

AFRICAN, LESBIAN, AND MARRIED: THE EXPERIENCES OF A BLACK SOUTH
AFRICAN COUPLE

by

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Nomrane Sophia Dondolo-Thipe, whose wish was for me to become a medical doctor. I know you are proud of me, regardless of the type of doctor I have become.

Abstract

Although South Africa has factored the rights of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) community into its constitution, this does not necessarily guarantee that those who engage in same-sex relationships enjoy these rights in practice. South African lesbian sexuality is often suppressed and silenced. This is partly due to the fact that discourses position people in power relations. Dominant sexuality discourses in Africa privilege Black African heterosexuals. The dominant discourse of Black African heterosexuals that homosexuality is un-African has had and continues to have a negative effect on the Black LGBTQ community.

It is not common for South African Black same-sex couples to marry. This thesis reports on an in-depth investigation of the experiences of a South African Black female married couple, who have two children. My argument is located within the paradigm of intersectionality and highlights dominant discourses of gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, and socio-economic status as they pertain to marginalised social groups: in this case, a South African Black female married lesbian couple. Ten unstructured interviews were conducted with the married couple, and two with their children. The interviews were transcribed and analysed by using narrative analysis, which allows the researcher to study the experiences of a single individual or a small group of individuals.

The aim of the study is to generate an understanding of how a South African Black female same-sex couple experience their identities through their life histories and daily practices, despite social disapproval. After analysing the results, considering that little research exists on the topic, I provide recommendations outlining possible further studies to investigate South African Black lesbian sexualities.

Key Words

Sexuality, masculine-presenting, feminine-presenting, sexual diversity, same-sex marriage, lobola, heteronormativity, LGBTQ, queer families, intersectionality

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Student number: 50374966

I declare that

African, lesbian, and married: the experiences of a Black South African couple

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



Lekgowe MBM Thipe
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02 March 2020
DATE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the background, rationale, objectives, and aims of the study. It also provides a general discussion of homosexuality in pre-colonial Africa and the existence of same-sex female relationships in pre-colonial Africa and South Africa.

Introduction

As a Black lesbian and a psychologist, one of my interests is working with LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered) individuals, especially the Black lesbian community and students at the University of South Africa, where I am employed. This study is, therefore, the result of both professional and personal aspirations. It aims to explore the lived experiences of a married Black lesbian South African couple, and how they make meaning of those experiences in the context of homophobia and heterosexism.

The primary research questions that guided the study were:

- How do you understand being a Black lesbian in South Africa?
- What do you think South African society makes of your marriage?

Equally important, in conducting this study with a couple who self-identify as lesbian, I hope to contribute to an accurate popular narrative and to inform counselling practice. There is a dearth of psychological research that addresses working with Black lesbians in South Africa, as well as research that addresses the perspectives of Black South African lesbians. This study is especially important to psychologists since it is crucial for counsellors to understand how sexuality, gender, and race impact Black lesbians' lived experiences. It is also ethically important for counsellors to have a broad understanding of these matters, so that they can engage with LGBT people in ways that support their worth and dignity, as well as their ethnic and cultural diversity.

Finally, this study provides a Black South African lesbian couple with a voice to express their own stories, separately and together, and to construct their narrative as they wish, according to their own experience. The study grants the participants' stories a place of power, challenging the oppressive

narratives that Black lesbians in South Africa are navigating. In summary, this study aims to explore the narratives that participants tell about their identities.

1. Background

Lesbians, like other non-heterosexual individuals, encounter challenges in a heteronormative culture. Some South Africans regard LGBT people as un-African and, regardless of the legal rights granted to LGBT persons through the South African Constitution, heteronormativity persists in South African society. As a result, living conditions for LGBT persons, particularly Black lesbians, are harsh in an environment that is deeply rooted in patriarchy and heteronormativity. Many heterosexual males in South Africa view lesbians as a provocation of their masculinity and a weakening of their power (Koraan, 2015). Hence, in South Africa, Black lesbians are more likely to become victims of ‘corrective rape’, as they are perceived to violate traditional gender norms (Breen and Nel, 2010; Ewing, Brown, Mkhize, and Msibi, 2020; Msibi, 2009). Corrective rape, in some instances referred to as curative rape, is a heinous act of violence against lesbians as a way of ‘curing’ them of their homosexuality (Breen and Nel, 2016; Koraan, 2015; Muholi, 2004; Mwambene and Wheal, 2015; Reddy, Potgieter, and Mkhize, 2007; Thomas, 2013). Corrective rape survivors state unequivocally that their assailants were intent on punishing and demeaning them for their lifestyle and sexual identity, as well as forcibly wanting to change them into heterosexual women (Breen and Nel, 2016). Unfortunately, often the perpetrators of corrective rape are never convicted.

Furthermore, the phrase ‘corrective rape’ also seems to suggest that if lesbians exercised their sexuality properly, that is, within the parameters prescribed by patriarchy, their sexuality would not need to be fixed (Koraan, 2015). In homophobic environments and cultures such as South Africa, where sexual violence is a prevalent weapon, lesbians, particularly Black lesbians, face community rejection and are exposed to policing through physical and sexual assault (Reddy, Potgieter, and Mkhize, 2007). Breen and Nel argue that Black lesbians in townships are especially susceptible to corrective rape and murder (2016). These authors also claim that, as lesbian and gay communities become more visible in South Africa, homophobic hate crime increases. In addition, one study reported that 42.8% of interviewees blamed Christianity for their victimisation (Itaborahy and Zhu, 2013). Baird (2009) reported that these findings echo the belief of some South Africans that Christianity does not affirm same-sex sexuality. Instead, it appears that religion (especially Christianity) and culture collaborate in many African contexts to make homosexuality unacceptable and to exclude LGBT people. As this study explores

how a Black, married, lesbian couple perform their gender and navigate their daily lives in a hostile South African context, it also hopes to inspire others to live according to their own lights.

1.2 Rationale of the study

The cultural politics of queerness in South Africa are more complex than ever, despite the fact that same-sex marriage was legalised in 2006. The Bill of Rights that precedes the Constitution established a legally protected environment that enabled organised sexuality activism to thrive (Currier, 2012). More crucially, it birthed a legitimising narrative that linked sexual orientation freedom to the broader democratic privileges won during the anti-apartheid struggle (Hoad, 2007). As a result, ordinary South Africans, particularly Black South Africans like me, now have more room to understand and portray themselves as LGBT individuals. Consequently, as South Africa's constitutional democracy continues to develop, the idea of homosexuality as 'un-African' proves increasingly difficult to maintain (Yarbrough, 2020). This is demonstrated in by four public Black lesbian and gay traditional wedding celebrations, as well as others (such as mine) that took place without media coverage.

These four traditional weddings involved the unions of Thoba Sithole and Cameron Modisane in 2013; Caster Semenya and Violet Raseboya in 2015; Somizi Mhlongo and Mohale Motaung in 2019; and the lobola (bride-wealth) process of lesbian couple Sape Maodi and Vaivi Swartz in 2015. The wedding celebrations included traditional African elements such as lobola negotiations, cattle slaughtering (traditionally, cattle are slaughtered to introduce each new spouse to the deceased ancestors of the other and to ask the ancestors to bless the wedding), and African traditional attire. Some included the Umoba ritual (a traditional Zulu wedding ceremony where families of the newlyweds exchange gifts). These weddings were portrayed in the media as beginnings of the fight against homophobia in Africa (Yarbrough, 2020).

The public weddings did not only depict the couple's intimate stories, but also the merging of their families and their respective cultures; isiZulu and Sesotho (Somizi and Mohale), isiZulu and Setswana (Thoba and Cameron), Setswana and isiXhosa (Sape and Vaivi), and Sepedi (Caster and Violet). The ceremonies also promoted cultural tolerance and provided a powerful message to the entire African continent that, in the end, love always triumphs, and that same-sex relationships have never been and will never be wrong. They also weakened the idea that homosexuality is 'un-African' by implying that Black LGBT South Africans can teach their communities and families how to unlearn long-held prejudices (Yarbrough, 2020).

In addition, these public wedding celebrations marked stories of historic breakthrough. They re-enacted wider debates concerning the interwoven architectures of race, gender, and sexual difference. They also noted the slowly but steadily increasing acceptance of Black South African LGBT people by their families and communities (Yarbrough, 2020). Cameron Modisane shared that ‘the whole notion’ of their public celebration instead of a private one ‘is to quash the idea that being gay is un-African’ (eNCA interview, 2013b).

‘Gays have been living amongst us since time immemorial,’ Modisane continued; ‘even in the rural areas and in the townships (segregated Black urban communities built under the colonial rule), we’ve always had gay people living as part of the community’ (eNCA interview, 2013b). Modisane’s observations are by no means restricted to the precolonial period. If he is correct, then being LGBT is as African as being Black. Perhaps Modisane is also implying that more South African Black communities can live harmoniously with Black LGBT people than the ‘un-African’ idea assumes (Yarbrough, 2020).

I lived harmoniously with Black LGBT people and heterosexual Black people in the township I grew up in. I suspect that the secrecy surrounding same-sex relationships is likely what allowed the idea of homosexuality as ‘un-African’ to deny the undeniable (Yarbrough, 2020). Before the wedding, Thoba Sithole told a journalist from MambaOnline that, ‘Hiding who we are is what makes people judge us even more and makes them not accept us for who we are. If we can just live life openly, then in time people will get used to the idea that gay and lesbian people are part of society and we are here to stay’ (Igual 2013). Moreover, I know of some Black gay and lesbian ‘white’ weddings (‘white’ referring here to the racialised origin of the ritual and the colour of the bride’s dress), which were celebrated in private, long before the four public traditional weddings. The public celebration of the four weddings was necessary to demonstrate that a Black LGBT traditional wedding is viable. Likewise, these unions proved that Black LGBT people can be accepted and celebrated by family, friends, and the community (Modisane 2013). Thoba Sithole and Cameron Modisane’s celebration, in particular, demonstrated that LGBT people can be respected in rural communities (De Waal 2013).

Moreover, the four public weddings depicted parents celebrating their Black lesbian and gay children without controversy (Yarbrough, 2020). It is a very rare occurrence for a Black family to understand, let alone accept, the homosexuality of their own children or relatives. But in the case of the four public weddings, family support was evident. This support fosters a sense of belonging and ensures the right

to participate in traditional ceremonies (De Waal 2013). It also may be viewed as confirmation that not all Africans are inherently homophobic (Yarbrough, 2020). Support from family and communities is made possible by the couple's agreement to conduct lobola negotiations and a lobola celebration. In the African culture, lobola is key to securing recognition for a marriage from families and communities. Lobola negotiations have never been a challenge; rather, they are a solution, even where the marriage is between same-sex individuals.

Finally, the four public wedding festivities were a clear challenge to the traditional African marriage custom (DeBarros 2016). They reflected the adaptability of a process that previously has excluded Black LGBT individuals. They demonstrated that an African custom is evolving to accommodate lesbian and gay couples. They also established a viable tradition that reworks the behaviours, meanings, and responsibilities that the idea of homosexuality as 'un-African' tries to deny (Livermon 2015). As Black South African LGBT people and their families engage in these customs, the 'un-African' narrative is nullified, and hopefully similar unions, ultimately, will remove its power altogether.

1.3 Purpose of the study

There is not much psychological research that addresses the lives, perspectives, and voices of Black South African lesbians. Thus, the objective of this study, through the prism of a couple who self-identify as Black and lesbian, is to contribute to an insufficient academic literature and to a more accurate public narrative. This study also seeks to inform counselling practice since it is vital for psychologists to understand how sexuality, gender, and race impact Black lesbians' lived experiences. It is of ethical importance for psychologists to have broad understanding that will enable them to engage with LGBT people in ways that support their worth, dignity, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Again, as a Black lesbian and a psychologist, one of my interests is working with LGBT individuals, especially with Black lesbians and students of the University of South Africa. As a result, this study is both a professional and a personal aspiration of mine.

Furthermore, shaming, homophobia, prejudice, social alienation, depression, suicide, cultural and religious issues, family rejection and homelessness are just a few of the realities of the LGBT group has or will face at some point in their lives (Breen and Nel, 2016). I have attended funerals of lesbians and gays to support their families. The Black lesbian community in South Africa lives on the edge,

fearing the worst might happen. These realities may have significant, lasting impact on the psyche, relationships, and health of the LGBT communities. Various forms of discrimination, lack of support from the community and from family especially parents, are also challenges the LGBTI community must sometimes face. Accordingly, this study seeks to understand how a Black, married, lesbian couple experiences life in South Africa, despite the odds described above.

Lastly, this study will provide safe space for a Black South African lesbian couple to tell their own story and to construct their narrative however they wish to, according to their own experience. This, in return, will anchor participants' stories in a place of power since they will be challenging the oppressive narratives that Black lesbians in South Africa navigate. This means that the other objective of the study is to explore the stories that narratives participants will reveal about their identities.

1.4 Aims of the study

The aims of the study were to:

- Raise concerns that societal heterosexism as well as an aversion to exploring abuses of societal power and status continue to exert a negative influence on most of South African society's view of lesbian women. Lesbians are struggling and hurting.
- Provoke the reader's thoughts regarding the quality of life in South Africa for the LGBT community, especially the Black LGBT group, as well as to relook at traditional values where the Black LGBT group is concerned.
- Explore the concept of African lesbian identity in general, especially the Black South African lesbian identity.
- Explore how participants experienced their sexual identity and what meanings they provided regarding the concept of the Black South African lesbian.

Concurrent with aims of the study were the following objectives:

- firstly, to explore the various means by which participants constructed their identities in a democratised South Africa;
- secondly, to find out the meaning participants provided for being Black females of same-sex orientation in South Africa;
- thirdly, to explore the experiences of the participant's womanhood;

- lastly, to explore the life world of the participants, as a Black married lesbian South African couple. It is hoped that a detailed and in-depth description and interpretation of the couple's experiences will help in bringing about an understanding of opportunities and challenges faced by other couples in similar circumstances.

2. Research question

What is the meaning of life for a Black, same-sex, married, female South African couple?

2.1 Sub questions

- What does it mean for participants to be Black, married South Africans?
- What made participants decide to marry?
- What is their experience of being married?
- How do their family, friends, colleagues, church and strangers relate to them as a couple?

3. Contextualisation

3.1 Global perspective on homosexuality

The equality report of the Human Rights Watch (2015) highlighted high violence rates towards LGBT people in every region of the world. The worst cases of violence against LGBT people were noteworthy in South and Central Asia, Eastern Europe, countries of the Middle East, the Caribbean and Africa. According to the report, LGBT people in the Caribbean still face criminalisation and LGBT women in some parts of the world suffer extreme forms of sexual violence, the so-called corrective rape and honour killings. Incidents of transphobia, homophobia and daily attacks on LGBT people were also noticeable in most societies around the world (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Although there is extraordinary progress towards equality in a range of countries, from Nepal to the United States of America, this advance also has a backspin that manifests in a widespread backlash. The hostile response is often witnessed in places that hold deep religious beliefs. In parts of the Middle East, extreme barbarism toward LGBT communities and the vexing persistence of violence against

transgender people across the globe were reported during 2015 (Human Rights Campaign Watch, 2015).

Activists, advocates, and allies from around the globe showed extraordinary courage, creativity, and dedication towards helping the LGBT community to enjoy visibility both legally and politically. Even Latin America, Asia, North America and Europe saw advances in policies and laws, especially in policies and laws reflecting positive social attitudes; however, there were no attitudinal shifts in some places (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Countries advocating for LGBT rights reached leading-edge political and legal victories. These advances include the protection of transgendered people, marriage equality, and laws that are non-discriminatory. These triumphs not only assisted in securing LGBT human rights but also served to progress social awareness and acceptance on a larger scale. In June 2015, marriage equality was legalised in fifty of the states in the US by the Supreme Court's ruling. This resounded positively across the globe. Instantly there were international celebrations and a social media response that was optimistic in tone. However, the ruling also ignited deliberation and forceful response against LGBT rights in countries like Indonesia and Kenya (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Furthermore, a sense of community among advocates and global interconnectedness was improved by means of social media, as the report made explicit. Readily available information about the right of LGBT people was made available on social media platforms, thus assisting in constructing solidarity across cultures and borders, and this is believed to have led to an increased number of LGBT people going public about their sexual orientation. The use of social media also assisted in supporting and encouraging global visibility and legal progress. Again, through social media, LGBT people found acceptance in their workplace, places of worship, homes, and other institutions (Human Rights Watch (2015).

Additionally, global leaders from the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, to the United States President Barack Obama, spoke out on equality and for LGBT rights. Pope Francis, together with other leaders, also advocated for a positive attitude towards members of the LGBT community, even though some fundamentalists opted for a biased explanation of religion to substantiate violence and discrimination against LGBT people, as stated in the report (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

During the May 2015 referendum in Ireland, 62% of the citizens voted in favour of marriage equality, making that country the first to introduce marriage equality by means of a popular vote. On the other

hand, Slovenia momentarily accomplished marriage equality in March 2015, but a referendum in December the same year annulled the parliamentary vote (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

In Mexico, 31 states announced marriage equality following an earlier decision when same-sex marriage had been nullified and considered unconstitutional. The Greek parliament extended current civil partnership rights, which have been in existence since 2008 for heterosexual couples, to homosexual couples; and the Cyprus parliament also granted civil partnership rights to homosexual couples. Nevertheless, these rulings were accepted against strident hostility, especially from fundamentalist Christian leaders and amid the disapprobation of most of the public. Nepal also witnessed constitutional protections for LGBT people after espousing an all-encompassing new constitution during September 2015 and became the first Asian country to do so (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Lastly, in South Africa, LGBT legal rights, however progressive, do not fully guarantee social and professional acceptance.

Below is a map highlighting worldwide laws regarding homosexual relations and expression and a list of countries that have accepted homosexuality over the past two decades.

Figure 1. Worldwide laws regarding same-sex intercourse freedom of expression and association, same-sex intercourse legal and same-sex intercourse illegal *Source:* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:World_laws_pertaining_to_homosexual_relationships_and_expression#/media/File:World_laws_pertaining_to_homosexual_relationshipsand_expression.svg

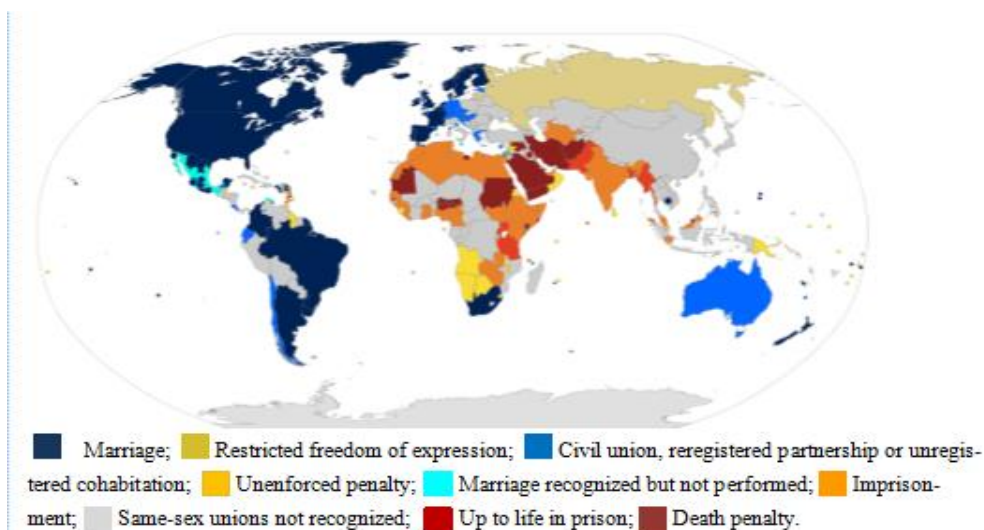


Figure 2. Countries that have accepted homosexuality over the past two decades.

Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/06/25/global-views-homosexuality-2019-appendix-a/>

Acceptance of homosexuality over time

% who say homosexuality *should* be accepted by society

	2002	2007	2011	2013	2019	'13-'19 Change
	%	%	%	%	%	
South Africa	33	-	-	32	54	+22
India	-	-	-	15	37	+22
Turkey	22	14	11	9	25	+16
Japan	54	49	55	54	68	+14
U.S.	51	49	60	60	72	+12
UK	74	71	81	76	86	+10
France	77	83	86	77	86	+9
Mexico	54	60	52	61	69	+8
Brazil	-	-	61	60	67	+7
Israel	-	38	48	40	47	+7
Tunisia	-	-	-	2	9	+7
Kenya	1	3	3	8	14	+6
Indonesia	-	3	5	3	9	+6
Nigeria	-	-	-	1	7	+6
Canada	69	70	-	80	85	+5
Poland	40	45	34	42	47	+5
South Korea	25	18	-	39	44	+5
Australia	-	-	-	79	81	+2
Argentina	66	72	-	74	76	+2
Spain	-	82	91	88	89	+1
Italy*	72	65	-	74	75	+1
Philippines	64	-	-	73	73	0
Germany	83	81	87	87	86	-1
Russia	22	20	15	16	14	-2
Greece	-	-	-	53	48	-5
Lebanon	21	18	17	18	13	-5
Czech Rep.**	83	83	-	80	59	-21
Sweden	-	86	-	-	94	-
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	92	-
Hungary	-	-	-	-	49	-
Bulgaria	38	39	-	-	32	-
Lithuania	-	-	21	-	28	-
Slovakia**	68	66	-	-	44	-
Ukraine	17	19	15	-	14	-

Note: Statistically significant differences shown in **bold**.

*In Italy, 2019 survey was conducted via telephone, while previous years were conducted face to face.

**In Czech Republic and Slovakia, 2019 surveys were conducted via face-to-face interviewing, while previous years were conducted via telephone. These mode changes might affect overall responses to this question.

Source: Spring 2019 Global Attitudes Survey.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

3.2 Openly LGBT politicians outside Africa

Europe, as compared to the rest of the world, has a high record number of openly LGBT people in public office. Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg in 2015, was gay. In 2015, the United Kingdom recorded 32 openly lesbian, gay and bisexual candidates, all of whom were designated in May 2015 to serve in Parliament, thus the UK parliament had the highest in the number of lesbian, gay or bisexual members of the national legislature in the world. There has never, been a transgendered person in the British parliament, even though numerous major parties have had a transgendered candidate running for parliament. The Health Minister Leo Varadkar of Ireland declared his sexual orientation as gay in January 2015. This made him the first openly gay cabinet minister in Ireland (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

In Venezuela, Rosmit Mantila became the first openly gay man and Tamara Adrian the first transgender person to serve in the national Congress during December 2015. In other parts of Latin America, an LGBT activist and openly lesbian feminist, Sandra Moran Reyes, was introduced to Guatemala's Congress in September 2015.

A transgendered woman in Trinidad, Jowelle de Souza became the first transgender person to campaign for national election, although she was not selected for office (Human Rights Watch, 2015). Madhu Bai Kinnar of India was elected mayor of Raigarh, the central state of Chhattisgarh, in January 2015, becoming the first transgender mayor in India. Her victory was over a rival from the country's dominant ruling party (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

3.3 Contradictions to the notion that homosexuality is un-African

Different African societies believed that same-sex sexuality yielded magical powers which were directly proportional to crop production, profuse hunting success, good health and that it kept evil spirits away (Epprecht, 2006). Additionally, the use of language describing same-sex relations in Africa may be viewed as evidence that those relations existed, the languages used preceded colonialism, and there were terms to indicate 'same sex' (Epprecht, 2006). The word *inkotshane* was used for same-sex relations by the Shangaan tribe of southern Africa while women in Lesotho used the word *motsoalle* (Gay, 1985, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998). The Senegalese used the word *gor-digen* to define homosexual men (Gorer, 1962, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998).

Furthermore, the Portuguese encountered varying gender relations within African societies and recorded cases of homosexual sex amid Congolese men that they called 'unnatural damnation' (Epprecht, 2006, p. 189). More variations of same-sex relationships within different African societies

were exposed by the colonists. Transvestism was also noticed in some parts of Africa, including Madagascar (Epprecht, 2006). Records show that Pangwe males, of present-day Cameroon and Gabon preferred homosexual sex as a wealth-transmitting act (Tessmann, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998). In Ghana older Nzima men, with a 10-year age gap difference between them, married each other (Signorini, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998).

Moreover, there is documentation of same-sex relations, from the 18th century within the royal kingdom of Dahomey, present day Benin (Burton, 1924; Langle, 1993; Norris, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998). Again, just as in ancient Greece, Zande soldier men married boys. Some females within this tribe, notably those from polygamous homesteads, also married other females (Evans-Pritchard, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998). In Angola and Namibia, the belief was that male spiritualists passed female spirits to fellow men through anal sex (Cardonega, 1940, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998). Likewise, rock paintings depicted Zimbabwean San men engaging in anal sex.

Contrary to the belief that homosexuality is a Western import, these examples are evidence that varying sexualities existed within the African continent (Garlake, 1995, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998).

3.4 LGBT matters: an African perspective (excluding South Africa)

In 2015 Mozambique decriminalised homosexuality after the amendment of its penal code, making it the first country to do so in Africa. This happened despite the Mozambique government having denied official recognition to LGBT organisations in that country. Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, while addressing the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, emphasised that LGBT rights are rights of a novel nature, conflicting with the norms, beliefs, traditions, and values of his country (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Similarly, during the same year, President Yahya Ammeh of The Gambia expressed disdain towards LGBT rights by making public threats to cut open the throats of homosexual men. His homophobic denunciation sparked global disapproval and outrage. In May 2015 the Ugandan parliament introduced what it calls an NGO Bill, which includes some oppressive components of the nullified Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2014. This Bill permitted the unjust banning of civil society groups, resulting in some LGBT organisations not registering their Non-Governmental Organisations for fear of persecution (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

3.5 LGBT matters: A South African perspective

In South Africa 1998 the Constitutional Court obliterated the offence of sodomy in the Sexual Offences Act and the Criminal Procedure Act. This ruling applied to past acts committed subsequent to the adoption of the Interim Constitution on 27 April 1994. On 30 November 2006, through the Civil Union Act, same-sex relations were legalised (De Vos, 2007; Isaak and Judge, 2004; da Costa Santos, 2013). This recognition of the Act, for the first time, provided a new definition of marriage in south Africa, and made South Africa the fifth country worldwide to legalise same-sex marriages.

Furthermore, South African gained recognition when it legalised same-sex marriages. This was after Edwin Cameron's insistence that sexual orientation be included in the Bill of Rights, as it was the first republic and country in the southern hemisphere, and the second country outside Europe, to legalise same-sex marriages (De Vos, 2007; Isaak and Judge, 2004; Itaborahy and Zhu, 2013; da Costa Santos, 2013). The South African constitution, thereafter, accommodated legal advocacy and favoured minority groups (Holland-Muter, 2012).

Even though South African law factored the rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people into its Constitution, those rights do not always benefit LGBT individuals (Nel and Judge, 2008). Some lesbian women have been murdered in homophobic attacks commonly known as 'corrective rape'. This horrendous offence is frequently performed by homophobic South Africans who proclaim to be converting lesbians to heterosexuality (Holland-Muter, 2012; Mkhize, Bennett, and Moletsane, 2012; Nel and Judge 2008; Reid and Dirsuweit, 2002). This latter view means that lesbian women are regarded as 'inferior' to heteroexual women (Gontek, 2009; Nel and judge, 2008; Reid and Dirsuweit, 2002).

4. Celebrating problem-free lesbian stories

The LGBTI community requires society's understanding. Their lives, histories, families, and allies are to be respected and celebrated. LGBT people are also to be commended for attempting to live ordinarily, given the living conditions they live in.

4.1 United States of America

In a study conducted in the United States of America which addressed the lives of lesbians aged 55 and older, 62 females were interviewed: 59 were of them were White and three were Black (Jones and Nystrom, 2002). The majority (53%) of the females were retired, while six of the 53% continued to

work in other careers even though they were retired. 34% were still employed and not yet retired when the study was conducted. At the time of the interviews, most of these females (65%) were in intimate relationships. The rest reported as being single or that their partner had passed on. Some 42% had children while 50% of the participants had had heterosexual marriages (Jones and Nystrom, 2002).

Interviewees shared similar opinions and experiences in several areas. Most of the women had been married, had raised children, had a tertiary qualification, and had worked or were still working. Regardless of various obstacles comprising sexual orientation, age and discrimination based on gender, these highly self-sufficient females achieved personal and professional success. In fact, many believed that they had emerged stronger regardless of hardships and adversity (Jones and Nystrom, 2002).

