection. *Ethnobotany Research & Applications*, 5: 147-158.

Tourangeau, R. & Yan, T. 2007. Sensitive questions in Surveys. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(5): 859-883.

Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H. & Snelgrove, S. 2016. Theme development in qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis. *Journal of Nursing and Practice*, 6(5): 100-110.

Valk, A. M. 2018. Lesbian feminism: Sociology. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/lesbian-feminism> Date of access: 23 Nov. 20.

Van Klinken, A. & Chitando, E. 2016. Introduction: Christianity and the politics of homosexuality in Africa. (In Chitando, E. & Van Klinken, A. eds. Christianity and controversies over homosexuality in contemporary Africa. NY: Rutledge. p. 1-17).

Van Klinken, A. & Obadare, E. 2018. Christianity, sexuality and citizenship in Africa: Critical intersections. *Citizenship Studies*, 22(6) 557-568.

Van Vollenhoven, W.J. & Els, C.J. 2013. The human rights paradox of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students in South African education. *De Jure*, 46(1): 263-284.

Van Zyl, M. 2011. Are same-sex marriages unAfrican? Same-sex relationships and

- belonging in post-apartheid South Africa. *Journal of Social Issues*, 67(2): 335-357.
- Veriava, F., Thom, A. & Hodgson, T.F. 2017. Basic education rights handbook: Education rights in South Africa. <https://eduinfoafrica.files.wordpress.com/2016/11/basiceducationrightshandbook-complete.pdf> Date of access: 29 Aug. 17.
- Verona, A.P.A. 2011. Explanations for religious influence on adolescent sexual behavior in Brazil: Direct and indirect effects. *R.bras. Est. Pop.*, Rio de Janeiro, 28(1): 187-201.
- Victoria, C., Ellis, S.J., Peel, E. & Riggs. 2010. Lesbian gay bisexual trans & queer psychology: An introduction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
http://terrabaltica.blogspot.co.za/2013/12/challenging-heteronormativity_25.html Date of access: 26 Mar. 18.
- Volger, S. 2016. Legally queer: The construction of sexuality in LGBTQ asylum claims. *Law and Society Review*, 50(4): 856-889.
- Ward, K. 2013. Religious institutions and actors and religious attitudes to homosexual rights: South Africa and Uganda. http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/4824/7/15Ward_ReligiousInstitutionsSexualRightsUgandaSouthAfrica.pdf Date of access: 28 Nov. 17.
- Watson, K. 2005. Queer theory. *Group analysis*, 38(1):67-81.
- Yip, A.K.T. 1997. Attacking the attacker: Gay Christians talk back. *Brit. Jnl. Of Sociology*, 48(1): 113-127.
- Yip, A.K.T., Keena, M. & Pages, S. 2011. Religion, youth and sexuality: Selected key findings from a multi-faith exploration. https://www.google.co.za/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=9&ved=0ahUKEwjC0o6s3JLWAhXJLMAKHW8YCksQFghjMAg&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.religionandsociety.org.uk%2Fuploads%2Fdocs%2F2011_03%2F1298990240_rys-research-report.pdf&usg=AFQjCNGzwRogUcZA2MuXpD3oADmY0uGoMQ Date of access: 13 Sep. 17.
- Zuckerman, P. & Manning, C. 2005. Sex and religion: An introduction. (In Zuckerman, P. & Manning, C., eds. Sex and religion. Belmont: Thomas Wadsworth. p. 1-17).

Appendix A: Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY, POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS MASTERS DISSERTATION: INVESTIGATING RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES OF HOMOSEXUALITY AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN POTCHEFSTROOM.

FIELD OF STUDY: SOCIOLOGY
RESEARCHER: LOUISA MAKOTI
Cell: 0794378986
louisa.makoti@gmail.com

Dear _____ Participants
Informed Consent Statement serves to confirm the following information as it relates to the Master's dissertation with the focus on investigating religious discourses of homosexuality among young adults in Pentecostal churches in Potchefstroom:

- 1 The main purpose of this study centres on obtaining information from young adults in Pentecostal Churches in Potchefstroom in an attempt to explore religious discourses of homosexuality.
- 2 The procedure to be followed is a qualitative research design, which includes the use of an in-depth interview comprised of open-ended questions whereby participants are given the opportunity to communicate their subjective views on the noted topic during either a face-to-face in-depth interview. Basic background information related to age and religion will be asked. Interviews will be recorded, to ensure sufficient transcription of information communicated by the participant. If, at any time during the interview the participant feels that it should be switched off, the researcher will oblige.
- 3 The duration of the interview will be no longer than one hour at most.
- 4 If at any point during the interview the participant should feel uncomfortable, he/she will be given the opportunity to either make his/her discomfort known, or immediately end his/her participation.
- 5 It should also be emphasised that participation takes place on a voluntary basis, with the consent of the participant without any form of coercion
- 6 The confidentiality and privacy of participants are guaranteed. The participants will be given the opportunity to choose their own fictitious name/pseudonym at the beginning of the interview. Only this name will appear on the interview schedule and in the published report and/or articles. The actual name and surname will only appear on this informed consent form in order to safeguard both the researcher and participant.
- 7 If a respondent regards any information as confidential in nature, and wishes to prohibit the researchers to publish it in the final report and/or articles, he/she 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 may be made available to the participant before the commencement of the interview he/she requests this. 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 report or published articles will be made available to participants on request.
- 10 Participants are also requested to provide their e-mail addresses, but only if they feel comfortable to do so. This is done in order to forward relevant information associated with the study (e.g. the final research report, published articles, etc.) to participants if they request this. It is, however, not compulsory to provide this. It will be treated confidentially by the researchers.

I, ... (Name and surname) (Chosen pseudonym)
hereby declare that I have read and understand the contents of the Informed Consent Statement, and give my full consent to the interviewer (name and surname) to progress with the interview on(date) and use information communicated by myself for the purpose of the Research Project outlined above.

Name and Designation	Signature	Date
Supervisor		
Researcher		
Participant		

Appendix B: Interview Schedule

SECTION A BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Sex	
Age	
Pentecostal Church	

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that Christians are free to express their sexuality?
2. Do you think that Christians are free to choose who they want to be in romantic relationships with?
3. What do you think about romantic relationships between two men or two women?
4. How do you think God views romantic relationships? (between a man and a woman; between two men; and between two women)
5. Do you think that Christians accept people who are gay?
6. Do you think gay people feel welcome in churches?
7. Are Christian people antigay?
8. How do you think homosexuals feel about church?
9. What does the bible say about homosexuality?
10. How does the bible refer to same-sex activities?
11. What do you think about homosexual Christians?
12. Do you know any homosexual people in your church? / Do you think that there are homosexual people in your church?
13. From your perspective how do gays and lesbians experience church?
14. How can churches contribute to tolerant of sexual diversity?