All females in the study belonged to support networks that encompassed spiritual/religious affiliations, friends, family, community groups and partners. They also expressed passionate desires to remain independent and healthy. The study's results suggest that lesbians' needs ought to be known and dealt with and that their lives and choices must be respected, just as all life is to be respected (Jones and Nystrom, 2002). It is also most important is to respect and celebrate the histories of homosexual people, irrespective of where in the world they live, for leading ordinary lives amid adversity. They ought to be admired for rediscovering and reconstructing the 'ordinary'. Above all, these women communicated satisfaction and happiness with their lives. subst

4.2 Africa (excluding South Africa)

Although it has not produced positive change on a large scale, there is evidence of a lesbian social movement in Africa; despite the hostile political and cultural odds of many African countries the visibility of African lesbians in starting different forms of social action is noticeable (Gilet, 2004).

Zimbabwe is notoriously known for its homophobic former leader President Robert Mugabe. Nonetheless Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) is its triumph story. GALZ campaigned around LGBT concerns and still managed to uphold Zimbabwean laws. With its own established manual, GALZ also contributes to other LGBT organisations' success in Africa (Gilet, 2004).

Since the internet is outside the control of the state in Kenya, an awareness of the lesbian agenda is apparent through theatre productions and not in mainstream media (Galebitra, 2003 in Gilet, 2004). A website known as Behind the Mask (BTM) is exclusively dedicated to gay and lesbian matters in Africa and contains resources and information pertinent to all of Africa. The website also has discussions, female-specific pages, and information on how to form social action (Gilet, 2004). The Rainbow Project is an LGBT organisation in Namibia is of the firm opinion that professionals like social

workers, amongst many others, are in dire need of re-educated on lesbian concerns to help contribute to the quality of services they offer (Gilet, 2004).

Furthermore, there is an online platform, HOLAA that documents experiences of African queer women. It was started in 2012 by three friends and records information relating to African sexuality. The platform also allows LGBT people an opportunity to communicate with one another without judgement or discrimination (Home-HOLAAfrica, n.p. n.).

4.3 South Africa

The laws are very progressive since they accommodate partners within the LGBT community allowing them to adopt children, to marry, to immigrate, to have employment benefits and to have equal age consent. Many other forms of lesbian social action exist in the form of campaigns, workshops, exhibitions, and street parades in South Africa, thus placing the difficulty of an African lesbian identity on the national and international agenda (Hoad, 1999 in Gilet, 2004). This study attempts to gather the experiences of the participants to understand how they navigate their everyday lives amid this difficulty.

5. My position in relation to the study

I have insight on how it feels to be marginalised and disliked because of belonging to a minority group. I was considered somewhat odd as a child as I was a 'tomboy'. I believe others guessed I was lesbian, long before I could identify as such. Belonging to a Methodist church also often meant being confronted by prejudice and negative attention. I was never a victim of hate crime while growing up and never fell victim to what is known as hate speech. I also hated my high school days since this is where I was mostly ridiculed by other learners for appearing and behaving differently from other girls.

For a while I thought I might be asexual. It was only when I imagined the person I could be intimate with as being female that I immediately heard some deeper part of me say 'YES, you figured it out eventually.' I Subsequently spent many days attempting to accept the idea that I might be attracted to women. I also began to realise that I had experienced same sex attraction since I was 13. However, I had not understood what I felt. I would usually think to myself that I felt weird around girls and did not find it as easy to befriend them as I did boys.

I have always been eccentric and accepted that I did not fit in with society's definition of 'normal' and I was content with that. However, there were times when I felt self-hatred resulting from internalised

negative beliefs about this ‘weirdness’. Identifying as a tomboy sometimes led to a great deal of confusion and inner conflict. I felt negative experiences of low self-esteem, suicidal ideation, discrimination, bullying and peer rejection. These potential risk factors support my interest for this research since I aspire to gain more in-depth understanding of experiences of the vulnerable lesbian population.

My family later made peace with the fact that I was a tomboy and was ‘weird’ compared to other girls. But as far as my sexuality was concerned, I struggled to accept that I was outside the heterosexual norm. I did not understand my sexuality. I only came out as a lesbian at the age of 22. My main supporters were my niece and closest friends, and in the process, I have lost and outgrown a few old friends but have still kept some and made new ones. My mother was and still is mostly worried for my safety. Ever since coming out, I have been interested in advancing social change through research, with the aim of improving LGBT life in Black South African communities, especially in rural South Africa. This interest is specifically in a sub-population either of women who identify as lesbian, have come out as lesbian later in life or who have sex with women but do not identify as being lesbian.

Having to accept that I was lesbian at 22 did not seem ordinary to me at all because all along I was not aware of the existence of the word, let alone its meaning. Perhaps because my Setswana culture teaches that women are meant nurture others, and as a child I was never asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, let alone whether I wanted to marry a man or a woman. I dated boys because girls date boys. I did not magically become lesbian. I finally found the power to ask myself, after two decades of no one else asking, who I really was.

As a Black lesbian female of South African descent, as are the participants in the study, my subjectivity is shaped both by my personal and professional exposure to the topic under study. Throughout my friendship with participants, during our tertiary education days, we often engaged in narratives about being homosexual in South Africa and in the African continent at large. I am an LGBT-affirming therapist and also offer therapeutic counselling to students at the University of South Africa (Unisa) who are faced with the challenge of revealing themselves (‘coming out’) as non-heterosexuals. In this study, I will connect my subjectivity to my own voice throughout the research process.

Since my experience conjures an awareness of the intersectionality of my own identity, I make my subjectivity and biases transparent to the reader in the hope that this declaration will reduce the

influence of my biases in relation to the study. However, my experiences and subjective sensitivities to issues around lesbianism in an African context will also potentially enable valuable interpretation and analysis of the narratives that the participants will provide.

6. Study outline

The remaining chapters of this study are described below.

In chapter two I scrutinise the existing literature and the theoretical framework grounding the study. I deliberate on the exploration of the role of intersectionality in the participants' identity construction and provide an explanation of how various concepts of gender theory influence the narrative of the participants.

In chapter three I explain the methodology and clarify the research design and data gathering. I also provide a thorough discussion of the justification for the use of unstructured interviews over other qualitative interviewing techniques. The end, chapter three contains an overview of how narrative analysis makes possible the understanding of how certain stories function within specific networks of power relations and privilege.

Chapter four is an analysis of the data collected and a deliberation on different categories of the participants' stories. Lastly, chapter five contains a discussion of the significance of the findings, the conclusion and provides recommendations for possible future research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two scrutinises the existing literature and the theoretical framework grounding the study. It also deliberates on the exploration of the role of intersectionality in the participants' identity construction and an explanation of how various concepts of gender theory influence the narrative of the participants.

Introduction

Chapter two explores the concept of two theoretical frameworks: Intersectional Theory (IT) and Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. It describes the two theories and explains how they support this study. In this chapter, I also provide historical context from literature regarding same-sex relations globally and in Africa, especially female same-sex relations in Africa, as well as highlights the existence of discrimination, sexism, and heterosexism, homophobia and oppression evident in the lives of Black LGBT people in South Africa.

In addition, this chapter offers an outline of sexuality as well as its components. It also depicts Africa and South Africa's views of sexual diversity, specifically society's perspective on sexual diversity pre- and post-colonisation. Some of the psychosocial, political, and legal matters that have impacted sexually diverse groups in South Africa are also highlighted in this chapter.

Furthermore, the second chapter discusses, in detail, the little-known phenomenon of same-sex female marriages in Africa. Although not a completely new topic of investigation, female same-sex sexuality research cuts through several scholastic disciplines and is a field of investigation that is still developing in Africa. Apparently, 'there have been oppression, secrecy and silence concerning African lesbian sexualities' (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016, p.133). It is for this reason that I have chosen to contextualise my research within Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender and Intersectional Theory to grant the participants a voice and to enable a better understanding of the fluid nature of the participants' sexuality.

1. Theoretical framework

This research draws on two theories, namely Intersectional Theory (IT) and Judith Butler's theory of gender as performative. I will now examine the ways both theories relate to the phenomena under study.

1.1 The Intersectional Theory

Deliberations on how to consider the Intersectional approach are still ongoing among scholars (Angelucci, 2017; Anthias, 2012; Bowleg, 2012; Christensen and Jensen, 2012). Nevertheless, according to Angelucci (2017), the approach may be summarised as proposing three main aspects, namely: intersectionality as a theory, as a method, and as a practice/praxis. As a theory, it is commonly referred to as 'Intersectional Theory' (IT) because it first emerged within scientific circles of discussion (Angelucci, 2017). As Angelucci clarifies: 'It was born, indeed, as a set of conceptual elements aimed at defining the context and the background of multiple discriminations, revealing their consequences and providing some food for thought for further investigations' (2017, p. 5).

By way of trial and error, Intersectional Theory rapidly developed as a methodological approach due to its relevance within experiential research (Angelucci, 2017). As a method, it has been fine-tuned from time to time to suit the practical aim of the research topic under investigation. In this way the theory has thrived and yielded distinct ways of advancing empirical research (Angelucci, 2017). Lately, IT is used by queer movements and feminist activists as a practice. Angelucci reveals that, as a praxis, IT is considered 'the playground for the claiming of both differentiated and equal rights for all. Within these movements, intersectionality has become a way to address specific needs and vulnerabilities and to spread light upon those intersections that have been silenced by the mainstream feminist movements' (Angelucci, 2017, p. 5).

Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013) describe intersectionality as being on the path of numerous forms of marginalisation and being affected by all of them. Crenshaw first introduced the theory in 1989. IT shows how multiple forms of marginalisation or prejudicial conditions affect the same subject. This means that the discrimination is not due to an accumulation of varying effects but of prevailing prejudice. Therefore IT, grounded within the feminist critical and political movements and the post-structuralist feminist debate, enables an analysis of how cultural and social order connect, bringing forth divergent types of unfairness (Angelucci, 2017). It is with this understanding in mind that IT emerges as an advantageous theoretical framework for the interpretation and analysis of the collected

interviews about the lives of a Black married lesbian couple in this study. Crenshaw's intersectional theory emerged from her work as a law professor.

She intended to elaborate on a theory that could be adopted as a statutory tool in the fight against varying types of partiality, especially the inequity African-American women faced in their places of work Angelucci (2017).

Crenshaw found that existing theory failed to confront and recognise the unusual kind of oppression these Black women endured since they have suffered differently from Black men and White women (Angelucci, 2017). The discrimination against Black women brings with it new perspective considering that it is constituted by the intersection of the two identities of being female and being Black hence Angelucci (2017) explains that 'indeed when subjected to heavier forms of discrimination both in relation to white women and to Black men, Black women find it difficult to claim their rights before the law. Their employer could easily demonstrate that there is no acting racial discrimination, because not all Black people are discriminated against in that workplace' (p. 4).

Crenshaw (1991) later expounded on her theoretical archetype. She was interested in finding the intersectional discriminating factor between gender and race and added the category of class to gender and race (Angelucci, 2017). Despite Its inception from within legal studies, it was later adopted by other academic disciplines, including psychology (Angelucci, 2017). IT also extends to include other categories such as age, sexuality, and religion, to name only a few, and these categories do not have rigid boundaries. This implies that categories are not fixed but are a changing "process of construction and negotiation of meanings, roles, social identities", according to Angelucci (2017, p. 6). It is for this reason that this study relied on IT as a framework to give voice to its participants and to move their experiences to its centre. Because the participants in my study are marginalised based on their ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, they are ideal subjects for an intersectional analysis. This will likely aid an understanding of the impact that social, political, historical, religious, and cultural contexts have on sexual diversity in South Africa, especially its effect on the experiences and the livelihood of the participants.

Correspondingly, IT, as a theoretical framework, also complements Judith Butler's theory of gender as performative by placing emphasis on the complication of identity. Social labels such as lesbian, gay, man, and woman are the most forcible way of sustaining and mimicking prevalent control structures that privilege some while disadvantaging others (Butler, 2004, p. 95).

Ultimately, I am convinced, through IT, that isolated aspects of people's lives cannot be viewed as the sum of their existence. The latter was also echoed by Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (2018, n.p.n.) when she expounded on the role of intersectionality and its importance when explaining that:

You cannot be a feminist, and at the same time homophobic and racist. You have to be on the side of human rights across the board. When we talk about the world that people like [the]wife to Walter Sisulu, the late Albertina Sisulu and former President Dr Nelson Mandela (Madiba) (both would be turning 100 years old in 2018) ... and what they dreamt of, means we would and should be fighting all these battles all at the same time (15 August 2018, n.p. n).

This means that there needs to be an integrated understanding of identity as it is the essence of the Intersectional Theory (Crenshaw 1991). It is for this reason that the study draws on IT to aid the understanding of how race, patriarchy, class, religion, and sex produce and interlink a model of superiority, privilege, and oppression often experienced by LGBT people. IT is also relevant for this study since I explore the intersections of identity in the lived experiences of a Black married lesbian couple thus the study accepts the basis of IT that discriminations and oppressions cannot be separated from one another, and that LGBT people, especially Black LGBT people in South Africa, often experience different types of discrimination and oppression at the same time.

1.2 Limitations of the Intersectional Theory

Although IT is efficient and suitable for empirical research, some scholars insist on its weakness based on its definition and open-ended goals (Davis, 2008, cited in Angelucci, 2017). Some scholars argue that the theory lacks thorough scrutiny of the collective formation of the categories when it views intersectional categories as detached pathways, passing each other only to meet incidentally. Other scholars suggest that instead of analysing intersectional categories in themselves, researchers ought to investigate the powerful process of categorisation and the varying ways in which these categories are disadvantageous (Angelucci, 2017). This study opts for an investigation of the latter.

2. Judith Butler's gender performativity theory

Butler (1990) suggests that gender is a performance that is practised. This means that gender cannot be understood as something we are born with. To say gender is performed 'suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitutes its reality' (Butler, 1990, p. 136). According to her theory, gender is what we do at a given time but is not universally who we are. The latter creates a difference between ontology (being) and performance (doing). Butler elucidates that

we sometimes perform gender in a well-known manner but sometimes we do not, and so it should not be a question of whether we put on a gender performance but rather, of what shape that gender performance will assume. She believes that we opt to display gender as it is unique to us as individuals; through our performance, we might alter gender norms, as well as the binary understanding of femininity and masculinity (Butler, 1988).

Additionally, Butler (1990) inclines towards historical and anthropological views on gender since these perspectives portray gender as a fluid feature of an individual. She is of the opinion that gender should be understood as a fluid variable, changing and adjusting to varying contexts at varying times. Although society has divided gender into dichotomies, no one is born with a specific gender (Butler, 1990, p. 24). Butler agrees that gender is a cultural construct and envisages a gender that could be expanded to include a number of embodied ways of living, so that those who live and portray a gender contrary to the binary opposition are free to do so without punitive gestures, or even worse, violence, as is sometimes the case among same-sex female couples in South Africa. This violence usually happens in one of two ways. First, violence may be perpetrated by lesbians on each other; secondly, the violence may be inflicted by non-lesbian people on lesbians in the form of corrective rape. According to Koraan and Geduld, 'at least 31 murders, in the last 15 years, [have been] linked with lesbianism and an average of 10 lesbians are raped per week to "correct" their sexual preferences' (2016, p. 1931).

Further, Butler (1990) states that the cultural perspectives on gender are accepted as natural, but that gender does not have to be that way (p.37). She is of the opinion that gender identity should be free-floating: not essential, but an enactment of the individual's temporary preferences: "As a free-floating attribute, gender suggests the possibility of a gendered experience that cannot be grasped through the substantialising and hierarchising grammar of nouns and adjectives" (Butler, 1990, p. 24).

In this way, our gender identification will not be as rigid as it is currently and will be the effect, instead of the cause, of our actions. Butler also argues that sex, male and/or female, is usually interpreted to cause masculinity and or femininity, which is understood to cause desire for the other gender. Her aim, partly inspired by Foucault, is to upset the hypothetical links between sex and gender, so that gender and desire are perceived as flexible and free-floating, but not as constituted by others (Butler, 1990). Additionally, she emphasises that it is most important to resist the violence, physical and non-physical, that is imposed by gender norms, especially against those who express a different gender from the binary and are nonconforming in their gender presentation (Butler, 1990).

Butler's theory helps to explain why this study deliberately selected a same-sex married couple instead of an unmarried same-sex couple as the research focus. The couple's marriage reinforces their decision to perform their gender differently since they married against the binary gender norm (Butler, 1990). By sharing their narrative, the participants as well as myself (as a participant in the research) contribute to Butler's hope of changing gender norms and the binary understanding of femininity and masculinity since we have chosen to live as married couples of the same sex, in defiance of Black African heterosexism.

Moreover, like Butler (1990), I am not presenting gender as a fixed nor an inherent category in this study, but as constructed through how people behave throughout their lives and what they do within their intimate relationships. Participants in this study (Participant 1 [P1] and Participant 2 [P2]) create their gender through their masculine and feminine presentations. They act out gender identities that are not forced on them by society. Their gender presentation is what Butler (1990) refers to as gender performativity. Butler's theory will also aid the understanding of how participants function socially amidst possible threats of violence, bullying, discrimination, and oppression. It will also assist readers to gain some insight into how the participants navigate uncomfortable reminders from society, family, friends, institutional powers (for example, church) that their sexuality is 'abnormal'.

3. Sexuality

It is almost impossible to speak of sexuality without mentioning gender. This means that sexuality cannot be understood without a clear concept of gender. The two mould into each other, are influenced by society and culture and are vital in upholding societal power relations. 'Any scientific enquiry of the former [sexuality] immediately invokes the latter [gender],' suggests Tamale (2011, p. 11). It is no wonder gender allows for the logical interpretation as well as the critical analysis of the research data. However, it would be wrong to assume that sex comes before and is a determinant of gender (Bittner and Goodyear-Grant, 2017; Butler, 1990; Fausto-Sterling, 2012; Westbrook and Saperstein, 2015). Additionally, gender relations and people's sexual lives are often impacted by constructs such as race, class, locality, ethnicity, age, history, religion, culture and disability. However, 'many researchers still view sexuality within the narrow spectrum of the sex act, and never investigate the extraneous factors that impact and shape our multifarious sexualities' as Tamale explains (2011, p. 11). This study seeks to be different by exploring sexuality in the context of additional factors such as culture, religion, and family, and is not only as related to the sex act.

Sexuality does not only include varying forms of identity, status or sexual orientation. It is to be viewed liberally as a construct that is non-binary, non-simplistic and outside societal norms (Tamale, 2011). Sexuality is a multi-layered concept and ought to be thought of as such. Its vast spectrum is characterised by attitudes and behaviours, beliefs, sexual knowledge, sexual orientation, values, personal and interpersonal sexual relations, as well as procreation. ‘Sexuality touches a wide range of other issues including pleasure, the human body, dress, self-esteem, gender identity, power and violence,’ attests Tamale (2011, p. 12). This means that sexuality is an all-inclusive natural, physical process connecting sensations, emotions, creativity, communication, psyche, and ethics, and it will be discussed as such throughout the study (Tamale, 2011).

3.1 Sigmund Freud’s perspective on sexuality

Freud (1905) believed that sexuality is universal and a drive that is connected to pleasure. He also believed that even the most sensible, conformist people might battle against their sexual desires and behaviour, as made evident by the many indignities highlighted by fundamental Christians from traditional churches and Hollywood’s movie stars. Although convinced that this struggle sometimes indecently expressed itself equally in males and females, Freud noted that our sexuality also defines us in healthy and indispensable ways (1905, p. 184).

Freud (1905) thought of humans as sexual beings. From his observation of an infant being breastfed, he concluded that the infant’s response to breastfeeding was an example of immature sexuality, as well as an expression of sexual satisfaction that would come later in life.

While it seems that people have difficulty accepting that sexual stimulation is not limited to genital stimulation, Freud (1905) also resolved that sexual ecstasy is highly possible through stimulating connection to possibly any specific area of the body.

It seems logical to suggest that sexuality and sexual excitement are inseparable and evident in humans. According to Freud (1905), sexual excitement is a product of three dimensions: mental life or sexual fantasies, the external world or sexual history and relationships, and the organic interior or sex hormones. He believed that our sexual fantasies often invoke pervasive and bizarre developments that lead to climatic pleasure and yield sexual excitement (Van Haute and Westerink, 2016b). He deemed the latter normal since he argued that having sexual fantasies did not necessarily mean that we want to engage in such developments. However, even if we did, he thought it normal to do so (Klokars, 2013; Van Haute and Westerink, 2016b). A great example of this is Valentine’s Day as some view the day as a sexual and romantic fantasy while some despise it and some are unsure of what the day is about.

On Valentine's Day individuals may either choose to participate or not to, and Freud (1905) considered both options to be normal.

Freud (1905) also believed that there exists a contradiction where intimate relationships are concerned. He said although we may intentionally experience sincere love towards others, subconsciously we cache negative, destructive fantasies and feelings. Freud (1905) did not deem this mixture of love and hate as pathological. With regards to homosexuality, he concluded that homosexual people possessed intellectual as well as culturally ethical traits (Freud 1905). To annul a law criminalising homosexuality, Freud signed a proclamation in 1930 (Klockars, 2013). Based on this, it may be concluded that the participants' sexuality and marriage, contrary to societal norms, may be deemed culturally ethical. My wish is that Freud's theory on sexuality may serve as an example and an encouragement to African leaders to invalidate laws criminalising homosexuality.

3.2 Sexual orientation

There is a difference between sexuality and sexual orientation. While sexuality can be viewed as a spectrum that we constantly move along, sexual orientation on the other hand encompasses our persistent sexual, passionate, emotional, and loving attraction to others. These latter expressions of desire, intimacy and love are expressed differently by every individual. While van Aders (2015) believes that sexual orientation includes a choice of a preferred partner, Savin-Williams (2014) suggests that sexual orientation comprises sexual attraction, sexual identity and sexual behaviour, as well as the meaning, intensity, frequency, experiences and quality of the sexual attraction.

In addition, heterosexuality is the readily perceived the dominant form of sexual orientation, which is a disfavour to those who are not heterosexual. However, many people have reported varying sexual orientations, comprising bisexual, gay and lesbian, queer, to name a few (Rosik, Jones and Byrd, 2012; Victor, Nel, Lynch, and Mbatha, 2014). Men Sleeping with Men (MSM), Women Sleeping with Women (WSW), together with many other sub-populations form part of the continuum of gay, lesbian, and the bisexual. It is also noteworthy to remember that people engage in intimacy for different reasons other than to express their sexual orientation, and that there is no link between sexual activity and sexual identity. Again, regular sexual intercourse with someone of the same sex or gender does not make one bisexual, gay or lesbian. Also, some people attest to no attraction to any sex at all, thus embracing an asexual orientation, a sexuality that is often misunderstood and neglected (Academy of Science of South Africa, 2015).

On the other hand, Epstein and Robertson (2014) believed that the confusion that has since surrounded sexual orientation in many different cultures originates from a profoundly defective description of the concept. They explain that sexual orientation cannot and should not be viewed as a clear-cut phenomenon, since same-sex and opposite sex feelings are present in most people at specific times. Likewise, the Kinsey scale suggests that sexuality ranges on a continuum between two extremes and is subject to change over time, which acknowledges the fluidity and diversity of human sexuality. This means that sexual orientation has always been, and is still, an unremitting phenomenon since it sometimes exhibits a rare steady change over time and yields a constant range of varied tendencies in individuals (Epstein and Robertson, 2014).

3.3 The development of sexual orientation

Research supports a noteworthy biological basis for the development of sexual orientation. According to the ASSAF (Academy of Science of South Africa) report, there are different biological pathways influencing sexual orientation amongst females and males, and this biological predisposition to sexual orientation does not happen outside the influence and impact of society and its culture. Other researchers suggest that sexual orientation, earlier in life for many, is generally fixed and that it is particularly more fixed for males than it is for females. Fixation for males and fluidity for females might be due to socialisation and gender. It seems there is insignificant proof that early childhood experiences and parenting styles have a bearing on one's basic sexual orientation (ASSAF, 2015).

There also exists no pragmatic evidence that sexual orientation is a product of contact with sexually diverse and gender-non-conforming people, not even through the key mechanism of peer pressure (ASSAF, 2015). However, even though highly influenced by culture and society, it seems that personal preference also plays a part in one's sexual orientation (Gordon and Silva, 2015). Moreover, sexual identity development is similar among all youth, including the sexually diverse, during adolescence (ASSAF, 2015). Nonetheless, it is the sexually diverse who must negotiate awareness and social acceptance since they are regarded as an insignificant sexual identity. This arbitration usually happens without support from family and community and may lead to a high risk for substance use and/or psychological distress for them (ASSAF, 2015).

Furthermore, people assign different labels to their sexuality, and some prefer not to attach any label to their sexuality at all. Consequently, people should not be put into one sexual category or another.

For example, the idea of gay identity development might require particular economic and social conditions, such as an urban environment where people have a high level of voluntary mobility or find themselves in loosened family relations (Leatt and Hendricks, 2005). Such concepts as ‘ gay’ might feel alien and inappropriate in different cultural contexts. There also is an intersection between race and culture in as far as how people define their sexual orientation. For instance, many White South Africans consider their sexual orientation integral to their identity (Nel 2007). However, the latter might not be the case in rural or poor Coloured and Black communities (Nel, 2007; Rabie and Lesch, 2009).

3.4 Homosexuality

Since many societies across the globe view homosexuality as a social problem, scholars across various disciplines, such as zoology, psychology, theology, and anthropology, became interested in investigating the origins of homosexuality. More on these theories will be discussed in the literature review chapter of this study. Some scientists have suggested two major categorical explanations, biological and psychosocial, to explain the origins of homosexuality. Those that view homosexuality positively ascribe a biological origin to it, while those that view homosexuality negatively assign its origin to personal choice (Sheldon, Pfeffer, Epstein, Jayaratne, Feldbaum, and Petty, 2007).

In addition, although criticised, theories in biology emphasise hormonal, genetic, and or anatomical influences to clarify the origins of homosexuality. These theories have not detailed one specific gene associated with homosexuality. Researchers have also not been able to pinpoint associations to an actual genetic area in lesbians. At worst, research in genetic studies of homosexuality in humans has been contradictory, confusing and frustrating since it lacks robust and convincing evidence for a definite genetic foundation (Sheldon et al, 2007).

Views on the origins of homosexuality strongly correlate with attitudes and often lead to social policy. A study involving 44 Black Americans and 42 Whites was conducted with the aim of understanding the public’s views on the probable origins of homosexuality. It showed that from 1977 to 2001, the number of people who believed that homosexuality is inherent more than tripled and that there was a decrease in those who expressed the view that homosexuality was directly influenced by one’s upbringing and environmental factors. Sheldon et al (2007) also attest that data collected from this study has shown some inconsistencies and minor ambiguity. Hence it is critical to further investigate public opinion regarding the origins of homosexuality (Sheldon, Pfeffer, Epstein, Jayaratne, Feldbaum, and Petty, 2007).

3.5 An African perspective on homosexuality (excluding South Africa)

Although literature shows that homosexuality has long existed within the African continent, there are still those who believe that it is a Western import brought by colonialism (Itaborahy and Zhu, 2013). Some blame traces of homosexuality in Africa on rapid improvement of technology. There is also pre-colonial evidence of punishment for those who were deemed to be engaging in homosexual sex, implying that homosexuality in Africa was a known phenomenon (Itaborahy and Zhu, 2013). Da Costa Santos (2013) also affirms the latter and agrees that there were same-sex practices in Africa before colonialism. However, it appears as though the fact that homosexual sex was outlawed confirms a homophobic tendency evident during Africa's pre-colonial period rather than an absence of homosexual sex (Epprecht, 2006).

Furthermore, some African leaders think homosexuality is ungodly and many churches support their view (Itaborahy and Zhu, 2013). These African leaders also strongly believe that members of the LGBT community should face imprisonment, forgetting that the Bible also condemns adultery, but adulterers are not sent to prison. These leaders also seem to conveniently forget that the very same religion that speaks against homosexuality was also brought to Africa by colonisers.

Moreover, in South Africa in the early 1990s the head of the African Christian Democratic Party, Kenneth Meshoe, provided an ignorant judgement that, for most South Africans, saying that homosexuality was a distasteful, ungodly, un-cultural and an unscriptural lifestyle. He also said that it was an illness White Europeans passed on to Black African people, and that those who practiced it were a disgrace to their forebears (Holland-Muter, 2012).

Another view on homosexuality that is sometimes presented by African authorities includes the notion that homosexuality is inconsistent with African values of procreation, that the purpose of a union between a male and a female is to bear children and also that it is confusing for family and clan as regards which of the partners in same sex couple will carry on the family or clan's name should the couple decide to marry (Holland-Muter, 2012; Itaborahy and Zhu, 2013). Echoing this latter view, Lewis (2008) suggests that 'the one reason why so many of Africa's fathers of the nation have lashed out so consistently and violently against homoerotic desires and relationships is the fact that discourses of national belonging have been anchored in familial scripts and the invention of nations as biological families' (p. 107). This outlook suggests that homosexuality in Africa hinders potential population increase; however, this view is not a true reflection of the already overpopulated economies of Africa.

Additionally, according to Francis and Msibi (2011) ‘President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, for example, justifies his intolerance with the claim that homosexuality is “un-African”, describing it as a disease “coming from so-called developed nations” (Human Rights Watch and International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, 2003, cited in Francis and Msibi, 2011, p. 162). Likewise, when Jacob Zuma was the African National Congress (ANC) Deputy President he lashed out at homosexuality, describing it as ‘un-African’, stating that same sex marriage was a disgrace to the nation and to God. “When I was growing up *unqingili* (homosexuals) could not stand in front of me’ (Tapfumane, 2006, cited in Francis and Msibi, 2011, p. 162).

3.6 A South African perspective on homosexuality

Lesbian sex and or relations were not illegal in South Africa before 1994 however, sex between men and sodomy were. Depending on the fine imposed, the court ruled for imprisonment for people in same-sex relationships, and offenders had to pay a fine (Isaack and Judge, 2004; da Costa Santos, 2013). This was a period when the law documented marriage as unison between one woman and one man and disallowed of same-sex marriage (De Vos, 2007; Isaack and Judge, 2004).

4. Gender, gender identity and gender identity formation

We cannot speak of sexuality to the exclusion of gender. Gender development tends to be progressive. It starts in the infant stage of human development and continues all the way to adulthood. All along, it is subjected to cognitive, biological and social influence (Santtila, Sandnabba, Harlaar, Varjonen, Alanko, and von der Pahlen, 2008). Even though gender identity is typically recognised in childhood, we might become aware of it somewhere between childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Hergarty, Ansara and Barker explain: ‘Gender is culturally and historically specific, internally contradictory, and amenable to change’ (2018, p. 59). For some people, gender identity is stable throughout life and context, whereas for others it varies either from one time to another in life, or over time and context in daily life, as expressed by Lindqvist, Senden and Renstrom (2020, p. 335). Gender is characterised by the American Psychological Association, as a sex role (APA, 2015). Lindqvist, Senden and Renstrom propose that gender may be categorised into four main aspects, including:

- (a) physiological/ bodily aspects (sex); (b) gender identity or self-defined gender; (c) legal gender; and (d) social gender in terms of norm-related behaviours and gender expressions. (2020, p.333).

Equally important, people questioning their gender could be left confused as to which gender they identify with, especially when they are LGBT individuals. Many people with different experiences and/or identities, which are seen as 'non-normative', may be excluded as a result of this ambiguity. There exist numerous other gender identities, and as a result, a binary view of gender excludes people who have a fluid gender identity, people who do not agree with society's view of gender, or people who do not identify with gender at all (Davis, 2009; Katz-Wise, Reisner, Hughto and Keo-Meier, 2016; Nowatzki and Grant, 2011; Sumerau, Matthers, and Moon, 2020). People who do not identify with gender are referred to as genderqueer. As explained by the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA):

Genderqueer people may identify as either having an overlap of or indefinite lines between gender identity; having two or more genders (being bigender, trigender or pangender); having no gender (being agender, non-gendered, genderless, or gender free); moving between genders or having a fluctuating gender identity (genderfluid); or being third gender or other-gendered, a category which includes those who do not place a name to their gender (2017, p. 60).

4.1 The Freudian theory of gender

Freud's psychodynamic approach to gender is based on his theory of psychosexual development, where family dynamics are believed to have an influence on one's subconscious level, leading to the development of one's internal gender identity. According to this perspective, gender roles develop as a product of the resolution process of conflict at the phallic stage, when feelings of hatred and rivalry grow against the father as opposed to a feeling of desire for the mother (Freud, 1905). Evans and Williams (2013) agree that from the latter perspective 'masculinity develops through the boy's desire for the mother and rivalry for the father, whilst "femininity" results from the girl's realisation of her own "castration' and lack"' (p. 108). Since the father is perceived as unconquerable and strong, this leads to conflict and then the defence mechanism of identification is used for conflict resolution. This gender identification is believed to lead to gender role development as well as sex-typed behaviour that may be disrupted by the absence of the same-sex parent (Evans and Williams, 2013).

4.2 The psychoanalytic feminist theory of gender

Psychoanalytic feminism has its roots in the work of Freud (1905) and posits that gender is not necessarily biologically determined, but it is psychosexually shaped. It holds psychosexual development responsible for the gender role humans adopt and childhood experiences as responsible

for making males believe they are masculine, and females that they are feminine. It also concludes that, since society is male dominated, these childhood experiences result in gender inequality (Evans and Williams, 2013).

Feminist psychoanalytic theories reject the notion that psychological gender differences follow anatomical differences (Nielsen, 2016). As a result, they have rejected the either/or gender binary that results from viewing gender solely as an Oedipal development and prioritise pre- and post-Oedipal experiences. Relational feminists' accounts of gender have less to do with sexual difference and sexuality, and instead pertain to the gradual formation of self, caused by conflicts over separation, identification, and loss (Nielsen, 2016). Diamond (1988) echoes the latter by arguing that it is fruitless to keep the difference of sexuality alive within the opposition of gender. His contention is that sexuality is imagined, whereas gender is where we live socially. According to him, feminists cannot ignore the political and social battlefield of gender (Diamond, 1988).

Additionally, Chodorow, (1989) suggests that gender is inevitably personal as well as cultural. In other words, gender is not only defined by linguistic or cultural means but is also psychologically constructed. Again, according to psychoanalysis, people use cultural images and meanings of gender to interpret their experiences, and that their experience usually is figurative and emotional. Hence, individuals construct their meaning of gender through intrapsychic strategies such as personal histories and biographies (Chodorow, 1989). An individual's sense of self, emotional tone, and unconscious fantasies are as much part of their subjective gender as their culture or language. People express their gender differently, and there are many forms of unique femininities and masculinities. This generalisation about gender psychology should be viewed as a compliment rather than criticism since gender generalisations may be useful within certain cultural, ethnic, and class groups under varying historical periods (Chodorow, 1989). However, such generalisations must be made with caution, so that researcher's claims do not exceed the limits of their data base, or that researchers explain the foundation for their claims, that they can. This way researchers consider that psychological generalisations are inherently statistical and seldom universal (Chodorow, 1989).

Furthermore, according to a cultural or social critic, there is no need for psychology to explain people's constructions of gender fantasies and images (Chodorow, 1989). The critic may suggest that it is widely established that males have greater authority, are catered to by women, and that it is more acceptable for them to vent their rage. It also may continue to imply that it is culturally obligatory for women to be submissive and give up to and give in to males, and that women do not coddle their girl children as they do to their boy children and their husbands. But Chodorow, (1989) is of the view that feminism

and psychoanalysis are transformational undertakings. Thus, understanding the significance of personal meaning to gendered subjectivity helps to further the aims of subjectivity and consciousness shared by psychoanalysis and feminism.

4.3 A South African outlook on the female gender

The South African perspective as regards the female gender is that there is persistent sexism which constantly dents the spirit of equal rights for women. Gender discrimination and exclusion are evident through prevalent folklore, and this negatively impacts the significance of the marginalised group's social standing and belonging (Lewis, 2009; Lewis, Khuzwayo and Ramphele, 1999). Lewis, Khuzwayo and Ramphele also elaborate that 'Citizenship is a secretly hierarchical and gendered process, and the extent to which masculine dignity, as authority and control, may be predicated on women's indignity and silence remains troubling in South African gender politics' (1999, p .43).

Moreover, gender and nationalism are seen as connected in devious ways, as sometimes made evident by the rape of South African lesbians. Lewis (2008) commented that 'public attacks on homosexuality have often been couched as a defence of what is traditionally "African" from a contaminating "Western" influence" ... a pivotal issue is how a particular attack on lesbians reflects naturalized patriarchal authority' (p. 107). However, the participants in this study were not held back by the notion that homosexuality is a Western import or un-African when they decided to celebrate their wedding in the traditional way.

Francis and Msibi (2011) also observe that, in South Africa, 'Heterosexism generally disrupts social justice' (p. 159), and that 'lesbian women are viewed to prefer [a] manly role in society' (p. 164). These authors are also of the belief that this type of prejudice feeds on the supposition that heterosexuality is the only ordinary and acknowledged sexual orientation. They furthermore explain that social disparity divides people into two categories of the advantaged (heterosexual people) and the subservient (LGBT people) (Francis and Msibi, 2011, p. 159).

In a study including 410 participants by the OUT-LGBT Well-being and the Joint Working Group (JWG), in partnership with the Durban Lesbian and Gay Community and Health Centre, 19% of lesbian and bisexual females reported having been raped or sexually abused when they were at school and also reported that one in three of the study's female learners suffered physical assault owing to their sexual orientation. In addition, 42% of the female learners in the study reported some form of verbal abuse and harassment at school (Francis and Msibi, 2011).

5. A Western view of female same-sex sexuality in Africa

Obsessive patriotism during the nineteenth century, as well as scientific racism, seems to have negatively affected studies of African sexualities. This, according to Currier and Migraine-George (2016), endorsed a racist heterosexual assumption about African women who were believed, by westerners, to persuade White men to enter into untrustworthy relationships while perceiving Black men to be sexual barbarians on a mission to rape White women. ‘Euro-American ideas of African sexual behaviours and bodies were likewise skewed by colonial and scientific racism,’ state Currier and Migraine-George (2016, p.144). Furthermore, during the colonial period, the bodies of African women like Saartjie Baartman were a source of fascination to Europeans. ‘African cultures and sexualities were always framed as different, less urbane and inferior to those of the west. This othering process was, and still is, important in justifying racist and imperialist policies,’ explains Tamale (2011, p. 19).

By the same token, African sexuality was viewed as one that required fixing since it was risky, strange, and backward. When North American scholars embarked on studies of African sexuality, their opinions were usually focused on and compared to glamorised Judeo-Christian standards of sexuality (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016). They were disrespectful in exposing different practices that included bride-wealth, the exchanging of wives, widow inheritance, and the buying of wives (Tamale, 2011). As reported by Gunkel (2011), the past 20 years’ increase ‘of online petitions and campaigns emerging from Europe and North America against homophobia in various African countries’ raises ethical questions about this new, Western-based ‘global’ online LGBT solidarity, which leads to ‘the hypervisibility of African queer bodies in online hate crime forums’ and promotes ‘armchair political tourism’ (p.77-78). The scholars mentioned above make it clear that the bodies of LGBT African females face possible additional threats of censorship, objectification, and the infringement of their human rights (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016).

5.1 A realistic view of female same-sex sexuality in Africa

Same-sex interactions and relationships amongst women in Africa remain largely underrepresented in educational writings (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016; van der Heever, 2015). Kendall (1999) explain that:

early scholarly efforts to ‘find’ African ‘lesbians’ were discouraging since it could not trace African lesbian communities, only to discover via cultural immersion that same-sex eroticism

between women transcended and escaped ordinary verbal representations (cited in Currier and Migraine-George, 2016, p. 135).

Lesbian women could not harmoniously coexist with other African women, let alone society, because they were not free to express their sexual orientation. It also often seemed to scholars as if conversations about sexuality in African societies were discouraged; that there was widespread homophobia; and the topic of lesbianism was taboo when it came to public discussion (Mama, 1996). Equally important, Morgan and Wieringa (2007) write that the homophobia that exists in Africa is worsened by patriarchy and excludes lesbian women 'from nation-building' (p. 11). It, therefore, becomes a priority to rescue personal narratives of same-sex-loving African females from suppression and lack of expression.

As already mentioned, the small body of existing literature is increasingly focused on studying same-sex practices among African women over the past two decades (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016). According to Currier and Migraine-George, research on female same-sex sexualities on the African continent reveals 'fluid emotional experiences and sexual conduct, broad communal, cultural, and spiritual contexts rather than hidden sexual minorities' (2016, p. 144). Other African same-sex relations have also involved personalised gender presentations, usually taking the form of butch-femme partnerships (Morgan and Wieringa, 2007).

In Lesotho, Basotho female same-sex relations occasionally contained sensual components. Despite this, their partnerships did not jeopardise their heterosexual marriages (Kendall, 1999, cited in Currier and Migraine-George, 2016, p. 135). Some Basotho females, from time to time, also engaged in sensual relationships with teenage girls, where the attachment mimicked a mother-child relationship. This is where adolescent girls were inculcated into same-sex play with and by older females (Gay, 1985, cited in Currier and Migraine-George, 2016, p. 135).

In Kenya, Kenyan Women having Sex with other Women (KWSW) opted for different broad ways of being impervious to negative media depictions, by affirming multi-layered non-conforming identities and ignoring prejudices by the Kenyan society. Investigating same-sex attraction between Ugandan women, Currier and Migraine-George (2016) concluded that the focus could be on transforming the vocabulary used to name and label others, and more emphasis put on people's stories that positively contributed to their self-knowledge.

Furthermore, lesbian women in Ethiopia also demonstrated a fluid sexuality (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016, p.137). Reports of the Kung society also showed girls participated in genital manipulation as a means of elongating the labia. This was done in groups or individually and did not always involve sensual same-sex attraction. Although the practice was not perceived as sexual, and despite the risk of its being punishable, it sometimes led to genuine relationships amongst the girls. Girls having sexual relationships would be seen as having seduced each other but they hid their relationships from their parents (Van den Heever, 2015). However, Morgan and Wieringa (2007) also reported that there were various close friendships that existed among women where they were able to express their affection and love for each other. These friendships were according to Rich (1980), strong emotional relationships. A bond friendship was called *oumapanga*. When a man entered into such a relationship, they possessed their wives collectively, but if female persons were each other's *oumapanga*, it means that they have sexual relations with each other, something their elders were fully aware of (Cited in van den Heever, 2015, p. 22). These close friendships were long lasting friendships and were sometimes solidified through rituals. However, at the same time that they had these bond friendships women were also expected to have heterosexual relationships.

6. Being Black and lesbian in the United States of America (USA)

Since the era of American slavery, Black women have experienced discrimination in all spheres of society (Collins, 2000). According to Collins (2000) oppression is “an unfair situation where one group consistently and persistently denies another group access to the resources of society” (p. 6). He further explains that “major forms of oppression in the United States include those based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, nation, age, and ethnicity” (Collins, 2000, p.6.). Black women frequently threatened the status quo, and frequently shared their stories in both White and Black communities while running a high risk of exile, violence, and social isolation (Collins, 2000). Furthermore, Black lesbians were at an even greater risk because their sexual orientation further marginalised and alienated them from the Black community (Clarke, 2000; Smith, 2000). Black lesbians were also excluded from the then safe havens, for example, historically Black universities and colleges, fraternities and sororities, Black churches, and Black civil rights movements (Dudley, 2013).

Additionally, due to the exclusion of Black women from White feminist movements and Black communities, Black feminism started to take shape in the 1970s (Jones, 2014). It was Barbara Smith who led the Black feminism movement at the time, bringing the stories and experiences of Black lesbian women to light. She did this by organising, documenting, and forming coalitions with other Black women including Black lesbian women (Jones, 2014). This was at a time when it was frequently

difficult to advance Black feminism movements due to heterosexism, sexism, and racism. These discriminations against Black women and Black lesbians served to undermine efforts to organise for liberation. Heterosexism, sexism, and racism served as a divider in more established political movements as well as among those who were directly impacted (Jones, 2014).

7. Same-sex marriages in the USA

Marriage has been criticised for being a patriarchal and heteronormative institution that invalidates nonmarital relationships (Auchmuty, 2004; Card, 1996; O'Brien, 2007; Warner, 2000). The marginalisation of Black LGBT people and poor people by marriage, the integration of LGBT people into the so-called mainstream culture, and the possibility that same-sex marriages serve as a kind of control over non-heterosexual sexuality are further criticisms of marriage equality (Bernstein & Taylor, 2013). However, there has been much discussion regarding the potential impact of marital equality, relationships, and family formation of Black lesbians. Less research has, nonetheless, looked at how marriage works for lesbians and gay people (Green, 2013).

It is vital for same-sex people to navigate the newly available institution of marriage based on their experiences and perceptions, and to base their discussions and decisions within LGBTQ communities around the viability of marriage as a social movement objective. According to scholars who support the affirmative position, same-sex marriage is largely a good and life-improving choice because of advantageous elements such as an increase in benefits and rights (Badgett, 2009; Haas and Whitton, 2015; Kimport, 2013; Richman, 2013; Riggle, Rostosky, and Prather, 2006), improved familial relationships (Ocobock, 2013; Ramos, Goldberg, and Badgett, 2009), increased security (Lannutti, 2005), expression of love (Kimport, 2013), decrease in psychological distress (Riggle, Rostosky, and Horne, 2010), or expressed activism (Kimport, 2013; Taylor, Kimport, Van Dyke, and Andersen, 2009).

Moreover, Bennett and Gates (2004) explained that marriage for same-sex couples has parental, financial and health insurance advantages. For Chambers (2001), marriage allows a variety of legal benefits for same-sex couples. Badgett (2009) also discovered additional symbolic advantages of marriage, such as the proclamation of commitment and the encouragement of the equal distribution of labour within families of same-sex people. These various benefits add to the significance of marriage for same-sex individuals.

8. Being Black and lesbian in South Africa (SA)

There is a dearth of studies on homosexuality in South Africa, especially about Black LGBTI people. The bias in the few lesbian studies that exist tend to highlight the experiences of White, middle-class women (Potgieter, 2003). Thus, Black lesbian experiences have been rendered almost invisible. Prior to 1997 there had not been a comprehensive South African academic study that dealt specifically with concerns pertaining to Black lesbians (Potgieter, 2003). However, in a study conducted by Govender, Maotoana, and Nel, in 2019, of Black lesbians from a South African township, themes identified through the analysis of data included: 'suicide attempts and mental health challenges; lack of support, hate crimes against lesbians, substance abuse; stigmatisation and discrimination of lesbians' (Govender, Maotoana, and Nel, 2019, p. 13941).

Theme 1: Suicide attempts and mental health challenges

Theme 1 emerged from responses suggesting that participants had considered or tried to commit suicide. From the study it was clear that Black lesbians often find it challenging to integrate into their traditional communities, which leads to them committing suicide or making suicide attempts. This is partly a result of their anxiety of being shunned by these communities, especially if they decide to come out as lesbian (Govender, Maotoana, and Nel, 2019, p. 13941).

Theme 2: Lack of support

Theme 2 was a discussion of how there was no emotional support for participants, from family members and others. This lack of support included expressions of contempt and rejection from family, the police, educators, and public in general. Additionally, this often worsens the marginalisation of lesbians and makes it harder for them to ask for assistance (Govender, Maotoana, and Nel, 2019).

Theme 3: Hate crimes against lesbians

Due to the perception that their sexual behaviour deviates from social and moral norms, lesbians in South Africa, particularly Black lesbians, are frequently at greater risk of gender-based violence (GBV), hate speech, and hate crimes (Govender, Maotoana, and Nel, 2019). This was evident throughout Theme 3. Victims of corrective rape are selected because there is a belief that having intercourse with a male will cure them of their same-sex deviance and their real or perceived lesbian identity (Ilyayambwa, 2012). For many Black lesbians, life is challenging.

Theme 4: Substance abuse

Most interviewees said they utilise drugs as a coping mechanism to deal with their challenges. Substances that are often used to cope include cocaine and or marijuana. In order to cope with rejection from family, friends and society, and as a temporary confidence booster that lessens the hurt they experience, LGBT people usually abuse drugs (Subhrajit, 2014; Tonya and Sarah 2011).

Theme 5: Stigmatisation and discrimination of lesbians

Participants believed that heterosexuals stigmatised and discriminated against them in a variety of settings. This stigmatisation caused emotional suffering of the participants (Govender, Maotoana, and Nel, 2019). According to Farr and Patterson (2013), most lesbian couples, as well as other people who identify as gender nonconforming, endure stigmatisation and discrimination throughout their lives, making them particularly susceptible to all types of prejudice. Due to this, Black lesbian couples frequently face high rates of social marginalisation and exclusion (Govender, Maotoana, and Nel, 2019).

9. Same-sex marriage in SA

It is common in South Africa for traditional healers and sangomas of the same-sex to marry each other (Nkabinde 2008; Nkabinde and Morgan 2006; Reid 2013). In the 1950s, Louw (2001) also observed an informal marriage custom among men in the Mkhumbane community of KwaZulu-Natal. Another instance of same-sex marriage in history was between an older and younger male mineworker (Achmat 1993; Moodie 1988; Niehaus 2002). The younger partner took on the role of the wife in sexual and domestic activities in exchange for money, food and presents. Additionally, in some South African societies, a wealthy or high-status woman could, due to her rank, marry one or more wives in order to become a 'woman-husband' (Gluckman 1950; Krige 1974; Wieringa 2005). There also existed 'women-marriages' within the Sepedi-speaking people of northern South Africa (Krige, 1974). It seems then that Black gay and lesbian couples did marry before the Civil Union Act was promulgated (DeBarros 2017; Haffajee 1997; Judge, Manion, and De Waal 2008).

10. Colonial laws against sexual diversity in Africa

It can be assumed that colonialism arrived in Africa and introduced laws to criminalise sexual diversity. These laws date back to the Victorian era. Nonetheless, it is not surprising that some African leaders,

such as former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, although unsympathetic to Western interference, would still imprison LGBT people in their countries (Lewis, 2008).

Colonial pioneers considered African sexual diversity as ferocious (Epprecht, 2005, 2006, Tamale, 2014). Western dictators viewed African sexualities as bizarre, primaeval, wicked, inhuman, lustful and nymphomaniac. The domineering colonial period and its rulers were determined to improve and 'civilise' the unrestrained African bodies and sexualities of what it considered the Dark Continent. This was attained through means of degradation, pressure, superiority, cruelty, and authoritarianism (Tamale, 2014).

A viable alternative for Africa's sexual diversity, according to the colonisers, became an introduction of 'buggery' laws, that is, laws against anal sex (Gupta and Human Rights Watch, 2008). Because British colonialists saw African sexuality as antagonistic, they decided to control it by effecting sodomy laws. The assumption was that perverse sex by Africans went unpunished. Since, according to white supremacy, morality within Africa was lost, an urgent need developed to restore European morality to the African 'infidels'. According to the colonisers, a mandatory re-education in sexual ethics was a must for Africans (Gupta and HRWO, 2008).

To protect its Christian principles, the United Kingdom, during the Victorian era, integrated anti-homosexuality laws into English Common Law. According to these laws, recreational sex was non-Christian since it was not for procreation (Amnesty International, 2013). In cases where sex was not for reproduction, it was believed to be a damaging physical activity, contrary to nature's order, not only to the individual but to the whole society (Kollman and Waites, 2009). In 1967, Wales and England legitimised most consensual homosexual behaviour (Amnesty International, 2013).

The renowned Wolfenden Report (1957) also recommended that, should consenting adults privately engage in homosexual behaviour, they should not be found guilty of a criminal offence (Van den Heever, 2015). The colonies, on the other hand, obtained independence during the 1950s and 1960s without nullifying the sodomy laws (Kollman and Waites, 2009). France legalised same-sex relations in 1791, but, as a form of social control, it did not exempt its colonies from anti-sodomy laws (Van der Heever, 2015). Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as Asia, also suffered sodomy laws that were inflicted by colonial rulers. Their colonisers deemed their culture as sexually corrupt and thought their sexual

immorality would only be healed by sodomy laws that would also serve to protect their new White owners against moral contamination (Van der Heever, 2015).

South Africa, like some African countries, also felt the effects of sodomy laws through its colonisers. When the Netherlands proclaimed consented same-sex conduct in South Africa a criminal offence, the ruling remained unchanged long after the British took over from the Dutch in 1806 (Amnesty International, 2013). However, unlike in other African countries, former South African President Nelson Mandela offered a more reasoned voice when he stated that sexual diversity is the product of a varied sexuality that has been suppressed for a long time but is not un-African. Further, despite the International Human Rights Law Commission's instruction to African countries to revoke these laws, only a few of the African independent states have done so (Van der Heever, 2015).

11. Sexual diversity in Africa in the pre-colonial era

A vast literature denouncing colonial influence on Africa's history of sexual diversity can be found. A large convincing body of evidence confirms that it was homophobia, lesbophobia, and transphobia, rather than sexual diversity, that was imported to Africa by Westerners. In fact, according to Epprecht (2006), colonialism demonised sexual diversity. There is also evidence that homosexuality predated colonialism amongst African societies; however, it was a sexuality that was privately but not publicly accepted. The Portuguese were amongst the first Europeans to travel the African continent. It is understood that they found an assortment of gender relations among African societies (Epprecht, 2006). They also documented what they coined an 'unnatural damnation' of same-sex intercourse among Congolese men (Epprecht, 2006, p. 189).

More variations of same-sex relationships within different African societies were exposed. Transvestitism was allegedly evident in various parts of Africa, including Madagascar and Ethiopia (Epprecht, 2006). In the countries currently known as Cameroon and Gabon, the Pangwe people were believed to have engaged in homosexual sex since it was implicit amongst males of all ages that the sexual intercourse was a wealth-transmitting act (Tessmann, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p. 138). The Nzima of Ghanaian descent exhibited a custom of mature men marrying other men, however with a 10-year age gap between husbands (Signorini, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998).

By the same token, parallel to the precedents set by the ancient Greeks, the Zande tribe of Sudan had warriors who married boys and paid bride prices for them in the same way they would do for female brides. Each of these boys would grow up to marry another boy as well. It was not only same-sex relationships between men that existed among the people of the Zande tribe, some females within the tribe practised lesbian sexuality too, especially those from polygamous households (Evans-Pritchard, 1973, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p. 232). Nonetheless, information concerning lesbian activity during pre-colonial and during modern times until the 1960s was scarce. Yet again, missionaries were swift to inhibit and condemn such behaviour (Sanders, 1997). Sanders (1997) expressed a worrying concern about how African society viewed homosexuality in his observation that it seemed as though gay acts were tolerated but lesbianism was reprovved.

Moreover, the practice of boy-wives, as displayed by the Zande of Sudan, was also common amongst mine workers in South Africa. The Zulus referred to homosexual acts as *hlobongo*, whilst the Ngonis referred to the acts as *metsha* (Sanders, 1997). Moreover, around the 18th century in South Africa, the people now commonly known as the Khoisan or San had a word – *koetsire* to label men who found other men sexually inviting (Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p.169). The San tribe also used the word *soregus* to describe a same-sex masturbation bond (Kolb, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p.169).

Likewise, same-sex arrangements were also recorded within the royal court of the Dahomey Kingdom, presently known as Benin (Roscoe and Murray, 1998). These same-sex arrangements are believed to have emerged sometime during the 18th century (Burton, 1924; Langle, 1993; Norris, 1993, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p. 97). Another important indication of same-sex relations within the African continent is the terminology that was used in some traditional African languages.

These languages predate colonialism and may be viewed as additional evidence for the existence of same-sex relations in precolonial Africa (Epprecht, 2005, p. 1261). Apparently, the Shangaan of southern Africa used the term *inkotshane* meaning male-wife, to refer to same-sex relations (Achmat, 1993; van Onselen, 1976, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998 p. 197). Similarly, the Basotho women of the present-day Lesotho participated in authorised erotic same-sex relationships called *motsoalle*, meaning a special friend (Gay, 1985, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p. 231). In Senegal the Wolof language denoted homosexual men as *gor-digen* or men-women (Gorer, 1962, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p. 101).

Additionally, various other African nationalities believed same-sex sexuality could bring magical powers that warranted increased crop production, hunting success, good health and the ability to keep evil spirits away. As Epprecht explains, ‘to perform anal intercourse with a male under proper conditions could thus bring good crops or hunting, protection from evil spirits, and greater virility in marriage’ (2006 p. 189). Angola and Namibia, for example, had male spiritualists who were referred to as *zvibanda*, *chibados*, *quimbanda*, *gangas*, and *kibambaa* (Epprecht, 2006, p. 142). It was a common belief that these spiritualists carried within themselves dominant female spirits that they passed on through anal sex to fellow men (Cardonega, 1940, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p. 142).

Equally importantly, rock paintings cannot be ignored as they have proven that thousands of years ago the San people of Zimbabwe portrayed men taking part in anal intercourse with other men (Garlake, 1995, cited in Roscoe and Murray, 1998, p. 195). These paintings seem to suggest that, as elsewhere, Africans displayed a broad array of sexualities, and this can only imply that the idea that Westerners brought homosexuality with them to Africa is far from the truth. I agree with the interpretation of the evidence of homosexuality found in pre-colonial Africa. If anything, it seems that European missionaries tried to wipe out homosexuality when they challenged the indigenous social and religious systems they found within the African continent. It also appears that these missionaries used Christianity to demonise homosexuality in Africa, hence the attitudes prevailing today (Caroll and Itaborahy, 2015).

11.1 Sexual diversity in Africa in the post-colonial era

Over the past few years, within the African continent, there has been an ethnic movement named the African Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI). At the forefront of the movement were robust African human rights activists who aimed to give voice to matters relating to sexual rights in Africa. However, the more candid and noticeable these activists are, the more they are repressed by religious establishments and the legal apparatuses of their countries. Some people suggest that the sudden appearance of people who are sexually and gender diverse seems trendy, even though it is not so (Van den Heever, 2015). It is absurd to perceive that it could be considered too fashionable to be an LGBT individual in South Africa, when such individuals often face discrimination, hate speech, intolerance, or violence. The SOGI movement is not the only one on the rise. Also, on the rise in Africa is a group of young LGBT people petitioning to be counted among African society. They are aggressive in their demands and choose not to hide. They reject being murdered, violated, excluded, discriminated against, and raped based on their gender identity and or sexual orientation (Van den Heever, 2015).

A common thread runs between the SOGI movement and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. These movements aim to bring about human respect, human rights, and human dignity. Sexual and gender minority groups are echoing LGBT people more enthusiastically by summoning their governments through litigation and the public condemnation of injustice and violence against LGBT individuals (Mgbako, 2011). These groups seek to demystify the mindset that Africans exhibit only one type of sexuality (namely heterosexuality), which denies Africans their sexual diversity. Again, most individual activists, as well as local activist networks, are appealing for fairness, dignity, and inclusion. For example, Sexual Minorities Uganda, INCREASE in Nigeria, and Sister Namibia are abrasive activists who refuse to go unnoticed. They are confidently challenging the stereotypes of how sexual minorities are perceived (Tamale, 2014; van den Heever, 2015).

The activists' persistence has yielded small but noticeable triumphs marking positive progress toward equality for LGBT individuals in Africa. To take Kenya as an example, the government has allowed a local LGBT organisation permission to register its organisation with the government, which was previously not allowed, since Kenyan Laws interdicted same-sex relations (Senzee, 2015). The Kenyan Constitutional Court was sceptical about the archaic anti-buggery law as it impacted contemporary life in Kenya and ruled for homosexual and lesbian people not to be impeached by the state (Senzee, 2015).

In Angola in 2014 the African Commission on Human and People's Rights accepted resolution 275, which prohibits human rights violations, violence, and injustice against persons due to their insinuated or real gender identity and/or sexual orientation (Van den Heever, 2015).

The resolution especially reprovved SOGI-related rapes, killings, and random incarcerations by the state or non-state offenders (Rights, 2014, cited in van den Heever, 2015). Further, at a regional feminist organisation promoting fairness for bisexual, lesbian, and transdiverse people, the Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL) was permitted observer status on 25 April 2015 at the African Commission. CAL had been denied the status in 2008 on the pretext that it was not promoting or protecting any rights reverred by the African Charter. It took seven years of advancement at the commission for CAL to attain its success. CAL's historic victory made it a recognised non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that gives voice to bisexual, lesbian, and transdiverse people enabling them to participate at the African Commission (Van den Heever, 2015, p. 28).

In South Africa, as already mentioned, the legal developments include South Africa being the first African country in 1996 to endorse the civil rights and prohibition of injustice based on SOGI (Nyeck, Sheperd, Sehoole, Ngcobozi and Conron, 2019). In 2002 South Africa strengthened its approval of LGBT people by legalising joint adoption by same-sex couples, implementing a law on legal gender recognition in 2004 and by approving same-sex marriages in 2006 (De Ru, 2013; De Vos, 2007; Judge, 2014; McCormick, 2015; van Zyl, 2011b; Yarbrough, 2017). The Seychelles retracted the decriminalisation of consensual same-sex activity in 2004. In 2004, Cape Verde's penal code removed transgressions associated with same-sex activity. Mauritius followed suit in 2009 and undertook to adapt its Sexual Offences Bill, thus decriminalising sexual diversity. In 2011, during its review at the UN Human Rights Council, Sao Tome and Principe also committed to legalise sexual diversity (Van den Heever, 2015).

12. Sexual diversity in South Africa during the colonial and apartheid era

As previously mentioned, scholars have found conclusive evidence of sexual diversity in Africa. They have also documented the types of human relations found amongst Africans. Their findings make it evident that colonisation and Christianity were the two dominant forces used to affect South African society (Roscoe and Murray, 1998). During the early 1700s, the German missionaries introduced a Christian-based system of education that ended in the 1950s with the introduction of the Bantu education system. British missionary schools were also established and served as the people's main source of education (Chisholm, 2017). Again, missionaries impacted South African culture by modifying societal norms as well as society's perception of sexuality and how sexuality shaped morality. In doing so, these missionaries crafted the meaning of morality for South Africans (Sanders, 1997). As a result, the antagonism towards homosexuality in South Africa stemmed mainly from religious sectors. Chapter 18 verse 22 of Leviticus in the new King James version of the Bible calls homosexuality a disgrace, and for this reason Christianity and most of its autonomous branches reject it (New King James Version, 1982, Lev. 18:22).

Furthermore, the Dutch Reformed brand of Calvinism, together with the growing Afrikaner nationalist movement, and the nationalist Afrikaner belief system in general was dominant under apartheid (da Costa da Costa Santos, 2013). This form of orthodoxy viewed homosexuality as debauched and contrary to the ordinary. As one would have predicted, the nationalist government, without hesitation, then assumed an anti-homosexuality standpoint that later had a negative effect on policy. Paranoia became a constant state of the apartheid regime as the government strongly believed that South Africa

was experiencing problems caused by internal and external powers. All along the apartheid government, led by a minority of South African people, held firmly that they were South Africa's way to civilisation. The Afrikaner understanding of Christianity legitimated the apartheid government's oppressive leadership (da Costa Santos, 2013). The government harshly punished any opposition to its dominance.

Moreover, the apartheid government became adamant that South Africa was not going to follow in the footsteps of Greece and Rome by holding firm to its rhetoric of Afrikaner nationalism. It held that to keep Christianity pure, homosexual debauchery was to be avoided since a nonconforming sexuality would result in the collapse of South Africa (Retief, 1994). It was during this time that the government referred to homosexual people as child molesters and this perspective led to the passing of the Immorality Act amendments of 1968 (Retief, 1994).

Correspondingly, during the apartheid regime, lesbians in South Africa were also discriminated against and considered invisible to state authority. The state presumed that White gay men outnumbered White lesbians and that lesbians were not mothers (Mcclintock, 1995). The state also concluded that White lesbians did not fit into the category of motherhood, femininity, and heterosexual marriage, as defined by White Afrikaners (Mcclintock, 1995). Despite this, later in the late 1960s, when the Immorality Act was reviewed and amended, lesbians became a priority for the state's agenda (Mcclintock, 1995). According to Retief (1994), lawmakers later also joined in the discussions about the appearance of lesbians, their sexual habits, and their butch role-playing.

Additionally, the apartheid regime dehumanised and rendered lesbians invisible. During an interview with a non-governmental organisation named free gender, a Black South African lesbian, Veliswa, explained how apartheid South Africa hid her sexuality from the public. She also expressed that she only started enjoying her full citizenship, in 1996, when the sexual orientation clause was made non-discriminatory within the South African constitution (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016, p 143).

12.1 South Africa's Anti-Homosexual Legislation

The implementation of the Immorality Act of 1957 by the apartheid government was an attempt to control how people would engage in sexual relationships; but the Act was just one element of a larger system of domination (Gevisser and Cameron, 1995). Sexual intercourse between different ethnicities was forbidden by the Act. When Afrikaner nationalism began to gain impetus, during the 1920s, a new definition for the future of South African politics became evident. The movement saw a future where

an Afrikaner state was to be instituted to advance the Protestant theological system of John Calvin (Calvinism), the Afrikaans language and its culture (Chisholm, 2017). This ethos would be free from English power and beliefs. According to the government, the Immorality Act would birth a God-fearing South Africa and whatever did not meet the criteria of Afrikaner culture would be regulated and disqualified, irrespective of whether it was due to a dissimilar dogma, a different race, or a different lifestyle. The Immorality Act of 1957 also regulated ‘unnatural/immoral sexual acts’, which the apartheid regime concluded to be a disgrace related to non-reproductive intercourse or homosexuality (Gevisser and Cameron, 1995).

12.2 The 1966 Forest Town Raid

The Immorality Act of 1927 forbade unrestricted homosexuality. The Immorality Act of 1957 later encompassed amendments that limited relationships between people of diverse races and banned the public visibility of homosexuality (Retief, 1994). The invasion of a private home party in Forest Town, Johannesburg, by police in 1966, incentivised the first unequivocal anti-homosexual statute and raised media publicity on issues of homosexuality in South Africa (Brown, 2014; Du Pisani, 2012). More than 300 White homosexual men attended the party.

The raid was a pivotal event for homosexual individuals and symbolised an act of rebellion toward the Immorality Act. Police continued to arrest men for impersonating women as this was seen as improper conduct (Brown, 2014; Gevisser and Cameron, 1995).

The South African government concluded that the Immorality Act of 1957 was ambiguous since it only restricted the public visibility of homosexuality, so it opted for yet another amendment. The amendment implemented a total prohibition of homosexual acts between people of different races and was passed in 1968 (Gevisser and Cameron, 1995). This provoked activism and an attack on the amendment’s approval by homosexual people as made evident by a small group of gay professionals who steered the Law Reform Movement of 1968. Although the Movement was mainly embraced by White middle-class people, it successfully brought different classes of White homosexual people together. And because it aimed to uphold the livelihood of its members, the Law Reform Movement warranted that their way of life was not disrupted. As a result, it dissociated from left-wing politics and from the anti-apartheid movement to maintain some level of respect from the apartheid regime (Gevisser and Cameron, 1995). As one would assume, this left Black homosexual people even more ostracised within the gay community. Dividing homosexual people along racial lines in this way illustrates the extent to which apartheid alienated society.

The Law Reform Movement possessed sufficient financial power to defy the government and it did succeed, although its accomplishment was insignificant. Eventually, the legislation was not passed, but changes were added to the Immorality Act of 1957, which included the following: the age of consent was increased from 16 to 19, dildoes were criminalised, and the ‘men at a party’ clause was added, which stated that two or more men were prohibited from performing any activity that aroused sexual passion (Gevisser and Cameron, 1995). These amendments were an attempt to keep the gay culture discrete since the apartheid government believed that society needed to be protected from a corrupting influence. For as long as the LGBT communities remained isolated and had no stories told about them in the newspapers, they were left alone, were not harassed and their clubs and homes were not raided. Eventually, the Law Reform movement, with its minor victory, lessened and ceased to exist (Gevisser and Cameron, 1995).

12.3 Homosexuality in the South African gold mines

Homosexuality is said to have existed in the gold mines of South Africa during the 1950s and 1960s, and still exist today in the mining community (Moodie, 1988).

When interviewed men working on the mines, who claimed to be heterosexual explained that being remote from their wives led to them feeling lonely, so they resorted to taking young boys as their ‘wives’ (Moodie, 1988; Roscoe and Murray, 1998). Although these men said that they had adopted homosexuality as the last option, while most men were returning home, some men stayed longer at the mines in order to spend more time with their mine boy-wives, demonstrating the significance of the relationships they had with them. This indicates that some men preferred same-sex relationships over opposite-sex relationships (Moodie, 1988). This leads me to question around whether choosing a heterosexual lifestyle might have been, for some, an escape from being rejected by a judgemental society and a fear of not being able to perform homosexual acts outside of the mines.

Moreover, these boy-wife unions assumed explicit roles. The roles included the ‘wife’ keeping the living quarters tidy and clean and affording the husband companionship (Moodie, 1988). However, the end of each work cycle typically saw the end of these marriages. The men kept their same-sex relationships a secret because they were deemed a disgrace. They were scared that they would lose their families and status within their communities (Moodie, 1988; Roscoe and Murray, 1998).

13. Sexual diversity in South Africa during the post-colonial era

The lived experience of South Africans does not favour LGBT people. Disappointingly, it has been more than 20 years since South Africa gained democracy, but the effects of apartheid on the lives of LGBT (especially Black LGBT) South Africans are still evident. Cape Town is known to be a gay-friendly city in South Africa. It is also known to be a gay tourism district with gay nightclubs. However, according to Tucker (2009), these nightclubs have openly disclosed to having policies that reject Black and Coloured clientele. As a result, Black sexually and gender-diverse people are secluded. Where they thought they would find solace within a community that would understand them, they only found isolation. Where they found solidarity amongst other Black people in their work against racism, they did not win against homophobia or transphobia (Matebeni, 2018). Stuck between two communities has resulted in distress, since their sense of belonging depends on impossible demands and conditions (Matebeni, 2018).

LGBT people usually take part in South Africa's Pride marches. These marches are a celebration of gender and sexual diversity and are held globally (Soldati-Kahimbaara and Sibeko, 2012). Unfortunately, in South Africa however, Pride festivities usually show how LGBT groups reject and discriminate against others based on race.

'Pride events in South Africa have often become sites of contestation by Black activists who feel that Pride is racially exclusionary, had lost its political agenda and is unable to represent their needs,' write Soldati-Kahimbaara and Sibeko (cited in McLachlan, Nel, Pillay, and Victor (2019). p. 34). At times these exclusions are not only raced, but classed as well (McLachlan et al, 2019). They also, from time to time, do not include Transgender, Intersex, Questioning and Asexual (TIQA) individuals (Matebeni, 2018). This segregation of Black LGBT people by race and class led to the birth of their new spaces in South Africa. The country witnessed an upswing of Black-asserting queerness inner-city and township spaces. There also was an explosion of several Black-dominated Pride events reciprocating the White-dominated Pride festivities (Matebeni, 2018).

Furthermore, lesbians belonging to a Black lesbian organisation named Free Gender, based in Khayelitsha, a township in Cape Town, held a protest concerning the unending problematic gender-based violence in South Africa (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016). Moreau (2015) later interviewed this group of lesbians with the aim of addressing and countering the challenge of township homophobic violence. Interview results reported that in South Africa, 'Black lesbians are redefining what it means to be a lesbian, fostering revitalised lesbian relationship ties and social obligations in their communities' (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016, p. 146).

The lives of lesbian women in South Africa usually reflect troubles, worries, fears, judgement and, at times, rejection that challenge their efforts to be accepted by society. These women come from varying ethnicities, communities, academic, social, religious, spiritual, and economic contexts, and their differing backgrounds suggest varied environments for life progression and accomplishment. Even more painful, in South Africa, is the violence against same-sex loving females habitually exemplified by corrective rape (Breen and Nel, 2016; Holness, 2021; Hunter, 2021; Kamban and Karels, 2021a; Kamban and Karels, 2021b; Koraan and Geduld, 2016; Morrissey, 2013; Msibi, 2009; Pickles, 2019; Schuhmann, 2020). The term ‘corrective rape’ was invented by Black South African lesbian activists (Msibi, 2009). It depicts the pretext of ‘correcting’ lesbian sexuality that is used to justify sexual violence against lesbians in South Africa.

Muholi’s work on South African female same-sex relations emphasised a non-fixed and shifting sexuality through visual or literary photography (Muholi, 2012). Z’Étoile Imma (2017) views Muholi’s work as a breath of fresh air that politically and creatively provides a point of departure in expressing Black lesbian sexuality. Muholi, according to Imma, threatens the racist and heteronormative mindset of Black gendered bodies and township space (Imma, 2017). Gunther’s (2013) project, entitled ‘Rainbow Girls’, is a documentation of lesbian females from South African townships, and also demonstrates, through a collection of photographs, an undeniable artistic culmination of sexually diverse South African women’s experiences (cited in Currier and Migraine-George, 2016).

There also are LGBT activist organisations in South Africa who, through workshops educate same-sex loving women about anti-lesbian violence. These organisations also provide a safe space for lesbian women to know about themselves and each another. FEW (Forum for the Empowerment of Women), located in Johannesburg, and OUT, located in Pretoria, are two such organisations. In addition to addressing intimate partner abuse in lesbian relationships, African lesbian activists have been working in collaboration with transgender activists to address homophobic and transphobic abuse in lesbian partnerships (Matebeni 2018; Currier, 2012; Theron, 2013).

14. Some challenges faced by LGBT groups in South Africa today

Below are some of the challenges faced by LGBT people in South Africa. The participants in my study have experienced many of these challenges.

14.1 HIV/AIDS

Around the beginning of 1980, HIV/AIDS became prominent in South Africa. According to Gevisser and Cameron (1995), the virus hit the gay community very hard, and at a time when there was very limited access to antiretroviral treatment in South Africa. This was between the 1980s and the 1990s. During that time, the state's healthcare system performed heart and kidney transplants and medical aids schemes paid for those surgeries but refused to pay HIV/AIDS-related claims. This led to access-driven movements such as the Gay and Lesbian Organization of Witwatersrand (GLOW) (Gevisser, 2000). GLOW was unable to implement programmes such as the Gay Men's Health Forum and the Township AIDS Project (TAP) aimed at petitioning for access to life-saving antiretroviral treatment, raising and spreading awareness, providing support and assisting HIV/AIDS-infected gay men. Gay men like Simon Nkoli would die from HIV/AIDS because of treatment being withheld (Gevisser and Cameron, 1995).

14.2 Negative attitudes of mental health care professionals toward LGBT people

It is very important to note that normative assumptions concerning LGBT people are subjective and do not represent absolute truth. Because of social marginalisation, mental health service providers' perceptions of LGBT people are frequently tainted (Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017). As stated by the Psychological Society of South Africa: 'These include the type of questions that are asked in a first interview, and subsequent sessions, and the way services are advertised, for an example, many advertisements for health services might only feature images of heterosexual couples and nuclear families' (2017, p.29).

14.3 Homophobia

Furthermore, despite the positive developments in legislation, discrimination and homophobia persist in today's South African society (Francis and Msibi, 2011). LGBT workers are still challenged by homophobia and LGBT students still experience bullying (Butler, Alpaslan, Strumpher, and Astbury, 2003).

14.4 Rejection by some religious sectors

In Africa, LGBT people experience rejection from some religious sectors (Tamale, 2014). In South Africa, despite the Civil Union Bill allowing LGBT people to marry, a specific law is in place that

provides religious sectors the option to reject marrying same-sex couples, which, in effect, allows these couples only partial rights. Section 6 of the Bill states that:

a marriage officer, other than a marriage officer referred to in section 5, may in writing inform the Minister that he or she objects on the ground of conscience, religion and belief to solemnizing a civil union between persons of the same sex, whereupon the marriage officer may not be compelled to solemnize such civil union (Bilchit and Judge, 2007, p. 490).

14.5 Difficulties with identity

Some Africanists, such as President Museveni of Uganda and the former Zimbabwean president, Mugabe, present being African as a single identity, and as the same as being Black. However, this is a mistake: being African cannot only be about a single identity nor only about race (Mkhize, 2019). In South Africa, for an example, there are various ways of explaining what being African means. There are diverse cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and racial groups. All these groups hold different ideas and opinions about being African and none of them can claim a single African identity. Therefore, it is mistaken to assert that homosexuality is not African before scrutinising African identities and their diversity (Mkhize, 2019).

Additionally, even though the South African Constitution prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, customary and ethnic narrow-mindedness, together with destructive attitudes from others, still force some LGBT people to hide their sexuality. This usually leads LGBT individuals to not publicly disclose their sexuality (Mkhize, 2019). It is also to be noted that to hide one's sexuality does not signify that homosexuality is un-African.

14.6 Controversial normative contexts

There are some dominant assumptions about sexuality. One of these is that there are only two rigidly delineated sexes. Another is that these sexes reflect human sexuality from birth. Another assumption is that only sexual attraction between opposite genders can be considered normal or natural (Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017). This latter assumption disadvantages LGBT individuals and advantages heteronormativity. Heteronormativity refers to the privileged position associated with heterosexuality. Very often society incentivises behaviour that fits in with heterosexuality while penalising behaviour that does not (Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017). 'The influence of heteronormativity extends beyond sexuality to determine what is regarded as viable or socially valued

masculine and feminine identities as well, that is, it serves to regulate not only sexuality but also gender,' explains Van den Heever (2014, p. 7). Other common opinions include the notion that attraction can only be felt between opposite sexes, that humans should commit to a single relationship for life, and that human beings all have a desire to raise only their own biological children (Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017).

The South African constitution may be one of the most progressive in the world. However, regardless of the constitution progression, there still are social, religious, and traditional beliefs that do not accommodate non-conforming sexualities and genders. Unfortunately, there is usually a disconnection between policy and how it is implemented with regards to LGBT people. These minorities are often viewed as less valid human beings who are not eligible for society's affirmation (Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017).

14.7 The educational context

Discrimination against LGBT individuals in school and tertiary contexts is well known (Francis and Msibi, 2011). There is a definite reflection of heterosexuality as being the norm in school and tertiary syllabi (Müller and Crawford-Browne, 2013, cited in Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017). From early in life, a cultural bias preferring men to women and opposite-sex sexual relationships to same-sex sexual relationships is taught to most children. Heteronormative models taught, acknowledged and emphasised in schools suggest that traditional families are only those stereotypically comprising of a father and mother with biological descendants. A construct like marriage or family is automatically associated with heterosexuality. Often, when same-sex families are mentioned, they are described as a 'lesbian family' or a 'gay family' (Breshears and Lubbe-De Beer, 2016, cited in Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017, p. 29). The use of such marginalising vocabulary when referring to families of LGBT people makes them appear as less valid families.

14.8 Social relationships

Sexually and gender-diverse people are not only negatively impacted by heteronormativity within the health and education sectors: the Psychological Society of South Africa suggests that 'heteronormativity adversely affects sexually and gender-diverse people within their families, schools, legal systems, places of work, religious and cultural traditions and communities' (2017, p. 29). This

begs for a better understanding of the notion of homonormativity. Homonormativity highlights the way in which LGBT people make meaningful rules and norms around their sexuality (Psychological Society of South Africa, 2017). This often translates into assigning fixed roles to partners in a homosexual relationship, for example, butch and femme, as in the case of the participants.

15. African leaders' responses to sexual and gender diversity

It seems some African leaders believe that Africa never did have LGBT people. They seem to believe that Africa is entirely heterosexual, with no evidence of other sexualities; the scarcity of research on same-sex sexualities in Africa by Black Africans intensifies the myth further. Understanding sexual diversity within Africa has also proven to be challenging mainly because, to most African leaders, sexual diversity is part of an intricate, highly controlled political agenda (Cloete, 2005). Most African leaders believe sexual diversity to be a White person's 'illness', which they brought with them from the West (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016).

These leaders usually emphasise how un-African same-sex relations are and conclude that LGBT people ought to be removed from African society since they are evidence of the corrupt agenda of White foreigners (Currier, 2012; Msibi, 2011). Africa's sexually diverse and LGBT people are portrayed as wicked and are labelled as paedophiles and offenders by these leaders (Bonthuy, 2007; Currier and Migraine-George, 2016; Mawerenga, 2018).

In 2008, Yahya Jammeh of The Gambia threatened to slit open the throats of gay men and behead them in his country if they dared engaged in same-sex marriage (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016). His opinion of sexual diversity was, and still is, that LGBT people are anti-human, anti-civilisation and anti-God. Sadly, the LGBT community are placed at risk and are exposed to hate crimes and discrimination by comments such as these (Tharoor, 2015 Currier and Migraine-George, 2016). The Nigerian and Ugandan governments have announced more inhumane and heavily biased laws making illegal all activity that is not heterosexual, as well as those practising it. Those who do not report LGBT people, and who support healthcare for them, the idea of same-sex relations, and LGBT Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) workers also receive a jail sentence (Currier and Migraine-George, 2016).

Former Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe, held power for 37 years. He is known for his most dishonourable proclamation of gays and lesbians in 1995 as worse than dogs and pigs, and later on, in

1999, as gangsters (Tamale, 2014). In 2000, he pronounced sexual diversity as a disgrace that decays culture, which Britain was trying to force onto Africans (da Costa Santos, 2013). Mugabe insisted on safeguarding Zimbabwe from homosexuality for Zimbabwean loyalists since he labelled homosexuality as a result of Western colonialism (Tamale, 2014). Other African Presidents who also echo Mugabe's sentiments that sexual diversity is un-African include former Namibian leader Sam Nujoma, Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi, Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, and the Kenyan leader Arap Moi. These leaders have publicly mentioned other stigmatising and discriminatory terms while referring to LGBT people (Tamale, 2014).

The topic of LGBT human rights usually elicits a negative response and is still a thorny subject in most of Africa (ASSAF, 2015). The Christian religion and media are the two main vehicles usually used by African leaders to promote fear and mythologies concerning sexual diversity in Africa. Some prominent political and religious leaders make a habit of perpetuating a fear via media that homosexual people will convert others (ASSAF, 2015).

Further, noticeable LGBT activists, through the media, are called out to be hanged while their names and photographs are made public (Rice, 2010). However, all this negativity does not stop African LGBT human rights activists from frustrating governments by refusing to have their sexuality dehumanised or eradicated. They continue to advocate and plead for recognition as African LGBT people with equal recognition of African citizenship rights (Van den Heever, 2015). One would assume that with the pressure from outside the African continent, African leaders would back down on their harsh attitude to the sexually and gender-diverse, but the opposite has proven true. Most African leaders still hold firmly to their standpoint that sexual diversity is undeniably a Western import even though most old sodomy laws been removed from European laws (Van den Heever, 2015).

The policing of sexuality through statutes and interdiction by African leaders may be viewed as an aggressive reinforcement of heterosexuality. Since the inception of this policing, throughout most of the African countries, there has been increased harm, ferocity, provocation and sometimes mob justice against LGBT people and anyone who is thought to belong within the LGBT community (Van den Heever, 2015). In some African countries, because of their lack of knowledge and empathy, police muddle up same-sex behaviour laws and gender identity laws, in the process arresting transgender people who may never have engaged in sexual intercourse (Human Rights Watch, 2008; van den Heever, 2015). These laws are dehumanising, degrading and sustain inequality. They disregard and reduce people's feelings, dishonouring and, at times, destroying their lives and careers. They grant the

police control and liberty to detain, intimidate and exploit LGBT people, and isolate LGBT individuals, forcing them to live in fear and in hiding (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

Within the African continent, sexually and gender-diverse people are at risk because of ostracism from most African leaders (van den Heever, 2015). The ‘at risk’ group, according to Van den Heever (2015), includes not only LGBT people but also sex workers, truck drivers, drug users, prisoners, adolescent girls and young women living with HIV (p. 12). All these minority groups, just like LGBT people, face violence, harassment, and exclusion, and more often than not, they cannot access healthcare support services central to their needs (Van den Heever, 2015). African leaders need to heed the cry of LGBT activists and sexual minorities in Africa who are asking for their human rights to be restored and come to their long-awaited and much-needed rescue.

Not all African leaders hold a negative view of gender diversity in Africa. There are other African leaders, though seldom afforded a chance to voice their opinion, who assume a positive stance where matters relating to SOGI are concerned. Joaquim Chissano, the former President of Mozambique, is one president who affirmed LGBT equality (Van den Heever, 2015). In an open letter to various African presidents, he said the full potential for all individuals should be nurtured and that discrimination against people on the grounds of sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, migrant status, and sex should come to an end (Feder, 2014). Commissioner Reine Alapini-Gansou also urged the Ugandan government to guarantee the safety of sexual minorities and to uphold an atmosphere of broad-mindedness towards sexually diverse people (Human Rights Watch, 2013b; van der Heever, 2015). Likewise, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa insisted on an end to violence and injustice based on real or perceived SOGI when he urged religious leaders to embrace a moral responsibility to those that are different. His utterance was a reaction to the reported increase of violence towards sexually- and gender-diverse individuals in Africa. The Archbishop holds firmly that it is God’s will for all humans to honour and respect one another since love is universal and no one is called to judge another. He has also continued to proclaim that he hopes for a future where politicians, traditional and African religious leaders would accept and love those who are sexually different (Human Rights Watch, 2013b).

16. The language used to refer to LGBT people

Most civil organizations have adopted a new term to refer to LGBT people and other forms of sexual and gender diversity. They currently use the term sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) as the term that collectively identifies people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer (a previously derogatory term, now being re-defined by self-identifying individuals as a means to counter heteronormativity), men who have sex with men (MSM) and women who have sex with women (WSW) (Van den Heever, 2014). According to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), sexual diversity includes all forms of:

sexual attraction, behaviour, identity, expression, orientation, relationships and response. It refers to all aspects of humans as sexual beings. The concept of sexual diversity does not position some groups as ‘normal’ and others as ‘abnormal’ or ‘other’, but rather reflects the reality that people have a variety of different kinds of sex, thus challenging the idea of heteronormativity (cited in Van den Heever, 2014, p. 13).

Participants in this study, butch and femme presenting lesbians, challenge the idea of heteronormativity when they normalise and solidify the sexual attraction between them through marriage. This is not how a heteronormative society views sexuality since its assumption is that only sexual attraction between the opposite genders is normal. Moreover, in his work, *The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS* and in *Heterosexual Africa*, Marc Epprecht (2012) explicitly explains that Western words are not useful within the African context where the language used by Africans, to describe sexual diversity, is inoffensive almost to the point of being complicated. He also states that “the language by which same-sex relationships are described [...] is often Eurocentric – the word homosexuality, notably, suggests a clarity arising from a specific history of scientific enquiry, social relations, and political struggle that did not historically exist in Africa and still does not very accurately describe the majority of men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women in Africa’ (cited in Van den Heever, 2014, p. 14). The word ‘sexual diversity’ is an inclusive expression and uses the terms LGBTIQ+, same-sex, sexual minorities, and sexually and gender diverse, interchangeably. This study makes use of the term LGBT for the consistency of reading.

16.1 Indigenous terms describing sexual diversity

There are a range of words in African languages including Swahili, Sesotho, IsiZulu, chiShona, and many more other African languages, that refer to sexual diversity (Van den Heever, 2014). ChiShona is a principal language spoken by Zimbabweans. IsiZulu, which is one of the main languages in South Africa, defines the word *nkoshana* as sexual intercourse between male individuals. ‘Boy wives’ or

‘mine marriages’ were defined as *tintoncana* or *bukhonxana* in ChiTsonga by spies from the lowveld and from southern parts of Mozambique (van den Heever, 2014, p. 17).

A variation of the word *bukhonxana* in Sesotho is *bonkonchana* and was found in Marc Hamel’s dictionary which was compiled in the 1950s, and again in a novel titled *Zidji* by Henri Junod. In present-day Central Mozambique, Zambia, and southern Malawi, the same word is still used (Van den Heever, 2014). In 1907, an Ndebele police constable explained that the word *ingotshana* referred to a male person who had sex with men. Meanwhile, the terms *matanyera* and *ngochani*, used in Zimbabwe, are very dishonourable and belittling. A Zimbabwean police inspector, in 1995, shot a fellow colleague dead after the man called him *ngochani mukadzi* or a homosexual wife. This police officer, when brought to court, did not deny taking part in gay sexual affairs, but, according to the judge, his admission of engaging in same-sex relations was too shameful to mention in public. The accused was therefore not convicted of murdering his co-worker (Epprecht, 2006, cited in van den Heever, 2014).

It is important to understand the history of African languages in order to understand the language used by Africans to imply sexual diversity. None of the terms used in African languages to refer to sexual diversity denote an LGBT identity; rather, they refer to behaviour that is seen as repugnant by the heterosexual norm (Van den Heever, 2014). Indeed, the term ‘homosexuality’ is foreign to African languages, just as the words ‘lesbian’, ‘gay’, ‘bisexual’, and ‘transgender’ are. However, the absence of those terms within African languages does not exclude sexual diversity, same-sex desire, and practices by LGBT people of African descent. The word homosexual, on the other hand, was first used by Karoly Maria Kertbeny and is from the Greek word *homos* (the same) and the Latin root *sexualis* (Endres, 2004). Many in Africa still use the word, homosexual, to explain a type of sickness for same-sex desire and practice. The term, homosexual, was coined for social control and to label LGBT people as deviant (Msibi, 2011).

The terms ‘gay’ and ‘lesbian’ were also at the centre of tussles over political identity, which came from Western struggles during the 1960s. The terminology and identity had not always existed, even in the West. The terminology came about as an investigative procedure (D’Emilio, 1983, cited in van den Heever, 2014). If the latter is true, African leaders’ claims that homosexuality was imported by Western colonisers does not hold water. Here, the aftereffects of colonialism still haunt Africa as they tend to erase facts about sexual diversity on the continent. However, few African political and religious leaders, activists, and academics are currently working hard to rectify these colonial injustices (Van den Heever, 2014).

In addition, homosexuality, as a mental disorder, was declassified, in 1973 by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) from its approved Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). This was achieved during the social protest movements of the 1950s and 1970s, which began with the Civil Rights Movement, later to evolve into the current women's and gay rights movement (Van den Heever, 2014).

17. Why should Africa take sexual diversity seriously?

Many people in Africa do not understand LGBT people (Van den Heever 2014). Most people automatically think of sexuality as a sexual association between a male and a female. Only a few people think of human sexuality alongside the concept of sexual diversity. Terms such as Men Sleeping with Men (MSM) and Women Sleeping with Women (WSW) clearly indicate that sexual acts and sexuality do not inevitably highlight sexual identity. These terms closely delineate sexual desire and sexual diversity. Most people tend to think of MSM identifying individuals as gay when it is not necessarily so (Van den Heever, 2014).

In 2015, ASSAF investigated human sexual diversity and found that normal societies have humans with varying sexual orientations and identities, and that it is impossible to rid societies of LGBT people (Van den Heever, 2014). ASSAF is responsible for the implications of human sexual diversity for policy in Africa. The report recommended that an emphasis should be on countering the belief in privileged male power evident across societal, political, and familial spheres, who create malevolent and sometimes violent environments for LGBT people. The report also states that current science does not favour a binary view of human sexuality along the lines of normal/abnormal and hetero/homosexual, but rather accommodates a wider spectrum of variations of human sexuality (Van den Heever, 2014).

A binary perspective on human sexuality tends to categorise people's sexualities. It sees some as abnormal and unnatural, and others as normal and natural. On the other hand, human sexual diversity and its variations reflect people's different kinds of sexualities and in so doing, the dominant heteronormative discourse is challenged (Van den Heever, 2014). The same is also true about how gender is perceived by society. It is often seen as a binary opposition which includes only men and women, despite variations of gender.

The aim of the chapter was to draft an affirming position statement with regards to sexual and gender diversity without excluding the pain experienced by LGBT people. Its attempt was also to provide guidance to mental health practitioners throughout the African continent but not limited to South African psychological professionals (Victor, Nel, Lynch and Mbatha, 2019). The chapter also stated that LGBT individuals in need of psychological services often experience prejudice, stigmatisation, and victimisation due to societal heteronormativity and patriarchy (Victor et al, 2019). Hence this study aims to understand, using narrative analysis, participants' experiences of how they make meaning of life in a patriarchal South African society, where discrimination and possible threats of violence against lesbians is also rife.

18. Black Female Same-Sex Marriages in South Africa

Marriage between two females, in most African societies, is not properly understood and has not been thoroughly investigated (Krige, 1974). This study thus deliberates on marriages between women, as practised among various cultures found within the African continent.

18.1 With the Nuer tribe

The term 'woman-marriage' was made popular by Evans-Prichard (Krige, 1974). Woman-marriages amongst the Nuer, besides the simple legal marriages between male and female, take different forms that include ghost marriages, widow concubinage and concubinage, where concubinage is the most common. Within concubinage marriages, the female is unmarried with children who are owned by the mother's ancestry, unless a genitor legally declares the children by paying a considerable amount for each. In ghost marriages, a female marries the wife of a deceased husband, and both take the deceased husband's surname since the wife's husband died without having male children (Evans-Pritchard, 1945, Cited in Krige, 1974).

Being barren as a Nuer woman carries the advantage of having special rights to lineage (Krige, 1974). A barren woman in Nuer, in some people's views, is likened to a man. She is allowed to acquire cows and a portion of the bride-wealth earned through the marriage of the family's daughters, just like a man. She is considered a man to such an extent that even when she passes away, her brother or her nephew is expected, by her ghost female, to marry a woman so that children may be born to the name of the female ghost. Even though the children naturally belong to the brother of the late barren woman,

he is regarded as their uncle since the female ghost is now deemed a brother to the brother of the late barren woman.

The uncle to the children is not allowed to cohabit with the female ghost since she is considered the uncle's brother. However, the ghost female may cohabit with a stranger in a house built by the uncle (Krige, 1974). A Nuer female who cannot bear children may also acquire wealth and marry several wives, particularly if she is a spiritualist. She becomes the legal 'husband' with the right to demand damages should these wives have relations with other men without her agreement (Krige, 1974).

18.2 In West Africa: Dahomey

In the western part of Africa in a country named Dahomey (now part of Benin), any woman could marry another woman if it was her wish to do so (Herskovits, 1938). Women who married women were occasionally referred to as woman-husbands and their wives called them husbands (Herskovits, 1938). Just as in a case where a male would marry a female, a woman marrying a woman in Dahomey would pay and provide gifts for full marriage. She would build her newlywed wife a house close to her own home and then select, from her male associates, one who would impregnate her wife. This genitor was only permitted to visit but not take the woman to his house and children born to him were not considered his. For this reason, no payment was expected from the genitor (Herkovits, 1938).

On the other hand, the genitor was not expected to pay nor provide gifts since he would not receive anything for his sexual services (Herkovits, 1938). The only advantage he would receive from this arrangement was that he would derive sexual pleasure from another woman free of charge. If the genitor could not bear children, the wife of the woman-husband was permitted to reject him and had the freedom to bring other men into the house without the chosen genitor's permission nor knowledge. The wife would only be pressured to keep the genitor away from her family and the family of the woman-husband, if there were children born between her and the genitor (Herkovits, 1938).

Woman-marriages in Dahomey meant that woman-husbands contracted for full marriage, including the handover of rights over the children as their legal father (Herkovits, 1938).

Amongst other tribes in what was Dahomey are the Ijo. This tribe has distinguished two types of marriages, the *egwa* and the *eya*.

The rituals for each kind of marriage are the same; but an *eya* marriage calls for a substantial amount of money to be paid as bride-wealth and it gives the father rights over the children, while an *egwa* marriage requires little money and the father does not have rights over the children (Krige, 1974).

19. Black Female Same-Sex Marriages in South Africa

Even though marriage is still viewed as a customary and/or legal union between a male and a female, in South Africa, ‘the acceptance of other sexualities has led to an examination and destabilisation of heterosexuality as a societal norm, and as a result of this acknowledgement, gay and lesbian women have become more visible, particularly among Africans’, states Msibi (2011, p. 23). Furthermore, the Civil Union Act, did not only legalise same-sex marriage, but also defamed heterosexuality, and also called into question the ethicality of patriarchy in marriage, believes Msibi (2011). As imagined, this caused great deal of anxiety among conformists and fundamentalists, who still held the view that the institution of marriage is threatened (Msibi, 2011).

19.1 The Lovedu or Balobedu tribe

The Lovedu, commonly known today as Balobedu, are a South African ethnic group within the Bapedi tribe (see Participant 1, personal communication, 16 October 2018). In the past the Lovedu women were also allowed to own and manage land (Krige, 1974), as still is today. Female-marriages within the Lovedu could be between any woman in who is not married. This was different from marriages by honour of those who had attained wealth through their own means. Their marriages involved that of every woman to a daughter-in-law, with the aim of the daughter-in-law providing services to her and her son. These marriages were guaranteed and administered by the law (Krige, 1974). Marriages of this kind were kindred to cross-cousin marriages and happened mostly between descendants of a uterine sister and brother (half-sister and half-brother with same mother but different father). Often, the uterine brother was the one using his sister’s cows to pay the bride’s price-lobola. One noticeable trait of the Lovedu woman-marriages, even today, is that it is tradition and common practice to offer daughters as wives to the ‘rain queen’, as often referred to, for personal benefit or for rain (Participant 1, personal communication, 16 October 2018). The queen could reallocate her wives to her clients or her relatives. This appeared to be a basic strategy for harmonising the queen’s political system (Krige, 1974).

At the time Krige (1974) conducted his study, women-marriages accounted for 5% of the marriages among the Balobedu. Amongst a total of 312 people living in the capital at that time, 75 were married women. 37 per cent of those 75 married women, of which included the queen's wives, were women-marriages. As I do not have a close relationship with or knowledge of the Lovedu, it is difficult to obtain reliable statistics relating to woman-marriages within that society, since the official census does not record Lovedu women-marriages (Krige, 1974).

Lovedu woman-marriages took place in the context of a crop-farming economy instead of a livestock economy (Krige, 1974), since there was a limitation of cows due to marriage ritual exchanges. Cows and money were to be invested for marriage: this was the preferred way and was seen as the correct way of arranging marriage.

In a case of unintentional homicide, the family of the departed would be loaned a girl to bear them a child; more often than not, however, this resulted in the girl remaining permanently married to the deceased's brother (Krige, 1974). Nonetheless Lovedu women held high positions amongst non-female tribe members. The Lovedus were governed by a queen; women could gain political status as heads of districts and were in charge of the wealth they earned after marriage. Within any household, the accumulated wealth benefited females and their first-born son as her heir. If a Lovedu woman was married to a man and they were not on good terms with each other, the woman was permitted to use the cows from her daughter's marriage to attain a wife for herself or for her absent son without her husband's knowing (Krige, 1974).

A uterine sister and brother complemented each other as far as the setting of the woman-marriage was concerned (Krige, 1974). They played vital life-long roles in the expansion of the homes in which they were born. Whilst the chief's eldest son succeeded his father as the head of the family who enforced law and order and also settled disagreements, the chief's eldest daughter, whether married or not, assumed the position of ritual head and was trusted with overseeing all significant difficulties and the welfare of her brothers' children. If there was no male child to succeed the father, the eldest daughter automatically took the position of headman and ruled until her death. Furthermore, if a brother used marriage-cows paid for his sister as bride-price to marry a wife, his sister had significant authority in the home he founded after marrying, he later on could ask for a daughter-in-law from this brother's house.

In consultation with her brothers the daughter equally distributed the endowments amongst the siblings and assigned seed-raisers (sperm donors) to the wives of her deceased father. These facts were considered very important in understanding woman-marriage among the Lovedu (Krige, 1974).

There are circumstances in which woman-marriage happened amongst the Lovedu and according to Krige (1974) these included:

The obligation to groom an heir for a political position, the right of a woman to a girl from a 'house' established by her bride-price regardless if she has a male child or not; female-marriage as an investment in women's wealth; inheritance of a wife by a woman; and the queen's wives (pp. 17-22).

Elderly women had the right to be cared for and served by their daughters-in-law. The daughter-in-law could be a bride to the woman's son or may have come from any home that had been set by means of the girl's bride-price if the woman's son refused to marry the girl. This meant that, even when the woman's son refused to marry a girl, his mother married the girl (Krige, 1974). Some Lovedu women, even though educated and Christian, opted for woman-marriage when it was beneficial to do so (Krige, 1974). However, most Lovedu girls today, especially those with an education, refuse to enter these woman-marriages (Participant 1, personal communication, 16 October 2018).

There was slight difference between woman-marriage for reasons of grooming an heir to the tribal leader of a district and a typical occurrence of woman-marriage. For reasons of grooming an heir, generally, the bride and her woman-husband lived in the same hut, unless the woman ruler ruled in absentia. When a male district ruler died without a male heir, a female from the ruler's house was automatically chosen as the successor. She was more highly considered than a male from another house. She was assigned an uncle or half-brother to render her support with all the court work. She ruled by herself until her demise, but her male child was not permitted to succeed her since he was not considered of his mother's lineage but of his father's.

To thrive, he needed to marry a woman with cows from the girl's paternal chief's home to raise her deceased brother an heir. Children belonged to the family from which the cows used in woman-marriage had come from (Krige, 1974).

In practice, this kind of marriage could be likened to the first one described earlier, where the mother of the female ruler and the married girl lived together. The only difference is the reason the married girl lived in one hut as her woman-husband, namely to bring up an heir. Children referred to the woman-husband as papa (meaning father). In this case, a married woman took on a dual role as she was trusted to birth and raise male children in the family and to increase the house into which she was born. All this was in the name of bestowing significance to the home she had confirmed by her marriage (Krige, 1974). A male child could inherit his father's young wife, particularly if the girl and his father had not lived in a kraal together. Just like the son, a girl child was also permitted to inherit her father's wives.

A female whose parents and brothers had died could inherit a girl engaged or arranged for her deceased brother (Krige, 1974). Woman-marriages amongst the Lovedu had strong bonds the same way heterosexual marriages do; however, they did not have high divorce rates as evident with heterosexual marriages (Krige, 1974). It would be unjust not to make mention that the Lovedu queen also had wives, since this was another type of woman marriage. Most Bantu cultures sent daughters to the king or chief as gifts, and the Lovedu queen, as already mentioned, was no exception. It was typical for commoners and the queen's relatives to gift the queen with a girl child in return of political favour like that of a district ruler (Krige, 1974).

The wives carried status and were labelled *vatanoni* (meaning royal wives) instead of *vasadi*, plural for any female figure, married or not (Krige, 1974). They were trusted with hoeing the fields for the queen. *Vatanoni*, who were of royal birth, were expected to remain virgins to receive the privilege of cooking for the queen. Remaining a virgin also earned the wife the right to receive a house of her own and to bear the queen's children by a royal relative residing in the capital. The children born belonged to the queen and addressed her by the name father, and call children of all the other *vatanoni*, including the queen's biological children, sister and or brother (Krige, 1974).

Since most educated girls never agreed to enter into women-marriage, family girls intended to be married to the queen were kept in the village (Krige, 1974). Woman-marriages with the queen created kinship connections involving many districts as fathers who gave their girl-children to the queen in marriage were made district rulers. The districts, in turn, became affinely connected when the queen was given a daughter offered to her in marriage.

It was custom for the queen, until the early years of the twenty-first century, to express her honour by rewarding her *vatanoni* with their own royal district and by allowing them to have wives. A *motanoni* of royal blood could also be allocated a district to rule and if she bore children with a genitor of royal blood, the queen would grant heir status to those children (Krige, 1974).

19.2 The Venda tribe

The Lovedus and Vendas live close to each other and have similar social structures and ways of life. Stayt (2018) reports that just like with the Lovedu, woman-marriage was a common phenomenon amongst the Venda. He said among the Venda woman-marriage was for reasons of having rights to holding or controlling property and having responsibility to the house of orientation. Woman-marriage amongst the Venda was not for political purposes since Venda chiefs are males. However, women were allowed to be district rulers (Stayt, 2018).

Furthermore, Venda women who had bought property with their profits from livestock trading, selling maize or pots, political placement or by practising medicine could marry a wife (Van Warmelo, 1948, Cited in Krige, 1974). It is not clear if the children took the surname of the woman-husband or of the woman-husband's son since the children would be the offspring of the married wife and the woman-husband's son. The married wife, being a cross-cousin to the son, could never be considered the son's main wife. The main wife is the one her father paid cows for, and the boy child of this main wife inherits from his father's mother rather than his father's father (Krige, 1974).

A Venda woman, with the wealth she accumulated herself, could also pay for a wife for either her daughter, her brother, or her husband. Other women-marriages among the Venda took the form of raising a male heir, as in the case of the Lovedu. In this case, the woman-husband would then source a genitor for the married wife. The genitor would only be permitted to visit the married wife and not to stay in the same village as her, but only to mend her hut in return for the sexual privileges he enjoyed (Krige, 1974).

19.3 The Zulu tribe

There is no literature with regards to women marriage among the Zulus nor any information on the social realities thereof. However, in 1995, a few cases of circumstances under which such marriages

could occur were recorded. The reporter did not personally know the cases, but only knew the person who provided information about the cases and information on the cases' geographical location (Krige, 1974). Following are five cases as exemplified by the informant in Krige:

Case 1

'In the chief house, a certain older man had five daughters but no male heir. When the old man passed away, his eldest daughter married a woman using his cows and asked the half-brother to act as genitor" (Krige, 1974, p. 27).

Case 2

The second case is of a wealthy aged widow with only one daughter. Her 'daughter proposed and married a girl and chose an unrelated male to serve as a genitor", reported Krige (1974, p. 27).

Case 3

In case three Krige (1974) provides an account of:

At Kwalibomvu, Hlobane, Vryheid, a widow without children married a woman and sought an unrelated man to be the genitor. The aim is growing seed for her husband's family. The marriage was brought to the attention of the church's minister, but the church elders refused to baptise her children since she, as their female-father, could not have birthed them (pp. 27-28).

All the above cases were an arrangement for raising a male heir (Krige, 1974).

19.3.1 The Zulu's general attitude toward women marriage

Woman-to-woman marriages though uncommon among the Zulus, differed from those of the Lovedus and were for two primary reasons (Krige, 1974). These marriages were to birth and raise heirs as well as for female diviners to create big kraals for themselves. Even with the strong clan system evident among the Zulu tribe, woman-marriage did not involve cross-cousin marriage. The Zulus' wealth came from cattle farming and because of this, unlike the Lovedu, they rarely used women for property dealings (Krige, 1974). According to Gluckman (1950), children born of this form of marriage belonged to the lineage of the female-husband lineage as they would a male (cited in Krige, 1974).

20. Summary

Chapter two has explained how detailed understanding sexuality to the exclusion of gender, and especially of sexual orientation. It is vitally important to realise that a denial of the existence of sexual diversity in Africa is extremely irresponsible since the advancement of accessible impartial health services and human rights are hindered by reproach and judgement towards at-risk populations. Africa is in dire need of liberal and mature leaders who are not shy to support and affirm the rights of all Africans irrespective of their SOGI (Van den Heever, 2015). However, amidst the anti-LGBT narrative within the African continent, noticeable developments, and success, although not rapid enough, are evident.

Moreover, it is clear from the literature that woman-marriages in Africa are not an unusual nor old-fashioned tradition. However, within the African continent, as in other countries globally, the occurrence of woman-marriage is not high when compared to other forms of marriage (Van den Heever, 2015). It also is clear that women-marriages, amongst the ethnicities discussed, were not for reasons of sexual enjoyment, but for a variety of flexible and general motives (Krige, 1974, Van den Heever, 2015).

The following chapter is a discussion and clarification of the methodology and the research design used in this study. It also provides justification for the use of unstructured interviews over other qualitative interviewing techniques. The end of chapter three also offers an overview of how narrative analysis aids the understanding of how certain stories function within specific networks of privilege and power relations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter three is a discussion and clarification of the methodology and the research design used in this study. It also provides justification for the use of unstructured interviews and narrative analysis over other qualitative interviewing techniques. The end of chapter three also offers an overview of how narrative analysis aids the understanding of how certain stories function within specific networks of privilege and power relations.

Introduction

This study is of a qualitative nature and used one of the five qualitative research approaches, the narrative inquiry, as opposed to phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, or an ethnography, as its methodology (Lazard and McAvoy, 2017). Narrative inquiry involves storytelling and narrative analysis (Clandinin, 2016; Riessman, 1993; Stephens and Breheny, 2012; White and Epston, 1990). While a story is an explanation of events told by a speaker, narratives are descriptions of social life used by the speaker to tell a story (Denison, 2015; Wong and Breheny, 2018).

Consequently, narratives make it possible to gather information from varying members of the population despite their social class, age or level of literacy. Their non-constricting data collection methods also aid the data collection process (Caine, Clandinin, and Estefan, 2013; Creswell, 2013, 2014, 2017; Denson, 2015; Dickie, 2018).

1. Narrative inquiry/research; what is it?

It is not uncommon for the term narrative inquiry to be used interchangeably with the term narrative research, and this study will not be any different (Caine and Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin, 2016; Saleh, Menon and Clandinin, Menon, 2014; Creswell, 2013, Dickie, 2018; Murray, 2009). “Narrative might be the phenomenon being studied, such as a narrative of illness, or it might be the method used in a study, such as the procedures of analysing stories told”, explains Chase, 2005; Connelly and Clandinin, 2000; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007 (Cited in Creswell, 2013, P. 70). This study used the latter. Again, according to Riessman (2008), “narrative research involves varying ways to investigate how storytelling can be used to understand social life and identity” (cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018. P. 245).

Narrative inquiry also acknowledges the significance and worthiness of stories told by people. It endorses the fact that it is the worthiness of told stories that warrant their examination and investigation not only of how they point out crucial events in the lives of people but also of how they consider and support people's sense of social identity (Denson, 2015). Though stories do not necessarily expose who we are nor what transpired, they do provide information on how we would prefer to be perceived (White and Epston, 1990; Wong and Breheny, 2018). Similarly, while telling their stories, the participants will be providing the researcher and the reader with insight into their self-perception and with a preference of how they wish to be perceived.

Additionally, 'narrative inquiry has many forms, uses a variety of analytical practices, and is rooted in different social and humanities disciplines,' state Daiute and Lihghtfoot, 2004 (cited in Creswell, 2013; p. 70). As a method, it looks at the expressed experiences in lived and told stories of individuals, as it will be in the case of the participants in this study (Caine, Clandinin, and Estefan, 2013). According to Creswell, the narrative inquiry method:

consists of focusing on studying one or two individuals (one couple in the case of this study), gathering data through the collection of their stories (hence the use of unstructured interviews), reporting individual experiences (on being a Black, married, same-sex, South African female couple raising children), and chronologically ordering the meaning of those experiences (analysing data), or using life course stages (for an example, marriage (2013, p. 70).

Narrative inquiry also explains stories of individuals while highlighting their identities and a view of themselves (Clandinin, 2016; O' Toole, 2018). "There is a temporal change that is conveyed when individuals talk about their experiences and their lives" attests Creswell (2013, p. 71). Moreover, narratives take place within spaces or places, for example, within the participant's culture, homes, jobs, religious and political circles; in certain historical contexts, for example, place and time (Creswell, 2013, White and Epston, 1990). It is for this latter reason that the following chapter will investigate the experiences of the couple over the course of their marriage, as a Black lesbian couple, in reference to their colleagues, acquaintances, family members, South African society and their religious and political circles. An investigation will also be made on how their experiences were influenced by the intersection of culture, race, sex, socio-economic status, and religion within the South African context.

Likewise, people tell stories to describe their experience in an accepted and expected way. This aids our comprehension of experience as well as our place in the world. This also allows a reconstruction of ourselves and of the way we prefer to be perceived.

When we analyse stories, we reveal something that is more profound than just the story itself, this analysis also reveals something about our social narratives, about our personhood, and about our interpersonal explanations (Wong and Breheny, 2018). Furthermore, throughout our lives, we are socialised through stories; thinking, or telling stories, happens automatically for most people. Additionally, when we listen to children and cultural stories or hear others talk about their everyday lives or watch television, we are immersed in a narrative structure. This way, stories become a means we use to order happenings we deem important to us. They become a useful device when we describe what happened, when we explain their meaning, and when we characterise who we are (Cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018).

Similarly, being embedded within culture and society helps with the components we use in shaping our life happenings into stories. According to Murray (2009), this structuring happens in two distinctive ways. First is the structure assist: setting a story up, in explaining the scene, in ordering actions and events, and finding the intention of the story. Secondly, the structure of stories considers the partial understanding of social life (cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018).

This then provides an understanding of the unsaid ways with which we respond and interact with our surroundings since stories reflect narratives about our social life. These structures are also important when we analyse stories since they shed light on why we prefer to tell some stories and not others. It is like swimming in a flow of stories of our own identity and consciousness, this being the very thing narrative inquiry is concerned with: to highlight that which moulds our identity and consciousness (Clandinin, Estefan, and Caine, 2014; Wong and Breheny, 2018). Yet again no matter how personal our stories, and because of these structures shaping them, the stories do not belong to us alone. And no matter how profound and personal our stories may be, material, social and cultural circumstances make some stories accessible and some inaccessible. Therefore, narratives become the all-encompassing structures and considerations inspiring why and how we tell stories. This is the essence of narrative psychology, which constitutes the content, structure, and function of stories people narrate during social interaction (Wong and Breheny, 2018).

Stories are also classified in numerous ways. Events in a story follow a systematic plotline, they are about what happened first, then about what followed, and about what followed afterwards. To sustain the meaning of these events, most stories include characters that act together by the possibility of a plotline (White and Epston, 1990). For instance, our speech regularly includes times, days, places, characters, and character descriptions as an indication of a beginning of a story (Wong and Breheny, 2018). However, not all stories are clearly structured and unbroken. At times stories are less detailed,

and researchers may possibly discard them as bad data. Some are complex, they overlap, are unfinished, and have deviations and subplots. Despite that, we instinctively know that these deviations appear because they are necessary. Therefore, even the unclear narrative is critical for analysis since researchers cannot afford to ignore sentimental stories that interviewees are passionate about (White and Epston, 1990).

2. Narrative analysis

The choice of method to be used while conducting my research was influenced by interest, personal value, assumption, and background (Prilleltensky 2003). I held a vivid memory of the gathering around the fire, during school holidays, at my grandparents' house when I was a child. Since my grandparents' socioeconomic status did not afford them the luxuries of a radio nor a television, it was my grandmother who, from my tender age, taught that a story contains essential wisdom concerning one's value.

Before researchers reach the narrative analysis stage of their research, they have to familiarise themselves with narrative psychology, followed by narrative theory, then narrative research. Narrative analysis uses qualitative research procedures to make an inquiry on people's personal life experiences. This inquiry usually is with one person or a small group of people (Riessman, 1993, 2005, 2008).

Narrative analysis is a form of case-centred research with a focus on the close readings of stories told by participants (Riessman, 2000a; 2003; Mishler, 1986). It seeks to understand human experience social phenomena through the form and content of stories analysed as textual units and focuses on the ways in which people make and use stories to interpret the world (Riessman, 2000a; Squire, Andrews, Davis, Esin, Harrison, and Hydén, 2014). Narrative analysis exposes, with the aim to elucidate how stories are told using narrative as a means that gives form to stories and, in so doing makes, meaning of experience and events (Riessman, 2000a, 2005, 2008).

According to Riessman (2000a, 2003), narrative is also a key means through which people produce an identity, which, in turn, implies that when we tell stories about our lives, we act out our chosen identities. Similarly, Riessman also views narrative as an interpretive device through which people represent themselves and their worlds to themselves and to others. If we agree that narratives can be employed as strategy for emphasis on reflexivity as well as positioning the self for understanding identity (Riessman, 2000a) then personal narratives carry the power to remedy the systemic exclusion of marginalised populations, as it shall be witnessed through the stories of participants in this study.

2.1 Why narrative analysis?

Qualitative studies provide a unique depth of insight which is difficult to gain from quantitative research (Chih-Pei, and Chang, 2017; Creswell 2012, 2013). Respondents are unrestricted in their ability to freely share their experiences, ideas, and emotions. Qualitative approaches also provide an impactful approach to research, allowing the researcher to follow up on interviewees' responses in real time and spark invaluable discussion on a particular topic. As a qualitative approach, narrative analysis fits into the category of social constructivism, which holds that people's lived experiences are best understood through the complexity and sophisticated knowledge that their stories reveal (Clandinin, 2013; Spector-Mersel, 2010). Hence, it will enable me to share real-life experiences via the research participants' stories (Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou, 2013).

Through narrative analysis – unlike with quantitative methods – I will provide in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences as well as insight to the meaning they will produce from their told experiences (Caracciolo, 2012; Herman, 2009). I will reveal significant experiences of their marriage life as described by them in their own words and in their own environment (Creswell 2012; Newby 2014). Should readers choose to adapt participants' stories to their own situation, the knowledge obtained from the data, by means of the narrative analysis, will provide them with thorough comprehension of the subject matter (Savin-Baden and Niekerk 2007).

Moreover, I will be using narrative analysis to develop a deep relationship with participants, making them feel that their stories are valued and heard (Creswell 2012). This bridges the gap between practice and research. Other qualitative research techniques, such as ethnography and phenomenology, emphasise the social and the experiential, but this study will use narrative analysis since it concurrently examines all three of these elements: temporality, place and sociality. This simultaneous exploration is what gives narrative research its unique characteristics because experience can be lived and created through narrative (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006).

The study also uses narrative analysis since it is informant and collaborative centred. This explains that meaning will be constructed through collaboration and negotiation between the myself and the participants (Caracciolo, 2012; Currie, 2010). The narrative analysis will also provide opportunities for me to probe deeply into complexities surrounding marriage between a Black married lesbian couple in South Africa. It will help me uncover implications around participants' lived experiences as a married couple. The process of storytelling is a key element in narrative research and provides an opportunity for both the cyclical and intertwined nature of dialogue and reflection (Ellis and Bochner, 2005; Wang and Geale, 2015).

Moreover, it is also noteworthy to mention that, when analysing participant stories using narrative analysis, the negotiations of data presentation and interpretation might be troublesome. Setting limits for stories also might be challenging in the following five ways: '1) Who authors the account between the researcher and the participants, 2) the scope of the narrative- for example- an entire life or an episode of life, 3) who provides the story, 4) the kind of conceptual framework that has influenced the study-for an example, constructivist or critical, 5) and to include all the mentioned elements in one narrative or not" (Bruner, 2004, Ntinda, 2019, p. 11). This study will analyse participants' stories while relying on the scope of the narrative they will use concerning an episode in their lives, their marriage as a Black South African lesbian couple.

3. Narratives

Narratives have multiple intersecting levels. Separating these intersections allows a better understanding of how personal stories are positioned within wider societal narrative structures (Goodwin, 2018; Murray, 2003, 2008, 2009; Silver, 2013; Sarbin, 1986; White and Epston, 1990). According to Goodwin (2018), 'Narratives are the most significant means through which we shape and define personal and cultural interactions" (p. 165). They also vary in levels and are personal, interpersonal and social in nature

3.1 Different levels of narratives

Narratives have multiple intersecting levels. Separating these intersections allows for a better understanding of how specific stories are enclosed in wider societal narratives. Four levels of narratives proposed by Murray (2000a) include, the 'abstract, positional, personal, and interpersonal' (cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018, p. 248). These levels are intertwined, making it possible for ideological narratives to make room for interpersonal interactions. Here, there is more to the analytic process than just singling out the levels. This is where narrative researchers are interested in how these levels interact on how this interaction adds value to the narrative analysis itself (Dickie, 2018; Riessman, 2008; Stephens and Breheny, 2013, cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018). As a result, choices strengthening the analysis of narratives and the constructive and interactional peculiarity of analysis are made clear. Moreover, all told stories contain narratives that provide meaning to the anticipated development of events (O'Toole, 2018). This development is usually reinforced, resisted and or reflected upon by both the researcher and the participants (O'Toole, 2018; Wong and Breheny, 2018).

3.2 The personal nature of narratives

The emphasis of narrative analysis is on stories told since these stories are the basis of narrative psychology (Denson, 2015; Murray, 2003, 2008, 2009; Sarbin, 1986). Therefore, the participants' personal story of being a married Black lesbian couple in South Africa, a country where Black lesbian marriages are uncommon, formed the basis for this study's narrative analysis. Their narratives were an account of events or experiences that they provided during interviews. They described the orderly nature of events as well as explained how those events were linked (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Green and Myatt, 2011; Murray, 2003; Polkinghorne, 1995; White and Epston, 1990). Correspondingly, Wong and Breheny (2018) also confirmed that, stories we tell reshape our disorganised experiences and help us to settle hostilities, thus allowing us to explain our context.

3.3 The interpersonal nature of narratives

Because narratives are interactional in nature, they have an audience and most times they aim to meet the expectation of that target (Clindinin, 2016; Caine, Estefan, and Clindinin, 2013; Saleh, Menon, Clindinin, 2014). Stories participants shared during interviews were insightful, interesting and entertaining. They also often placed me at varying positions such as an empathic listener, a confidant, and a co-conspirator (O'Toole, 2018). This role identification become very important at the interpersonal level of my analysis. Despite being the immediate listener, I made participants aware of the audience not known to them, that might have access to their narratives, including thesis readers, journal readers, supervisors and other researchers (O'Toole, 2018; White and Epston, 1990).

3.4 The social nature of narratives

Narrative research is not only concerned with personal stories told to a particular audience. It also seeks to understand how the reflection of told stories impact the society at large (Clindinin, 2016; Denson, 2015; White and Epston, 1990). These culturally shared stories are referred to as public narratives and or ideological narratives (Wong and Breheny, 2018). Essentially, they cast an understanding of how shared narratives should be amongst members of society. Wong and Breheny (2018) believe that social narratives aid in understanding people's behaviour.

Storytelling is a personified practice dictated by social expectancies (Bomberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; Saleh, Menon, and Clindinin, 2014). A narrative of same-sex marriage, for example, may highlight coping against all odds whilst also outlining discrimination and rejection as something to repel. This makes some narratives harmonious and others strenuous. However, the person telling the

story is expected to solve this rhetoric. Once a resolution is reached, the relative power of the narrative becomes inevitable (Wong and Breheny, 2018).

Moreover, changes in history also have the potential to modify social narratives since stories and making sense of stories change over time (Bell, 1999 cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018). For example, narratives of homosexuality not being African have birthed LGBT activism in Africa. Again, LGBT rights in Africa are slowly but surely changing for the better and these developments influence stories told since experiences vary depending on the timing of the storying (Green and Myatt, 2011; Wong and Breheny, 2018).

4. Data collection

Most frequently, researchers collect narratives by interviewing participants (Creswell, 2013, Dickie, 2018). These interviews can be structured, allowing participants to be interviewed following the same content, or semi-structured where participants respond to the same key questions; however, the researcher is flexible to change the structure request more information from the participants should need arise; or unstructured where only a list of topics is relied upon by the researcher (Denson, 2015; Creswell, 2013, 2014, 2017, Murray 2018). As already highlighted, this study used unstructured interviews with the aim of stimulating the couples' personal narrative of their marriage experiences. I found narrative inquiry a methodology that was particularly relevant and advantageous to the exploration of same-sex marriage for a Black South African couple since its focus is on a precise story that is real to the participants.

The data collection steps included setting boundaries for the study and establishing the protocol for recording information. Questions asked were open-ended and attempted to elicit views, opinions and most importantly experiences of the participants (Goodwin, 2018; Riessman, 2008). Participants were interviewed at their homes having expressed their home as a place of preference, comfort, and convenience, since they came home late from work. Interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed as participants did not feel comfortable with being video recorded. Questions were designed to elicit rich accounts of the couple's home and work environment, children's school, neighbourhood, social and religious contexts. Additionally, the study explored the participants' emerging sexual gender identities as well as the interconnections and co-constructions of these identities that helped to form the individual collective senses of being Black homosexual in South Africa (Caine, Estefan, Clindinin, 2013; Creswell, 2013, 2014).

Riessman (1993) suggests five to seven general questions linking to the research topic when conducting interviews. These questions were reinforced by probe questions when participants found it challenging to get started. For example, I used questions such as ‘tell me about a time when’ or ‘what does that mean’, as probes, especially when it became challenging for the participants to produce narratives. Having taken Reissman’s suggestion into consideration, I asked the participants numerous wide-ranging questions I have identified as a prototype for collecting data (Creswell, 2013, 2014, 2017; Murray 2018). The questions aimed to focus participants’ thoughts on the recent experiences of their marriage, more specifically as a Black lesbian couple in South Africa raising children.

The questions that guided the interview process for the couple’s narrative included the following:

- What does being South African mean to you?
- Perhaps you may begin by telling what it means to you to be Black, married and of the same sex, living in South Africa.
- Tell me about a time when you two met.
- How did you reach the decision to marry?
- What was getting married like for you?
- What is being married like for you?
- What is your daily practice now that you are married?
- How do your family, friends, colleagues, church members, and strangers relate to you a couple?
- Seeing that you are raising children, what is that like for you?

As a narrative inquirer, I learned about the participants’ stories using a narrative approach of ongoing conversational unstructured interviews and interaction with participants (Green and Myatt, 2011). I interacted with them in the context of regular check-ups, visiting their church and attending spiritual seminars, as we are good friends. I conducted a total of 10 interviews with participants, while simultaneously writing the thesis, and had a few informal conversations with them. Since stories differ according to the way participants tell them, participants either tell ‘detailed’ or ‘simple’ stories (Wong and Breheny, 2018, p. 249). Participants in this study provided detailed narratives of their experiences.

My role while conducting interviews was that of an interviewer and a reflecting facilitator. I aimed to establish an atmosphere where the expert knowledge of the couple is privileged over mine and the reader. More importantly, I was cognisant of the knowledge I brought to the study. I was not oblivious to the truth that being the data collector may have influenced the responses of the participants (Creswell, 2014).

4.1 Data transcription

I transcribed the data to familiarise myself with it and to better prepare for its analysis. Narrative analysis requires a person to immerse themselves in the transcripts, hence I transcribed the data myself. Transcription was verbatim and included exclamations by the researcher and the participants; it also emphasised the interaction between the researcher and the participants and not only the researcher as a listener or a questioner. The ‘mmm’, ‘yes’, ‘uh-huh etcetera’, were an encouragement to allow the participants to continue with their story and to indicate that I was listening to what was said. I also noted their pauses, laughter and sighs (Creswell, 2013, 2014).

The transcription process was lengthy; however, it enabled me to make sense of the participants’ narratives and how those narratives were told (Murray, 2018). Participants were given the transcribed transcripts for verification, as data was collected to allow for corrections, omissions and or additions to the information. I told the participants that no identifying information would form part of the transcription during the analysis part. I also maintained the sequencing of the participants’ stories before I later examined, numerous times, the second version of transcription to identify recurring themes. Transcribed interviews were filed electronically and an archival system needing an authorisation code was created (Creswell, 2013, 2014).

4.2 Participants

I experienced a challenge finding same-sex loving, married, Black, South-African females to participate in this study. However, since much focus in narrative inquiry’s is on individuals rather than on the larger population, I found one couple to interview (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Grbich, 2012). Creswell (2013) explains, ‘Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single individual or the lives of a small number of individuals’ (p. 74). However, critics of narrative inquiry are often of the opinion that it overemphasises individual importance over social importance (Clindinin and Connelly, 1990, 2000 cited in Creswell, 2013, 2014); while Creswell (2013) asserts that social constructs are just as obtainable from individuals as they are from a collective. My association with participants placed me in a perfect position to request them to form part of this study. Their uniqueness stems from the fact that it is not common for South African Black female same-sex couples to marry.

Participants were born and grew up in South Africa and are currently raising two boys, one who is biologically one of the participants, one they are legal custodians to. The couple and I met at a specific institution of higher learning where we were all in pursuit of our varying career aspirations and then later became friends. Both participants are employed and have completed post-graduate qualifications.

They met at the tertiary institution when one was 20 years and the other 19 years old. They married at ages 33 and 34, respectively. They are currently not affiliated with any LGBT organisation.

4.3 The researcher

As a Black lesbian female of South African descent, like the participants, my subjectivity is shaped both by my personal and professional exposure related to the topic under study. My curiosity for undertaking this study was personal. I developed an interest in trying to explore experiences of another Black lesbian couple with the aim of deepening my understanding, instead of assuming what it is for them to be Black, same-sex and married in South Africa and most importantly to find out how they handle societal discrimination, judgement and rejection. Throughout my friendship with the participants, during our tertiary education days, we all often engaged in narratives of being homosexual in South Africa and in the African continent at large. I am an LGBT affirming therapist also offering therapeutic counselling to the University of South Africa's (Unisa) students presenting with issues of coming out as non-heterosexuals; I will connect my subjectivity to my own voice throughout the research process.

Since my experience conjures an awareness of the intersectionality of my own identity, I make transparent my subjectivity and biases to the reader in hope that this declaration will reduce the influence of my biases to the study. However, it is also precisely my experiences and subjective sensitivities to issues around lesbianism in an African context that would potentially enable valuable interpretation and analysis of the narrative participants will provide.

4.4 Data analysis: a narrative analysis

Wong and Breheny (2018) argue that detailed analysis of narratives assists the understanding of social life. Storytelling allows humans to make sense of their experiences, this storying of experience takes centre stage when researchers analyse data by means of a narrative approach (Green and Myatt, 2011; White and Epston, 1990). It is the word narrative, in narrative research, that made possible an analysis of stories told by participants (Gubrium and Holstein, 2012; Riessman, 1993). It allowed me to gain full comprehension of what was being said, of what was meant, and how what was told may have had a connection with other stories (Wong and Breheny, 2018).

Additionally, it is to be noted that there exists no conclusive approach to narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995, Cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018; Riessman 2008). Narratives may be analysed differently by different researchers; hence flexibility is required during the analysis of narratives. Researchers are urged to differentiate between ‘big and small’ stories, and between daily ‘ordinary interactional conversations’ (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018, P. 247).

5. The construction of the narrative analysis

Narrative analysis requires researchers to provide a detailed analysis of the data in the beginning before advancing to analysing the specifics of the story and of the general data (Murray, 2018). Hence, I first moved from analysing a specific aspect of a story to analysing a much wider narrative. Again, it is not possible for every story told or the identified narrative to form part of the final analysis, so I had to decide which parts of the story told by the participants responded to the research question. I also did not venture to deliver a comprehensive justification of everything said by the participants (Riessman, 1993, 2008; Wong and Breheny, 2018; Wong and Gemma, 2018).

It is worth noting that different researchers will uniquely affect different stages of the research and for that reason will provide varied analyses. This will be achieved by asking varying questions, by choosing dissimilar experiences to analyse and by reacting differently to stories told by interviewees (Wong and Breheny, 2018). Moreover, even stories that seem not to be fitting with other stories can benefit the narrative analysis since we cannot contain narratives because narratives have alternative interpretations (Murray, 2003; Sarbin, 1986; Wong and Breheny, 2018).

Likewise, narrative analysis also constitutes varying methods of data interpretation that share a commonality of a storied form (Creswell, 2013, 2014, 2017). Riessman (2008) suggests a typology of four analytic strategies that reflect diversity in composing stories: the thematic analysis, the structural form, dialogic/performance analysis and the visual analysis of images or interpreting images alongside words. Thematic analysis involves an analysis of what is being said from spoken words or written text while the structural form emphasises how stories are told or written, highlighting the linguistic analysis in which the person telling the story uses language form to achieve a specific outcome (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Riessman, 2008; Stephens and Breheny, 2013). In the dialogic/performance analysis, the researcher and the participant(s) interactively produce talk or perform talk as in play or poetry (Riessman, 1993). On the other hand, visual analysis entails a told story told about how images were produced as well as how different people interpret and understand images produced (Creswell, 2013,

2014). This study will analyse data by means of thematic analysis and while doing that the researcher will make certain that the story of the participants, not the researcher's nor the reader's, remains at the centre of the study.

5.1 Narrative analysis tools

Narrative inquiry may use varying tools such as setting, characters, structure, discomfort, humour, and refrains as a method of data analysis (Wong and Breheny, 2018).

5.2 Setting

Stories have a context, meaning that they have a setting and a place (White, and Epston 1990; Murray, 2003; 2009). Participants in this study told their narratives from the comfort of their home lounge as the setting. The lounge here may be viewed as a social, physical, and psychological setting. Van Vuuren and Westerhof, (2015) suggest that stories are shaped by where they are told as well as by the context of the telling (Cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018).

5.3 Characters

The setting in a story paves way for a description of the characters and the character's roles in that story. Riesman (2008) believes that it is through telling stories that we perform our identity. Echoing the same sentiment is Wong and Breheny (2018) when explaining that stories that are socially accessible pave way for a wide spectrum of identities. Again, narratives have specific (a Black South African married same-sex couple) and general (discriminated same-sex couples) characters. Each character plays a distinct role in a story. This has an influence on why characters are defined in a certain manner, as well as on how the listener influences the description of the characters. Hence, according to Wong and Breheny, some characters are made available or unavailable by the social levels of analysis...especially when motives of family or those in power relations should be questioned (2018, p.256).

5.4 Structure

Stories have distinctive characteristics and structural forms that aid researchers' analysis. It is the structural features that describe the story as an interactional construction (Riessman, 2008, Silver, 2013). My starting point for the narrative analysis was to perceive the participants' stories from a general venture point. Having this broad and general view of their narrative structures aided the mapping of their experiences onto a sequential plot that was easy to recognise and link to other events. Grbich (2012) suggests that we gain understanding of people's stories when we ask how they produced and linked their stories to other events (Cited in Wong and Breheny, 2018).

5.5 Storying discomfort

Regardless of how we perceive ourselves, either negatively or positively, stories we tell are not always explicit. Listeners may find the conclusion to stories we tell to be implicit (White and Epston, 1990; Wong and Breheny, 2018). Participants' stories too often seem partial, emphasising a discomfort in the telling. This is when participants are not sure if they are allowed to tell their stories in an unambiguous manner but rather leave it up to the listeners' conclusion. According to Wong and Breheny (2018) the latter is a demonstration of how understanding is derived from shared meaning.

5.6 Humour

Another helpful tool used in narrative analysis is to examine why and when participants chose to use humour when telling their stories (White and Epston, 1990; Riessman, 2008; Silver, 2013). Usually, humour is used to describe, to resolve, and to raise distressing topics. Wong and Breheny (2018) suggest that the use of humour when participants tell their story should be observed since it can reveal hidden stories usually covered by amusing interactive moments.

5.7 Refrains

Refrains consider specific story parts and anchor only the information the storyteller wishes to emphasise. They are used to recognise catch phrases, buzz words or themes during the analysis since they provide the narrative with an effect (White and Epston, 1990; Wong and Breheny, 2018).

5.8 Validity

Validity within narrative inquiry denotes the credibility of what is being said. Consequently, readers know that the researcher's work is valid if they are convinced of what is being said to be rational. Again, considerations of what is valid differ depending on whether one thinks knowledge is a reflector

of reality or of society. Hence, it is difficult to refer to validity in conventionally welcomed ways when using narrative inquiry since it echoes the perspective that knowledge is a social construction rather than a coherent form of knowledge (Creswell, 2013, 2014, 2017; Denson, 2015). Therefore, I took measures to increase the internal reliability and validity of the interview data by asking more than one question about a specific construct, which additionally allowed me to observe any inconsistencies in the responses of participants.

According to Creswell (2013), conventional ideas of validity illustrate more the accepted way of knowing than narrative analysis does. One writer, Kvale (1995), is of the view that conventional ideas of validity do not acknowledge postmodernism (Cited in Creswell, 2013). Therefore, as an alternative to conventional concepts of validity, narrative inquiry employs words such as crystallisation, trustworthiness, truth-like observations, and authenticity (Clindinin, 2016; Creswell, 2013, 2014, 2017; Murray, 2018). Validity in narrative inquiry is then explicitly linked to personal meaning rather than to noticeable, quantifiable truth. The need for narrative researchers to competently support their methods for adding to validity becomes paramount. Therefore, to address the latter, Polkinghorne (2007) suggests two areas that relate to validity in narrative research. Firstly, the disconnection between the meaning derived from experience and the telling of that experience by the teller; and secondly, how researchers interpret stories told.

The disconnection relates to the participant's self-awareness and reflexivity, their language proficiency, how open they are, and the reality that narrative texts are co-constructed. Thus, from earlier on during the analyses stage, to increase trustworthiness, I increased validity by seeking feedback from participants on how I understood their narratives. I also became aware of my own biases (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Murray 2018, Riessman, 2008). As already mentioned, researchers are to be clear about the disposition of their interpretation, attests Polkinghorne (2007), hence my interpretation of the data collected was from a hermeneutic point of view, for an example from a specific context, the South African context, with the use of participants' original narratives supporting my interpretation.

6 Ethics

Before interviewing the participants, ethical clearance was requested and obtained from the University of South Africa's research ethics committee. Within the ethical clearance application was an explanation of the research methodology, an example of a consent form (signed both by the participants the researcher) and an outline of interview questions (Creswell, 2017; Grbich, 2012; Lazard and McAvoy, 2017). I expressed sensitivity to participants' rights and values when I stressed voluntary

participation and provided them with an option to withdraw from the study should they feel like the original agreed-upon conditions had changed. I followed the latter by reassuring them that if they withdrew it would be without hostile penalties to them. Again, I told the participants that their stories would be kept strictly confidential and utilised only for the intention of this study (Creswell, 2017). Moreover, I made them aware of the counselling arrangements made should interviews bring forth personal issues they could not bear.

7 Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology used for this study and in some detail explained the qualitative method used as well as the narrative research. It also provided an explanation of what narrative research is and the reasons why narrative analysis was a chosen means for data analysis. Furthermore, it explained the data collection method and how ethical procedures were considered before the collection of data from participants. The following chapter is a discussion of the significance of the research findings and the implications the findings may have for therapy.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings that were derived from 10 qualitative interviews with a married couple who identify as lesbian. The interview questions were exploratory, aiming at developing an understanding of how a married Black couple experience their identities within the South African context and how they deal with the systemic pressures in their daily lives. The participants were born in South Africa and are between the ages of 35 and 40 years old. One is of Ndebele descent and the other is of Northern Sotho ethnicity. They live in the urban part of the Gauteng province and are both university graduates with postgraduate degrees. They are raising one biological child and one fostered child. The participants also categorised their gender and self-disclosed as femme (Participant 2 is feminine presenting), and as butch (Participant 1 is masculine-presenting) respectively. They used the words lesbian, gay, femme, butch, hard core, and homosexual interchangeably to define their sexual orientation.

The following section presents reports of how participants negotiated heteronormative spaces as lesbians in a predominantly heterosexual South Africa. The interview questions provoked, amongst other stories, narratives of freedom, of early signs of sexual and gender awareness and identification, sexual orientation and its development, normalcy, coming out, and their family's responses to and perceptions of their sexual orientation. In this chapter I will only discuss themes that were significant in assisting me to respond to the research question, since other themes were not significant enough to integrate with the final analysis.

1. Being South African: A narrative of optimism

Participant's narrative of being South African yielded three sub-themes, including South African law as it relates to the LGBT people, LGBT activism in South Africa and narratives of freedom and privilege.

1.1 South African law regarding LGBT people

The South African Constitution achieved a new standard in Africa when it upheld and acknowledged human rights for the LGBT citizens and residents (Francis and Msibi, 2011; Reddy, 2009). It is, however, noteworthy to remember that while these constitutional developments marked incredible improvements from what had gone before, the current laws have not filtered down to the level of everyday life for the LGBT community. It is not surprising that Participant 2 (P2) felt like despite

South Africa's progressive constitution with regards to LGBT rights, there still is lack in the implementation of the law when she said:

I feel though the government has done their part in legalising our way of life, there is little education about us...that has happened. I think for me it was something that they just wanted to, they wanted to look as if they have accepted [us], but they actually haven't. You know you...after making it legal, there's something...there must be some form of education.

Additionally, P2 believed even though South Africa has, within its constitution, a law against discriminating against people on the basis of their sexual orientation, lawmakers often overlook cases of corrective rape, with the result that perpetrators ultimately walk free with little to no prosecution at all. She was insinuating that discrimination and violence against LGBT people is a serious challenge in South Africa, despite our progressive laws. P2's sentiments concerning corrective rape were also confirmed by the literature review chapter of this study, noting that corrective rape is popular in South Africa and is highlighted by the well-known cases of lesbians such as Zoliswa Nkonyane and Eudy Simelane, who unfortunately died during the same attack (Fihlani, 2011; Francis and Msibi, 2011; Matchett, 2012; Morrissey, 2013). In affirming this, Matchett (2012) wrote that 'in South Africa, rape is not classified according to sexual orientation' (p. 280). Reporting on the latter, P2 shared that:

correctional rape and all those, is because we tolerate all these things. We speak about it because something has happened, but there is no law that speak[s] to it. If you assault a person because of their sexuality, there is going to be no punishment. There is just the law that speaks to rape in general. But corrective rape is not just rape. Corrective rape is me having to rape you because I want you to feel this thing that you say you do not want. So that you come right in your head to say this thing of homosexuality does not exist; that this thing that I've been running away from all this time is nice. Nothing is being said about that. When we are amending laws, nothing is being said that speaks directly to things that are being done to homosexuals. It's just general laws and regulations.

Participant 1's (P1) stance was that, regardless of the effort made by the government, South African society struggled with perceptions of sexuality. She felt that some South Africans still could not accept same-sex relationships, hence, there was still the practice of violence, which led to the rap and murder of lesbian women. In her explanation, she said:

But the government to be honest, I feel like they have done their part to, to sign laws, to put things into place, (claps hands), you know, but it's, it's us the people that are finding it difficult

to marry the law and hence we can still see people feel like they can do corrective-rape in 2018, 2019, and in 2020.

1.2 LGBT activism in South Africa

LGBTI organisations in South African claim to work for social justice and the right to human dignity. They aim to lessen the tension between human rights and the remnants of colonial laws, and challenge government to revoke and review oppressive and discriminatory laws. They also provide information and refer people to other organisations working within areas of gender identity, sexual orientation, and LGBT people. In addition, they usually focus on how legislation has been passed and used to criminalise same-sex activities. P1's view of LGBT activism in South Africa was very optimistic. She believed there was tremendous progress regarding LGBT activism in South Africa, as highlighted by literature. Her report about LGBT activism in South Africa was that:

I think you know what, if you look at organisation *ya bo* (Steve's¹ organisation) Steve, I don't know what they call it, I'll find it out for you. They're doing an amazing work in Africa. It is incredible. Even though re *Tjeya nako* (they take time) but a brick gets laid every day. I mean today there is a case, I mean there is an issue *ya* legalising (of legalizing) gay marriages, you know. They are trying, they are trying, South Africa is trying. It is just that there is something that's holding us back. I feel like we are trying. There is a lot of things that still need to be done. Yet I feel like there is progress.

1.3 Narratives of freedom and privilege

When asked what it meant for them to be South African, P1, without being asked about her gender identity and without hesitation, explicitly and boldly claimed her sexual identity when she said, 'to me it means that as a lesbian person, it means that we have freedom to do what we want'. She went on to express the freedom she now has under the current regime – that she otherwise would not have

¹ Steve Letsike is a renowned activist within the LGBTI sector. She is also famous for issues relating to human rights, social justice and feminism. She is the current deputy chairperson for the South African National Aids Council (SANAC), representing civil society within SANAC structures. She is also the founding director of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) named Access Chapter 2 and co-chairs an initiative by the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development called the National Task Team on Hate Crimes. Her NGO is a human rights organisation with focus on matters concerning gender equity and the LGBT populations. P1 and I also know Steve on a personal level.

experienced during the apartheid era – when she recounted that ‘there are no longer limitations like before, you know. I can marry, and that marriage will be acknowledged and recognised’. In addition, according to P1, her appearance obviously implied that she was lesbian when she said that “‘like for me you can see *gore ke stabane* (that I am homosexual)’. However, she took pride in this appearance and identity when she reported that ‘when people got lost looking for me in the village, they just said, *ke timetse ke nyakana le ngwanyana wa stabane* (I am lost and looking for that homosexual girl). They (meaning the villagers) will take you to my house’.

P1 was not naïve about the possibility of living in a society where some people may not acknowledge same sex marriages but was content and optimistic because ‘the law has been passed, with regard to gay or same sex marriage’. To elaborate on her story of freedom and gender awareness, P2 also expressed the experience of her ‘ability to move around as a woman’ as well as her ‘ability to do what I want to do, when I want to do it’.

The participants seemed to suggest that the South African government has laws that benefit LGBT people. P2 mentioned a benefit from legislative protection that allowed her to provide business services and not to be discriminated against at work when she exclaimed, ‘We are lucky to be living in South Africa in this era, you know. There’s a lot of opportunities, business-wise and at the workplace.’ She also seemed to suggest that she has found ways to improve her life circumstances as compared to her parents when she said, ‘I am able to do what my parents could not do.

Furthermore, prior to 1994 in South Africa, the standard of education was different for each learner’s race. The Bantu Education Act, later renamed the Black Education Act of 1953, meant that White and Black learners attended separate schools that enforced different policies concerning the medium of instruction. The Act was introduced after Christian-based education was terminated in the 1950s as explained by Thompson (2001) and aimed to consolidate Black people’s education by implementing discriminatory educational practices uniformly across South Africa. This Act directly affected the youth of South Africa and made certain that all social aspects of Black and White people were kept separate. It also controlled Black people’s economic activities and movement (Thompson, 2001). In contrast to these oppressive conditions, P2 expressed her privilege in relation to the current South African education system when she said, ‘I am able to take my child to any school that I want, and for me (pause), for me, that is (pause), that is a privilege. She also felt that her political environment had improved as compared to the youth during the apartheid era when she explained: ‘You look back to what the youth was doing politically, the youth of 1976 in particular, and you look, comparing to what they had and what we have now. The difference is just huge.’

Moreover, the Group Areas Act was the core of apartheid under the leadership of the National Party and controlled the lives of Africans, Coloureds, and Indians, limiting their rights to property. This law forcibly removed Africans from living in what it deemed ‘wrong’ areas, and that is how Black communities were destroyed. Again, the Act did not permit Africans, Coloureds, or Indians to own or occupy land in White areas. Spatial planning during the apartheid era also meant that Blacks lived in Black townships while Whites lived in comparatively safe and extravagant White territories (Stevens, Duncan, and Hook, 2013). However, on the contrary, P2’s cheerful narrative seems to be influenced by the choice of limitless geographical spaces she has saying, “I can be able to live wherever I want to live. This can also be understood as P2’s starting point for defining her Black South African identity according to geography and/or location. Her definition though, is marked by a positive outlook, as opposed to narratives of Black lesbians from the townships.

2. Negotiating same-sex sexuality through coming out, gender performance, religion and heteronormativity

2.1 Participants’ negotiation of their own same-sexuality

2.1.1 Participant 1 (P1)

Some people become aware of their sexual orientation from a young age, while others are not so sure. ‘It was at the age of 12, that’s when I dated my first girl.’ attested P2. It also seems as though, for some time, P1 did not have a definite way of identifying her sexuality when she said, ‘I did not know what it is, but I just knew that no man (pause), you know (pause), ai (no) man (pause), there’s something about Mary” (referring to herself as Marry, she is referring to the movie titled, *There’s Something about Mary*). In 2015, the Academy of Science in South Africa investigated human sexual diversity and found that normal societies have humans with varying sexual orientations and identities, and that it is impossible to rid societies of LGBTI people. P1 also shared that she had kept what she had referred to as ‘something’ a secret she was not ready to share with anyone. ‘I’m keeping this to myself. Not my sisters (pause) nobody, just me (pause), not even friends. It’s just me stuck in that little place saying ... this is my little thing; this is my little stuff, she explained. While becoming aware of her sexual identity, P1 did not immediately engage in sexual activities. She reported that:

When I started to understand that I’m gay, I was in (pause), grade ten? I was 14, but I did not acknowledge it. I did not act on it. I would just have crushes. Like, I had this huge crush on my teacher, big time.

P1's account echoes Freud's assertion that it is normal for sexual fantasies to invoke pervasive and bizarre developments, leading to sexual excitement and climatic pleasure. Freud found this normal, since he argued that having sexual fantasies does not necessarily mean that the person really wants to do these things. However, even if they did, he thought it normal to do so (Klockars, 2013).

Moreover, according to P1, it was uncommon to see anyone identifying as homosexual in the rural area where she grew up because of the discomfort that came with it. When asked why she thought that she grew up not seeing LGBTI-identifying people, her response was:

I think they are there, but people are not comfortable People in the rural [areas] are not working and so probably, maybe if I did not go to school and be exposed, maybe I would be married to some teacher, maybe I don't know. Do you understand what I am saying, because of the surrounding influence?

Furthermore, like romantic love, attraction is difficult to explain. We often think that we know why we are attracted to a specific person, but it is usually not that simple. It is as though P1's attraction to people of the same sex was made evident by frequently being around a particular female teacher at school. She was not sure if the attraction was sexual: however, she had certainty that her attraction was not forced, as most homophobic people tend to think. The other foundation states that "Reputable psychological, sociological, legal and medical bodies globally agree that same-sex attraction, behaviour and identity are a natural part of the spectrum of human sexuality" ((2016, p. 31). P1 did not force her attraction towards her teacher because sexual attraction is not forced and is not controlled. P1 also understood her sexual feelings and accounted for them as follows:

Ge bare etla o tlong massager (when she said rub my feet), *wa raba ntwana, wa raba* (you rub my friend, you massage). With this you can even offer your service without being asked and say *kopa go massager* (may I please offer you a massage). That for you is for free you know, whether it was a sexual drive, I don't know.

Additionally, P1 grew up perceiving her sexuality to be normal despite her belief that she engaged in sports that might have been considered a challenge to normalcy. She reported that, 'I just lived like a normal girl who played soccer. Who (pause), the only barrier that I broke, for me, was the issue of playing soccer, doing the things that boys did, you know? This is very unlikely for an individual who is deemed to be different by the community. There was intense scrutiny of P1 and, if she had been seen as masculine-presenting, it would be expected that this would make a person conform to gender norms, but P1 did not seem to care about this. She also did not compromise her outward masculine appearance

any more than what was required by religious laws. ‘I would go to church in a dress, but before I would sit down and eat, I wanna change into my trousers (pause) and stuff, and, you know, start feeling comfortable again,’ she said.

Again, growing up, P1 did not only perceive her sexuality as normal, but also as playful and fun. She did not perceive her sexuality in the same way as people in her community did. This view is supported by Butler, who wrote that it was unfavourable to assume that only sexual attraction between opposite genders was normal or natural (1990 p, 524). Carrying out feminine gender roles was not something that P1 favoured, she inherently preferred and performed a masculine gender role. When asked what normal sexuality meant to her, she shared that:

me going to play soccer, me acting like a boy, if they put it that way. In the rural areas, doing the things boys do, feeling comfortable. Huh going and ploughing in the farm, me going there and riding donkeys That for me was normal. But I would run away from making food in the kitchen and go out in the scorching sun of Limpopo *ke disa dikgomo* (looking after cattle) that was fun. I would rather ride the donkeys than get water, than to get a bucket and put it on top of my head to get water. I would rather take a wheelbarrow than a bucket. Not that I did not do it, I did it. But what was easy for me was to take donkeys to fill up water.

Even though P1 identified as gay, her male friends related to her as if she was one of them. It appears her male friends packed away their moral rulebook and thought of their gay-identified friend in terms of something bigger than sexuality. It is as if they appreciated her friendship, recognised her humanity and perceived her as a whole person. When asked how her friends related to her P1 recounted that:

I never had issues with them. They were just my boys, even today, they still are, they’re my boys No funny questions. No funny movements. No funny things. We’d go to the river, swim together. Go to the field, look after the cattle. And come back home eat, ...

And unlike other village boys who saw P1 as a girl they could propose to date or ‘make some moves’ toward, as she put it, her male friends ‘just took her as one of them, straight up’. It seems that this genuine association and friendship which P1 shared with her male friends earned their respect. Perhaps it was P1’s masculine appearance and her identification as ‘hard core’ that encouraged her male friends to relate to her as one of their own. The latter seems to have stimulated a resemblance amongst them, thus sustaining P1’s narrative of her normal sexuality.

2.1.2 Participant 2 (P2)

Hormonal and physical changes during puberty usually mean that we start noticing an increase in our sexual feelings. As expected, P2's hormonal changes happened during puberty when she started noticing her sexual feelings. (It was during this time that I also started wondering and sometimes worrying about my own sexual feelings). Perhaps this was also a time when P2 was trying to understand who she was becoming and what her sexual identity was. It is possible that she first wanted to establish firmly whether her attraction was towards females, males, or both; and to make sense of her sexual feelings before she could finally accept her sexual identity without any doubts. As a result, for reasons only known to P2 and at varying intervals, she engaged in sexual acts with both females and males. 'The first time, I'm 16 going for 17, I'm trying it with a boy. Yeah ... I was in my matric at that time. I think 'Ag, let me try, it's the most normal thing to do''. Perhaps she felt greater social pressure to do so since she convinced herself that dating the opposite sex was a 'normal thing to do'. This did not, however, stop her from enjoying romantic sex with females: 'I go to varsity, I meet a girl and I completely (with great emphasis) forget about the boy. I forget about the boy because this girl, she drives me crazy. crazier than I ever thought that I would be in my life,' P2 explained.

Similarly, it is important to note that sexual identification is an individual's choice that should be separated from sexual orientation. Identifying as lesbian does not necessarily reflect the reality of P2's sexual behaviour; and no matter how many times an individual engages in sexual activity with the opposite sex, if they are not attracted to them, they will not become heterosexual. In the same vein, the Anova Health Institute report noted that people engage in intimacy for different reasons other than to express their sexual orientation, and that there is no link between sexual activity and sexual identity (cited in ASSAF, 2015). Again, it does not matter how closely related P2's sexual orientation is to her sexual behaviour and her sexual identity; they are different and ought to be viewed as separate from each other. Butler (1990) also argued that sexual orientation, sexual behaviour and sexual identity are independent of each other. P2's sexual identity is her self-concept, her own internal personal sense of being, a woman in her case. 'I consider myself a lesbian woman,' reported P2, while P1 considers herself a 'hard core' lesbian (meaning a butch/masculine lesbian). P2's sexual behaviour, on the other hand, reflects the actual sexual acts she performed, and her sexual orientation is reflected by the romantic or sexual attraction she had toward the girl who 'drove her crazy' at university. Both P1 and P2's sexual orientation, then, describe their enduring romantic, emotional and physical attraction to females.

Over and above that, many people, when thinking about romantic relationships, tend to think about the archetypal trajectory where two people meet, form a relationship, and decide either to stay together or break apart. Perhaps this is the ‘straightforward’ reflection of most people’s experiences. However, it appears as if P2’s search for love was often a much more conflicted, complicated and confusing journey. Dailey, Pfiester, Jin, and Beck (2011) estimate over 60% of people have experienced the complicated relationship trajectory of an on-and-off relationship at some point in their lives. It is important to note that the estimate did not specify the sexual orientation of participants interviewed (Dailey et al, 2011). As a result, it is also possible that P2’s public sexual encounter with males and hidden sexual encounter with females was a result of the societal pressure she felt since she believed that ‘everybody knew her boyfriend’. Her report on the latter was that:

So, I’m now cheating, I’m now cheating ... on a boy, with a girl. The girl can’t take the fact that she’s sharing, and we decided, *abuti* (brother), no... let’s leave this thing. I, I don’t want... it’s either you’re bi... or you’re in the closet but, I can’t do this, the girl said. So... I’m heartbroken. We’ve broken up. Now there’s this boy... this boy is annoying me now. I don’t want him anymore! And he keeps on nagging that he wants me to ... and I would make up an excuse. You know, *nê*, I never want to have sex with boys, *nê*. I went to this, uhmmm, hospice, for people that are HIV-positive. So, after seeing people that are so sick I never wanted to date, until I’m married ... Then I stayed for a few months alone, ’till I decided, no man, let me look for somebody more educated. And I continued with boys ... I continued with boys to the next year ... and then I got another girl. I was prepared to do it undercover. And that was a perfect girl. And we did it undercover, everybody thought that I was ‘straight’, because everybody knew my boyfriend, but I had a girlfriend ... Yes, so ... I pushed that for ... I pushed that for a good seven years ...but between seven years, between seven years I had about 34 girls, undercover.

2.2 Negotiating same-sex sexuality through the coming-out process

LGBT people refer to those who do not disclose their sexual identities as being ‘in the closet’ (Ponse 1978, cited in Smuts, 2011). However, there is confirmation that there are ‘different levels of being in the closet. In some cases, lesbians choose to keep their identities secret from the “outside” heterosexual world and only disclose their identities to lesbian friends’ (Smuts, 2011, p. 25). As evidence of this, P2 managed to disclose her sexuality to a friend while P1 kept it a secret. P2 mentioned that:

In 1999 I met this other girl, who was, umm, lesbian and out, and we became friends. We were real friends. We were not friends with benefits. I was then able to tell her this problem ... mind you, I had this problem. Meanwhile, P1 reported that:

I'm keeping this to myself. Not my sisters ... nobody, just me, not even friends. It's just me stuck in that little place saying ... this is my little thing. this is my little stuff. Because I wouldn't know what I'm going to say... what am I going to say – that I got a crush on my teacher? I'm like *ai wena* (no, you).

Both participants realised at an early age, in their teenage years, that they were lesbian (Smit, 2011). 'It was at the age of 12 that's when I dated my first girl,' attested P2. Meanwhile P1 first recognised her sexual attraction to women at the age of 14 and confessed feeling confused. She also confessed lacking both the knowledge and the vocabulary to explain it. She shared that "I did not know what it is, but I just knew that no man (pause), you know, *ai* (no) man ... *there's something about Mary* (referring to herself as Mary from *There's something about Mary*, a 1998 movie directed by Peter Farrelly). Perhaps she was just starting to become aware of an internal conflict due to realising her difference from the heterosexual norm. This phenomenon is referred to as 'the first stage of coming out, namely identity confusion' (Smit, 2011, p. 29). When asked about the time she understood that she was gay, P1's response was that:

for me, when ... when ... being called daddy's boy was not an identification of homosexuality. I just looked like the girl who does ... you know ... boy things. But when I started to understand that I'm gay, I was in ... grade ten? I was 14. But I did not acknowledge it. I did not act on it. I would just have crushes.

Although both participants accepted their sexuality, their acceptance was not public. As a butch-identifying lesbian, as a child, I was completely in the closet as my sexual orientation developed (Smuts, 2011). P1 also stated that she was in the closet: 'I was not out. Like I said, I grew up in a rural area. There was nobody who, who, who was out.' However her lack of sexual interest in the opposite sex, her butch appearance and her style of dress 'outed' her, whether she was aware of it or not. She confirmed that her appearance 'was saying that this is not the girl that people expect me to be, because I would wear my brother's trousers'.

P2 also found it challenging to come out of the closet even though it was constitutionally favourable to do so. She reported that:

I can't come out of the closet yet. I mean my mother is a Christian ... she would literally disown me. So, coming out of the closet was not an option for me then. I would rather stay there and uhm ... do it ... do it underground. But this girl is not prepared now to hide it ... And I can't. I can't ... can't go around holding hands and kissing, in public. And now it's after it has been passed into law – it's now allowed.

Eventually, the participants entertained a decision to come out. P1's decision to come out was an ongoing process: 'I was like, you can't even think about ... you will desire it [coming out and publicly acting her sexuality out] and it ends there, and you will never act upon it.' she said. She did not decide to come out as soon as she became aware of her sexuality, as she explained that she only 'came out at tertiary'. As Smit puts it, 'Lesbian women still tend to search for 'relatively safe places' before they feel comfortable enough to acknowledge their sexual identity publicly' (2011, p. 26). It seems her decision to come out eventually at university was calculated. When she was asked why she waited that long to come out, she said, 'What was gonna happen to my parents?' Her decision seemed cautiously planned, particularly because she was afraid that her parents might find out, and that surrounding social conditioning shaped her experience and willingness not to come out earlier. 'Identities are linked to social spaces or places, and that social class is significant in the struggle to construct lesbian identities – especially as it relates to Black lesbian women,' attests Smit (2011, p. 26). P1 communicated that 'you will never act upon it because of your surrounding and how you are socialised'. However, even the grip of the religious conditioning that P1 was raised in could not prevent her from claiming her sexual identity. The conversation about how she experienced her sexual behaviour is highlighted below:

Thipe: When you started to understand that you were gay as you put it, how was that experience for you?

P1: Having sex?

Thipe: I don't know if it was sexual for you, when you started understanding that you were ...

P1: I've known that I was different. Like very early, *gore ke rata basadi* (that I love women). I had that attraction towards *banyana* (girls), *mara* (but) I did not act upon it. When I started acting upon it, I said '*makunyewe*' (I am not backing down).

Thipe: (laughter) When did you start acting upon it?

P2: (Giggles.)

P1: Ahh very late, 2002.

Thipe: Where were you?

P1: I was doing my first honours; I was over 21.

Thipe: Oh, you were already in varsity?

P1: Ja (yes), I was in varsity because remember my first four years of my degree I was a Christian soldier, if I remember very well. Solid ... praise the Lord. I prayed to God to halt this 'gayism', but it still did not work.

The process of coming out demands facing the attitude and expectations of society. The above extract shows P1's ambivalence toward coming out; this is perhaps because society usually assumes that heterosexuality is the norm, that everyone is heterosexual and because those who are homophobic often look at anything outside heterosexuality with condemnation. Moreover, rejection of LGBT people or lifestyle is often linked to religious moral values. For P1, there also may have been a sense of regarding herself as different and a misfit in respect of the roles expected of her by the church. The coming out process is also very personal in nature and often entails first coming out to the self. P1 was the only person who could decide when and how to come out. It appears, in the above extract, that before she could come out to family, she first decided to come out only in one part of her life when at university only.

2.3 Negotiating same-sex sexuality through gender performance

We struggled at first. We struggled because she wanted to train me to be a girl. *Ngwana ngwanyana oetsa* (a girl child makes) tea and all those things. And in my head, it did not make sense. But we struggled, especially when I was turning nine, 10, 11, 12, it was a struggle because she did not understand. But because you know when you are raised in a house that is very strict, you do not have a choice, but you just need to abide by those rules. So, the only way to not do what she wanted was to give her what she did not have, which is water and coal. So that substituted me not doing... (pause), but I had to learn how to do the chores. It's not that I did not do my chores, I still had to do *ditupu* (clean outside floors), wash the dishes, but I always used to do the dishes *kabo ma 3* (around 3pm), cause that's when she will be back. I had to learn those mechanisms of dealing with her to make sure she gets what she wants. I

would wake up 5 o'clock in the morning to milk the cow 'cause she likes *amasi* (milk). So, I developed those things to learn to deal with my mom.

Additionally, from the extract above, it is clear how P1's mother gendered domestic chores. This was expressed by P1 when stating that her mother 'wanted to train' her 'to be a girl'. Said P1; '*Ngwana ngwanyana oetsa* (a girl child makes) tea and all those things. And in my head, it did not make sense.' P1 was rebelling against her mother's fixed ideas about the gendered nature of domestic chores, thus making gender more flexible (Butler, 1988). She acted out gender as it made sense to her as an individual, altering gender norms and the binary understanding of femininity and masculinity (Butler, 1988). She preferred to act a gender identity that was not forced on her by her mother.

Additionally, as outlined by the literature, P1's mother, despite P1's gender variation, perceived P1's gender within the binary opposition of women and men (Hyde, Bigler, Joel, Tate, and van Anders, 2019; Berman, Joel, Mukamel, Tarrasch, and Ziv, 2013; Drescher 2010, Goldner, 2011). I also found gender expression to be an important part of my lesbian attitude, since being butch defined my sexual and social relationships. Likewise, according to P1, it was obvious that she was a butch, boyish or masculine lesbian, as compared to a girly, femme or feminine lesbian, since she identified as 'hard core'. Being 'hard core' was how she performed or acted out her gender (Butler, 1990). The villagers, particularly the village elders, assigned her a male gender identity based on the comfort she displayed in assuming that identity. She internalised and interpreted her village elders' perception of her sexuality as follows:

They've always associated me with daddy's boy. Like because I would fix my dad's car with him, oils, whatever that needs to be done. I'll be the one to be told to, 'get me a spanner (car tool)'. I'll go and get number 10 or 14. I knew what 14 would be, you know. So, it was one of those things. I think people associated that ... and then ... then automatically they ... they ... they ... would be saying I'm daddy's boy.

P1's report above echoes Butler's (1990) explanation of how gender is performed and is perceived by others when she explains that gender and sexuality are often understood as a sex-gender-sexuality/desire continuity model (p. 17).

2.4 Negotiating same-sex sexuality through religion

About 80% of South Africans are affiliates of a particular faith, with the majority being Christian (Nell and Shapiro, 2013). Approximately 'a third of Black South African population belong to the largely Christian African Independent Churches. These churches too, take a fundamentalist view of

homosexuality' (Nell and Shapiro, 2013, p. 22). It is no wonder, as already mentioned, that the lives of many Black South Africans, including that of the participants (and my own), are greatly influenced by Christian religious teachings. The church becomes a significant feature in the lives of the participants by providing, not only spiritual support, but also enormous influence on moral matters that directly affects them in a negative way. The participants, along with most Black LGBTI people, including myself, were raised to see the church as a place to go to for a sense of belonging and comfort. However, most of us experienced – and still experience – religion, particularly Christianity, as a major challenge to our sexuality. The experiences of the participants were no different; however, they did not allow the dictates of religious rules imposed on them to intimidate or stop them from expressing themselves sexually. When asked about the time she became aware of her same-sex attraction, and was then seeing a woman, P2's response was that:

No... no... it was hidden, it was hidden. She was seen as my friend. So, it was hidden from my family. But it was known from her side of the family. So, we dated for almost a year. And I went to church, and I was told that it is 'demonic'. I was prayed for ... It was the Baptist church ... I was prayed for ... and I was delivered. I had also believed that I was delivered ... But after that I tried to live a 'clean-life', I was born again, and I stopped it. So, 1996, I was clean ... '97, I was clean. 1998 ... I ... went back to Sedibeng. So, 1998, I got a friend from church, another friend.

In addition, just when the LGBT community of South Africa started feeling a sense of belonging, at least through the constitution, most religious fundamentalists and traditional leaders continued to strongly contest their Africanness. This is in accordance with the evidence presented by the literature that suggests that the Christian religion and media are two dominant vehicles used by African leaders to spread fear and myths concerning sexual diversity throughout Africa (Epprecht, 2006; Hoad, 1999; Van Klinken, 2013). Since most South African denominations consider homosexuality a sin, the exclusion and rejection of LGBT people remains an important part of the homophobic church. Christianity teaches that there is a barrier that interrupts fellowship with God when people sin, and for this reason a confession of sins is required. They also believe that God forgives sins and washes them away upon confession, thus restoring our fellowship with Him. Therefore, sins are not to be covered up or ignored. For example, P2 articulated that:

I was still at church, still born again, participating ... I go on a fast, and I go to the mountain to pray. Now the prophetess starts praying and say, 'Hey, you must confess. Confess your sins.' And now, I cry again. Hey, hey, hey ... I have this problem. And I'm attracted to women ... You

had to choose somebody to which you would go and confess to. So, I go to this woman, and she was the pastor and the prophetess. I go to her, and I tell her that ‘this is my problem. And this has been haunting me’.

From the above extract, one realises that P2 was haunted and possibly hurt by the unfriendly religious environment. In most cases, it hurts to be lesbian and Christian. Most Black LGBT people I know, including myself, have been hurt by the Christian religion when stating that homosexuality is a sin, thus referring to us as sinners. It hurts, and it is draining to constantly be in an unwelcoming environment. Religious environments that reject LGBT people often change from being a place of comfort and hope into one of despair and hopelessness. At its worst, the suffering that usually accompanies the oppression of LGBT people by the church often breathes self-hate into their spirits. Often, it forces them to divorce themselves from the Christian religion. Sometimes they feel wronged by the church and that God has turned His back on them, thus leading to feelings of bitterness. This bitterness may also birth self-doubt that hinders the integration of their religious beliefs with their sexuality into an understanding of self.

Furthermore, there exists, in the church, a belief in being ‘delivered’ from homosexuality or sin in general. This doctrine holds that a person can immediately abolish their homosexual desires. It also suggests that it is possible for Christians, with a same-sex attraction, who aspire to live a life of holiness, to repress their sexual desires through spiritual discipline, prayer and fasting. This narrative also reveals the predicament faced by the church in recognising homosexuality as a sin and at the same time encouraging the acceptance of sinners. Again, with its doctrine of deliverance in mind, the church often singles out homosexuality to be one of the most horrendous sins, thus supporting the stigma around homosexuality. No matter how many times P2’s church tried to deliver her from same-sex attraction, its efforts resulted in failure. My conversation with P2 below illustrated the impossibility of being delivered from homosexuality:

This is the second time, this is the second time (laughter), this is the second time I’m delivered. 1999 and for a few months ... for some in April ... I’m delivered ... until ... 2000, January-February. I’m delivered, by the way, and then we decided, that this is not working. The very same girl again. ‘Let’s do it.’ ‘No, no, no!’ We picked up where we left off and we continued. Uhh ... we continue ... 2000 ... 2001 we see that it’s not working out man! I’m leading ... I’m leading a double life. I decided, that no ... I’m going to do the fasting alone this time and I pray. And I help myself [long sigh]. And I stopped. Then I meet some boy. And I think, ‘Now, let me try it with boys.’ I mean, it could work. I’m doing my matric then.

Thipe: Okay... is this now your first time trying it with boys?

P2: Yes.

Thipe: Ever?

P2: Ever.

Thipe: Okay ... so even back then when you spoke about 'being clean', you were not?

P2: No, I was clean. No boys ... so ...

Thipe ... no dating at all?

P2: The first time ... I'm 16 going for 17 ... I'm trying it with a boy.

Thipe: Mmm, and this is in high school?

P2: Yeah ... I was in my matric at that time. I think 'Ag, let me try ... it's the most normal thing to do.' I'm ... I'm told about Sodom and Gomorra ... I'm getting scriptures in the Bible against homosexuality. And I'm thinking, 'Ag man ... the Bible is against homosexuality, but at least heterosexual relationships are better. Let me try to date a guy. I date a guy ... uhhh ... in the year ... 2001 ... my story is going to go on until 10 o'clock ... unless I pause now ... I can go on and on.

Thipe: Not to worry, go on, that's why I'm here.

P2: Okay ... I date a guy, in my matric year ... I started dating him about September-October ... We dated until I completed my matric. Going to varsity, dating a boyfriend, that's a boyfriend ... Convincingly, I'm crazy about him. I mean, it's the first time I'm dating a boy. Crazy about him, I go to varsity ... and I meet a girl. I meet the girl that I'm married to now.

Sexuality is about understanding and accepting the sexual attraction and feelings we have toward others and the extract above illustrates just that. It paints a picture of the long painful phase P2 had to endure in her life, trying to conform to the requirements of living a life without sin and being a 'real woman'. The convenient amnesia of society is that the terms 'lesbian' and 'woman' are both social constructs, and that lesbians just like heterosexual females are at liberty to identify as 'women'. Gontek (2009) powerfully articulated this when he wrote that:

The term lesbian women imply queer women, whose identities may be placed anywhere in the entire spectrum of sexuality, be it as lesbian women, bisexual women, bisexual-lesbian women, butch, tommy boy or lesbian men, transgender, transwomen, or any other way of life (p. 02).

Moreover, P2 probably had to 'come out' over and over to herself, a painful experience I had gone through, as she bounced back between dating males and females before she could finally make sense of her sexual identity. She had to take time to explore her attraction to same sex perhaps because she was confused and still trying to convince herself of her sexual identity. P2 also might have been worried about the condemnation she might have to face from the church, society, friends, family, and the people she loved; or worry about what her same sex attraction meant for her future. I know that the major reason I dated males for the longest time before I could gather the courage to date females was the thought of being looked at with disgust, dismissal, nervous giggles, surprise, disbelief and, most annoyingly, with soul-piercing stares.

In addition, very few church leaders in South Africa accept LGBT people, while many perceive homosexuality as a disease that needs to be cured, thus leaving devoted LGBT members of the church isolated. The participants linked their deeply felt spirituality to the church, and still do thus, religion was also the first step they used to free themselves of homophobia in the church. The participants never gave up their search for a church leader who was willing to find ways to relate to them, who genuinely believed that they too were God's creation.

P1 and P2 were raised as a Lutheran and as a Catholic respectively. For the major parts of their lives, both participants' lives were restricted because of church laws. Christianity became their biggest oppressor. As Tamale (2011) discussed in chapter two of this study, gender relations and people's sexual lives are often affected by constructs such as race, class, locality, ethnicity, age, culture, disability, history, and religion. P2 was willing to 'abandon her homosexuality if that was what God wanted'. When P1 finally reclaimed her sexuality from the grip of religion, it seemed, for her, in religious terms, that it was the inner work of the Holy Spirit as she felt internally reformed and adjusted. To articulate her story of reclaiming her sexuality from the religion, P1 said:

In the Lutheran church I grew up in, girls are not allowed to wear trousers when you go to church, do you understand. I think my dad took that and our surrounding and he ran with it, because my sisters were not allowed, like they could not wear trousers ... Church (pause), you know, they'd force you to wear a certain way. I did that, but, not that I wished that I could ... then I'd come back home, and I'd take it off ... The minute that the car parks, I would go and

change, and then I eat. I would not (long pause) would not eat with my church clothes, never. Even today.

As mentioned earlier in chapter two, through Butler's (1988) Theory of Performativity, the clothes we wear may be considered a performativity of either our femininity or masculinity. P1 showed the performativity of her masculinity when she would change out of her church clothes she was forced to wear and go back to wearing trousers. Additionally, the connection between religion and the church dress code for Black-dominated denominations in South Africa is intriguing. The dress code expected for church attendance is only applicable to females and not to males. I am currently not affiliated to any religion, but, as a hobby, I enjoy visiting different, Black-dominated Christian congregations. Most of these religious organisations, in South Africa, interpret female dress code as a symbol that is important for religious identification.

The church dress code demanded by P1's church is a window into the social world made inevitable by a set of customs and rules. However, for most churches, this regulation of the female dress code goes beyond clothing. The church uses it not only for clothing, but for grooming as well. It seems the female dress code serves as an effective means of nonverbal communication, which expresses concepts deemed necessary and central to a religious denomination, such as religion, ethnicity, and gender. It also defines a woman's identity as expressed outwardly through her appearance, which is then forced to fit this religious belief system. 'Belief is a powerful thing. It is the most powerful thing that can break a society, remarked P1.

Moreover, heterosexism and homophobia in the church made P2's coming out, even to herself, difficult and frightening. This forced her to believe that there is good and evil sexuality. This resulted in her sexual identity developing while in a non-supportive cultural and social context. Religion and church in the lives of participants and their families also proved to be intricate entities as echoed in numerous passages in the participants' narratives. P2 said, 'My mother is Christian, she would literally disown me. So, coming out of the closet was not an option for me then. P1 also shared that, 'I was a Christian soldier, if I remember very well, solid (pause), praise the Lord. I prayed to God to hold this 'gayism' but it still did not work.' Again, P2's siblings believed that she was 'demon-possessed and the demon that possessed her was going to kill their mother'. They even held a formal family meeting explaining to P2 that she 'needed prayers and fasting so I could be delivered'. P2's family believed firmly in Christianity.

2.5 Negotiating same-sex sexuality through heteronormativity

All people, whether homosexual or heterosexual, have differing family experiences. What was clear from both participants was that their parents' perception of their sexuality was important to them. The participants feared being rejected by their families since they were strongly connected to their family members. As a result, they opted not to disclose their sexual orientation and gender identity to their families, especially their parents, when they were young. Black parents usually reject their gay children because Black families do not want to lose face within the community, particularly within the church community. The parents of the participants, like mine, grew up believing that homosexuality was demonic, illegal and morally wrong. This was due to our parents' negative religious views about homosexuality. As mentioned earlier, the Christian religion and church are intricate systems within many Black communities, and most Black LGBTI people, including the participants and myself, were raised within the Christian church system.

When I asked P1 why her father would not allow her to wear trousers to church, her response was that: "It was religiously not, allowed, and according to him, women are supposed to wear skirts and dresses, and they must, you know, look like, house Mamas (laughter)." This did not stop P1 from standing up to her father. She said her father always had an issue with her wearing trousers to church but not at home. Reporting this P1 said 'My father would be like, "Why are you wearing trousers to church? Whether you wear like that at home, but you can't wear trousers there (at church)." But I always defied that.' This proves P1's comfort with her gender, even though, according to societal norms, her sex did not match her gender. Moreover, according to Butler:

gender is a project with a cultural survival to its end, hence masculine-appearing lesbians are perceived by society to have a propensity to disturb the connection between gender and sex, through their masculine clothing and their masculine gender performance, even though they are sexed as female (p.139). Yet, when they are attracted to feminine-presenting women while performing a masculine gender, their sexuality may still be considered typical, because we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right (1990, p. 140).

P1's father's cultural norms influenced his experience of his daughter. It seems his perception arose from social dynamics he had established long ago. He represented an old-world culture and wanted to filter and interpret that culture for his child. His belief about love was that it should be confined within the barriers outlined by society. To him, love was strongly connected to gender, instead of to a person. P1's father's beliefs are in agreement with Wong and Breheny (2018), who write that 'shared understandings of social life that shape what we believe to be good, shape how we believe people

should act' (p. 252). P's father did not consider anything that fell outside the heterosexual norm as 'normal'. This is in agreement with Habarth's opinion that, 'heteronormativity has been defined as the enforced compliance with culturally determined heterosexual roles and assumptions about heterosexuality as natural or normal' (2015, p. 166). It also appears as though P1's father took the common African saying literally that it takes a village to raise a child; P1 explained that her father 'was concerned with what villagers would ask. "Why *o sa kgale ngwana gago* (why do you not reprimand your child for wearing trousers)"? Moreover, when responding to the question, 'Why did you only start dating at a tertiary education institution when you were already aware of your sexuality at the age of 14?', P1's response was that:

you will never act upon it [referring to her attraction to people of the same sex] because of your surrounding and how you are socialised ... Like I mean a girl must love a boy, a boy must love a girl ... *kere* (I am saying) this is how you were, how you were, how you were socialised as a person. And for my parents, normality is when a man says, 'Come P1, let's date.' But I can't go to a girl and say *ntwana* (baby) *are dire 1 plus 1* (let us be together).

2.6 Negotiating same-sex sexuality through marriage

In 2006, the South African government passed legislation permitting same-sex marriage. This was the outcome of the *Minister of Home Affairs v 21 Fourie* case, where it was declared that it was unconstitutional not to recognise same-sex relationships and the South African Parliament was mandated to ensure that same-sex couples' relationships were validated (Barker, 2011). However, this, in many instances, did not mean that South African Black culture readily embraced these marriages. Agreeing with this, P1 expressed that same-sex couples' relationships ought to be validated when she shared that 'it seems that gay marriage is legal, but we still fight trying to negotiate our way through'. My investigation of marriage included sub-themes of the meaning of marriage for the participants: their marriage values, the process of lobola negotiations in a homosexual marriage and parenting.

2.6.1 The meaning of marriage for the participants and their marriage values

The participants viewed marriage as the glue that bound them together. They believed that being in a marriage does not mean that there is the option to quit the marriage should there be challenges. 'But if I have given my life to the other person and I am stuck here with you for life ... no matter how P!\$\$\$# [swear word] off I am, I just have to come back home,' stated P1. P2 elaborated by saying 'marriage forces you to work on your issues ... once you are legally married to somebody, that forces you to work on your issues'. They also added that marriage for them carried the notion of accountability to each other. This accountability included finances, keeping each other updated on their whereabouts

and who they are with. 'The minute you are married you are accountable to your partner for what you are doing and who you are with, said P1. P2 further expounded that this 'accountability' is for everything. This accountability not only included each partner's whereabouts, but how they spent their money as well.

The equality of their same-sex relationship was evident in the way they communicated with each other. They both felt an unspoken, ineffable connection to each other and believed that this was a result of their similar sexuality. P2 described it as 'knowing how each other is wired'. When I asked them about what they valued most about their marriage, the participants' stories covered features such as honest and transparent communication, respect, love and intimacy. Our conversation below bears this out:

Thipe: This leads me straight to wanting to find out about your values as you are talking about the meaning of marriage. What are your own values as a married couple?

P2: (Laughter). My values are respect and love for the other party. I think for me it's to treat each other with respect. That will teach the other person how to treat you. If I want you to do something for me, let me do something for you and let me expect you to do the same for me. Cause for me I think that these are the core values. Other things are there, but I think for me those are the core ones.

P1: As a married couple lots and lots of sex is important.

Thipe: Is it not as important when you are not married?

P2: No, it's not, honestly. I promise you; it is not.

Thipe: Ja, ja (yes, yes), educate me. Why is it not as important when you are not married as it is when you are?

P2: For me it's this. There are many things that can go wrong in a marriage.

Thipe: Okay.

P2: It is easy for you to sort things out if there is intimacy. Because if you cannot find each other anywhere else ...

P1: ... at least find each other in the bedroom.

P2: After that, you will be able to be calm and talk about those issues. Because it happens that we are disagreeing, and nobody wants to say I am giving up, and everybody is saying I am right. So, you need to find a place where you can find each other (laughter).

P1: ... for me, the most important thing that I value in my relationship is communication. It doesn't matter how much or how long we talk about it, as long as we talk about it, but let's get it out there. Because a lot of relationships out there really get messed up because people don't talk. I can have integrity and love you, but if I don't communicate my true self and feelings, I bottle it up in the corner and I explode. Next thing we find ourselves distant. So, for me I really value communication. I really value communicating freely in a safe environment where I am going to be protected even while my thoughts are vile. That for me is everything. Let us not refrain from telling each other something because I am scared of how you are going to react. That is where things go wrong in relationship because someone does not want to say something because they are expecting negative feedback from you. Even if it can be negative, *mara* (but) put it in a way that can be comfortable. That safe comfortable relationship, communicating our thoughts and knowing that my thoughts will be well received ... Honesty is also key. Dishonesty nearly broke my marriage. Not being honest and doing stupid things you know, and I have learnt to be honest ... honesty and communication for me they are key ... or be transparent with your partner as much as you can.

I fully understand why P1 highly values honesty and communication in her union with P2. Honesty is very important for any relationship to thrive. It is a prerequisite for trust and trust is the building block in a relationship. Honesty helps partners honour and commit to their promises. It also guarantees integrity and authenticity that are vital for working together. Again, honest communication breeds mutual understanding of different interests and perspectives. However, honesty should be applied carefully, and not harshly, to consider the feelings of the other.

Furthermore, communication is the essence for nurturing long-term love. The harnessing of better communication between partners could prevent the emergence of many challenges. Couples who openly share their aspirations, fears and thoughts, also increase their chances of understanding each other better, thus being vulnerable with each other. This is because being vulnerable with each other means consciously choosing to express our feelings, opinions, thoughts and desires to one another as

couples. In relationships, better communication also leads to a deeper connection, confidence, trust and security.

Lastly, when we openly and honestly communicate with each other it means we prioritise each other's feelings, needs and wellbeing. It means our partner's emotional needs are as important as our own, and that our partnership is a place where we both belong. This fosters a sense of 'we' that protects the relationship and strengthens the love connection.

The extracts below explore the participants' motives for marriage:

P1: We just decided, the both of us. that you know what, marry because we love each other, I love you and you love me. There was no romantic nonsense *yago kwatama ka magwele* (bending on one knee to propose). It was just me and her sitting down and said, let's get married, and we said: Well let us do it in two months' time ... there was no process of saying now I am going to think about it. It was just us saying, we are doing this, let's get married.

P2: I have seen a lot of people staying together for five to seven years and breaking up, and I guess, at a very early age I had made up my mind that I will not cohabit with anybody. And uhm, though you still see that with heterosexuals, but in my experience, I've seen it happening more in the homosexual environment and I think where I was in my life, I think I was not going to give up everything for nothing. Because at that time uhm, me and my family were not getting along, so I was imagining me without having a relationship with my family, with my mother for nothing. So, I had to have a reason to myself. I had to justify it to myself why I was risking everything. For me a commitment made sense because I knew I wanted to do this. But I did not want to stay with somebody who is going to decide after two years that they not the one for me. So, marriage made sense and I was clear to say, if we can't get married then let's not be together. Because I am not in this to waste my time. I was very brave, but I think the one thing that I knew for sure was I wanted to do this. I think that was the only thing that I knew for sure at the time, that I was in love with her, and I wanted to marry her. And I was not going to sacrifice that for anybody.

Long-term relationships are often built on more than just congeniality and attraction. Hence, the importance of commitment in ensuring a couple's connectedness. Commitment between two people who love one another provides credibility to a promise or a pledge made. It is not only keeping an

obligation when all is going well but also when things are not going well. This way commitment proves resolve for couples to honour their responsibility. It is for these very reasons P1 shared that she ‘wanted to marry my partner and that I was not going to sacrifice that (not marrying her) for anybody’. By so saying, P1 demonstrated a deep desire of her commitment to her partner. She expressed her love, loyalty and a passion to take her commitment to her to another level.

Additionally, in the above extracts, participants were easily able to share rich and satisfying comments about how they experienced their marriage. Their agency in making meaning of their marriage is evident as they move through life. Neither of them felt culturally relegated to prepare meals, take out the rubbish or mow the lawn. They seemed to pride themselves on this freedom that did not hold them to obligatory cultural or societal expectations. They were happy to be the architects of their household’s divisions of labour. They agreed that even with the butch-femme dynamic evident in their marriage, the butch spouse may at any time choose to perform a feminine gender role while the femme spouse may perform a more masculine role. They did not want to play into the societal-cultural role of femininity and masculinity. P2 recounted that ‘our attraction is powerful because we talk and talk about how we want our marriage to be’. One may conclude that this negotiating and re-negotiating of their marriage rules, especially since they both felt that society already placed many stereotypes on them based on their gender performance, was their most important ingredient for their happy marriage.

3. The process of lobola negotiations in a homosexual marriage

Lobola is an African tradition that is fundamental to customary marriage. It is a norm where payment in the form of cattle or cash is expected from the family of the groom to the bride’s family. This handing over of cash or cattle is meant to consider the reproductive and domestic contribution of the bride and how it will advantage her new household whilst disadvantaging her own family by losing her (Rudwick and Posel, 2014). Paramount to this, lobola also ensures that children born from this union are recognised as the husband’s (Rudwick and Posel, 2014; Murray, 1981). It is also important to note that the cattle or cash payment is not to be regarded as selling the bride to the ‘highest bidder’ or that the groom is buying her (Shope, 2006, p. 65). Since the participants were not ‘out’ to their parents at the time of their legal marriage, they decided to first marry legally before embarking on lobola negotiations. P1 took the initiative and proposed that she be the one paying lobola. Often, in same-sex relationships, the two individuals decide who will pay lobola, as was the case with participants in this study. It is also common for masculine-presenting lesbian women to be expected to pay lobola for their partners (Livermon, 2015). This renders gender performance fundamental to how the lobola process is perceived. My wife and I also came to the same agreement that I, as a masculine-

gendered woman (masculine-gendered because I did not allow the dictates of society to determine my gender based on my sex, I chose my own gender), would pay lobola for her. However, the agreement had nothing to do with my masculinity but was simply because my wife was not working at the time of our traditional wedding. Be that as it may, when a female pays lobola instead of a male, there exists the possibility of re-writing traditional gendered roles that go with the process of lobola.

When responding to what lobola meant for her, P1 shared that ‘it is just a token of appreciation’ that her wife (P2) will be ‘taking her surname’ and that she (P1) will be able to ‘take care of her (P2)’. She also mentioned that the reality of P2 taking her surname is not to be viewed as P2 losing her identity. P1 further elaborated that, ‘It’s a matter of appreciating the other family to say thanks for this woman is going to take my surname, and any offspring coming from her will be in my surname. P1’s view of paying lobola is like the *eya* marriage of the Ijo tribe in Dahomey as described by Krige (1974) and mentioned in chapter two. The *eya* marriage, as opposed to the *egwa* marriage, requires a substantial amount of money to be paid as bride-wealth, which includes the rights to the children (Krige, 1974). P1’s perception of lobola also echoed Chiweshe’s (2016) suggestion that lobola is originally about creating relationships and uniting two families. Both participants also believed that the customary dictates for lobola should be reconstructed to accommodate homosexual relationships.

Additionally, P1 also alleged that going through the lobola ritual would help change the perception that lobola is an exclusively heterosexual practice and would also validate their marriage, especially by gaining validation from their parents. She shared that ‘lobola validates ... from a random grandmother, they would know how to address her [her wife], that’s what I always wanted. She is not my friend, and that thing of always explaining that to people is irritating’. As Rudwick and Posel (2014) remind us, the process of lobola concretises relationships and gains the couple validation from their family, community, culture, and ancestors. The following extracts express the participants’ experiences of the process of lobola negotiations:

P1: Uhm, the lobola though was well entertained, to a point where I even went to speak with my dad and uhm when I was done talking with dad, we reached an agreement that we will pay the lobola amount for P2. We had a conversation with the delegates, P2 as well went to her family and spoke about the lobola. There was no resistance from my side and P2’s side because we prepared them. We first told them our intention and then the family. My family and P2s family sat down to conceptualise the whole lobola thing. They said it’s fine, let’s arrange and tell us a date and we will meet. The date was set, it was November 2018.

P2: It made sense to do the right thing, I mean we are African. For two families to come together one must pay lobola and one must receive lobola. That's how we have been raised. It's been done that way, so it can be understood that the Mabuthos as Koning (P1 and P2 maiden pseudo-surnames) are one.

The participants' Africanism and Blackness were implied through belief and doing. P1's suggestion to pay lobola and P2's agreement indicated that their Africanism and Blackness were made evident by means of P2's belief that she was African and by means of P1's act of paying lobola, thus respecting and acknowledging an old African tradition. By this belief and act, the participants demonstrated how they could stay true to their sexuality while still respecting their African tradition. They bridged the gap between homosexual relationships and tradition. P1 did not mention encountering problems with paying lobola. She said it was just an issue of 'creating good relations' between two families and celebrating two 'children who love each other'. She also felt that the process was handled just like it would have been in the case of two heterosexual people getting married when she shared that, 'P2's family tradition was respected and accommodated throughout the lobola negotiation process'. P2 allowed for the lobola process in respect of her and P1's families, as well as to honour their cultures. African philosophy and the family perceive lobola as a vital process that requires participation of the family from the beginning, when the first letter is written to the bride's family, to the end, when the couple start their lives as a new family (Mkhize, 2004; Nkosi, 2011).

As already mentioned, the participants also reported that it was very important for them to follow culture as a guarantee for their families to respect, accept and bless their union. Be that as it may, there was an aspect of the tradition where P2's family was willing to compromise, that is, to permit females to form part of the lobola negotiations. This is not common practice in the Ndebele tribe; however, P2 noted that it was done with utmost respect. The latter shows that even though culture is constructed, it does not have to be static. The participants proved that culture can be redefined and deconstructed. The participants' Blackness and Africanism were demonstrated by means of ethnicity (following the Ndebele way of negotiating lobola with little variation) and culture.

When the participants discussed their experience of the process of lobola negotiations with me, our conversation unfolded as follows:

Thipe: So P2's family is Ndebele right, and you (P1) are Pedi?

P1: Yes

Thipe: Okay, you (P1) had a team negotiating for you?

P1: Yes.

Thipe: ... who went to P2's family?

P1: Yes.

Thipe: Okay.

P1: I took my uncle, his wife, umm, my brother, his wife and my other cousin.

Thipe: Ooh, so there were females on the table?

P1: Yes.

Thipe: How did they (P2's delegation) take it?

P2: Ndebeles do not negotiate lobola with women.

Thipe: Yes, that's what I thought.

P2: But uhm, they were accommodative, and in doing that they then said let us also invite my aunt.

Thipe: Okay.

P2: So that there's also a woman from our side.

Thipe: Ooh, I see.

It is noteworthy to mention that lobola is a heteronormative process that can never exclude gender in same-sex relationships. Although P1 tried to separate herself from the inevitably gendered lobola process by stating that 'I am a woman marrying another woman', her uncle found a way to make gender the centre of the lobola negotiation process, thus reintroducing heteronormativity. This study witnessed P1 being viewed as the man by her uncle when he said, "We are going to regard you as the man who is going to ask for a wife.' When one presents as masculine, as P1 does, one is often seen as a man. Butler (1990, p. 23) would regard this as an 'incoherent' gender since P1's gender would not be conforming to the norm. This incoherence is, however, ironic since Butler (1990) believes it to be a result of society's heteronormative laws to safeguard people's adherence to a normative sexuality and gender. P2 also, for a while, thought her family were not so worried about the gender of her partner

when she explained that ‘my family did not bring up any issues regarding her partner’s gender’. However, she soon contradicted her assumption when she shared that ‘the negotiation from our point was that we are giving our child to you as we would if you were a man’, thus reinforcing existing heteronormative norms.

4. Parenting

Like heterosexuals, homosexual people can have and raise children. In fact, just as in developed countries, many Black South Africans in homosexual relationships are increasingly family- and children-centred. Brooks writes that “Black lesbians are more likely to have children or partner with someone who has a child” (Brooks, 2017, p. 36). Although not all same-sex couples make the choice to have and raise children, the choice is still available to all who have the desire for it. Most lesbians opt for the donor insemination process since it allows pregnancy without their having to participate in sexual intercourse with a male. In South Africa, this process is regulated through the Human Tissue Act, No. 65 of 1983 (later amended by Act 106 of 1984 and Act 51 of 1989). Due to donor access being limited only to married women upon their husband’s written consent, the insemination Act was restricted until October 1997. Currently, the amendments to the Act grant all unmarried women, including lesbians, access to donor insemination. Also, although there was no legal proscription against adoptions by individual gay or lesbian people prior to September 2002, same-sex couples who wished to adopt were strictly forbidden from doing so. The Constitutional Court later permitted same sex life partners to adopt children jointly if they were deemed to be suitable parents. Eventually, on March 28, 2003, the Constitutional Court made a ruling that both parents of a same-sex couple automatically become legal parents of a child or children conceived through artificial insemination (Van Ewyk and Kruger, 1974).

Furthermore, when I asked her if her employer would grant her maternity leave if she were to fall pregnant, P2’s response was that:

Even when you are adopting a child that is younger than three months, you must be given maternity leave like somebody who is on maternity leave. But there has not been an incident, it’s just that for me there has been a lot of stereotypes because there is a lot of heterosexual women that have given birth through IVF, but it’s not spoken of, and then we assumed that they had sex naturally and they had a kid. But with us it’s going to be clear, its either IVF or P1 cheated. There is that stigma as well, that this child is handwork [meaning that the child is

not conceived by natural means but scientifically manufactured with the help of human hands].

You do not want your child to grow and know *khuthi* (that) this one was hand manufactured.

P2 seemed to imply that, if she were to fall pregnant, she would prefer not to be stigmatised due to having conceived via IVF since some heterosexual woman, at times, due to varying reasons, also do conceive via IVF. This is what Butler (1990) refers to as femininity or woman-ness or representation of femininity or woman-ness. It is a representation of behaviour, action or expression performed at a particular time in life. P2's representation of her femininity or woman-ness was also echoed when she shared that 'even when you are adopting a child that is younger than three months, you must be given maternity leave like somebody (a heterosexual female) who is on maternity leave'.

Likewise, P2's comment on medical aid was that:

We're (P1 and P2) on the same medical aid. They did not give us issues. They didn't because initially P1 had her own and it was expensive so then we decided *ukuthi* (that) we would take mine. All the requirements and the marriage certificate were asked, then there were no issues.

Credit here is due to favourable law amendments and medical aid schemes are advantageous to same-sex couples in South Africa. The Medical Schemes Act states that it is unlawful for medical aid schemes to refuse the registration of same-sex partners.

Moreover, contrary to the literature that suggests that the LGBTI people, from time to time, cannot access healthcare support services central to their needs, the participants in this study did not report any challenges in accessing health care and did not experience harsh treatment from health care professionals (Muller and Hughes, 2016; Matebeni, Reddy, Sandfort, and Southey-Swartz, 2013 Nel, 2007). P2's account of her relationship with her family's health care professional is recorded below:

Our gynae [gynaecologist] is educated when it comes to homosexuality. I think she was the one who advised us on how to go about getting IVF (in vitro fertilisation) and the best facilities for that. Our medical aid does not cover for that ... We also have got two GPs they actually learned to (pause), I think one is White and the other is Black, *ke mopedi* (she is Northern Sotho), so they have learned that we are a pair, and we work together. So, when the other is not there, they would ask you where is the other person, why are you coming alone? Our exposure is just to these three people and Sbusiso's [participant's son] doctor. He [the son] is still going to a paediatrician. She, she's fine. I think we discussed it previously *ukuthi* (that) with educated people it is easier.

It seems P1 is suggesting that an increase of information about LGBT people may yield decreased levels of discomfort toward this population, and probably reduce LGBT stereotyping and discrimination. She is implying that more knowledge about the LGBT community could assist society change their misunderstanding to acceptance to even lessening biases concerning the LGBT community.

5. Children of participants' view(s) of family

P1 and P2 are raising two teenage boy children who were ages 14 (C1) and 16 (C2) at the time I interviewed them. Whatever its origins, a family structure must be adaptable and open to change to allow positive development of its members. There was no evidence of abnormal development shown, through interviews, by C1 and C2 due to being raised by lesbian parents (Haugaard, Dorman, and Schustack, 1998). Both children showed play and activity preferences similar to children raised in heterosexual households (Gold, Perrin, Futterman, and Friedman, 1994). The latter was proved by C1 when he expressed that nothing changed after he told his friends that he has two mothers; while C2 expressed that him and his friends sometimes joke about having two mothers. There has also been concern that children raised in lesbian or gay homes will become lesbian or gay as they grow, engage in incorrect sex conflicts, or sex role behaviour, and possibly even experience sexual abuse (Gold, Perrin, Futterman, and Friedman, 1994). However, this was not the case with both children when asked if they thought they would ever be gay someday. According to a study of lesbian-led homes, most children from these families identify as heterosexual when they become adults (Patterson, 1995). Below are the children's responses when asked if they thought they would ever be gay:

Interviewer ...would you ever be gay in your life if you think about it? Do you think you can be gay?

C1: No.

Interviewer: No...why do you say no? How do you know you won't be gay?

C1: 'Cause I'm not attracted to men.

Interviewer: (laughter). You are not attracted to men, are you attracted to women?

C1 and 2: Yes.

Interviewer: (laughter). So you already know these attraction stories.

C1 and C2: Yes.

Furthermore, there also has been worry that children raised by lesbian or gay parents will experience stigmatisation and have strife with their peers, thus threatening their self-esteem, psychological health and social connections. These worries and apprehensions, however, have not been supported by research (Gold, Perrin, Futterman, and Friedman, 1994). Additionally, it seems that C1 and C2 view their family life as normal, despite having lesbian parents, in the same way that children from heterosexual homes do (Tasker, 2005). Extracts above and below are evidence that C1 and C2 both did not experience stigmatisation from their friends.

Interviewer: Okay ...C2, and your friends know (about having two mothers)?

C2: Ja.

Interviewer: And what do they say?

C2: First time they felt *gore* (that)...*mara* (but) as it goes, they just...sometimes we make jokes about it *gore* (that)...

Interviewer: What types of jokes? (laughs).

C2: (Laughs) They will ask me how it is to have two...

Interviewer: Two mothers...yeah.

C2: Yeah...I'll be like its fine...they'll be like ahhh (laughs).

Interviewer: (laughing)...You won't get into trouble.

C1: How do they...

Interviewer: Oooohhhh, okay, how do they become intimate *neh*?

C2: Yes.

Interviewer: How do they appreciate each other?

C2: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, and how do you answer?

C2: I said I don't know.

Interviewer: You don't know *neh*...clearly you don't know.

C2: Yes.

Interviewer: (laughs) And then, it doesn't bother you?

C2: *Aai* (no), not really.

Interviewer: Do you think it feels normal or funny, or how does it feel (to have two mothers)?

C1: It's normal.

Interviewer: Is it normal?

C1 and C2: Yeah.

Moreover, society, particularly health care professionals, could show LGBT parents and their families more respect and support (Ahmann, 1999). For instance, health care workers may acknowledge both parents, speak in a gender-neutral manner about spouses and show publications and posters about various family types. They must refrain from erroneously believing that challenges that might be experienced by children of lesbian or gay parents have to do with their parents' sexual orientation.

6. Significance of findings

The findings of this study contribute to the limited body of literature that addresses experiences of Black South African LGBT people. While analysing the participants' interviews, I noticed experiences participants shared with me that other researchers have not yet highlighted. When telling their stories of being South-African, participants spoke of their South African identities as a history they shared with other South Africans, as an improved geographical location, as a belief, and as a cultural practice. Participants also experienced a sense of liberation living in South Africa (a rare occurrence for Black lesbians) from threats and acts of violence such as the corrective rape of lesbians from homophobic and misogynistic members of society. They also never mentioned their race, but only implied it, when telling their stories thus refusing to hierarchise their identities of being Black, lesbian, and married.

7. Implications for therapy

These findings should remind us as therapists of the ethical duty we have to be culturally competent, and to have extensive understanding of oppression concerning the LGBT population in South Africa, especially the oppression of Black LGBT people. We should first embrace the humanity of the LGBT people before we embrace their sexual identities. It is my hope that through this research, therapists will be mindful when counselling Black lesbian clients and clients of the LGBT community at large.

Doing this may provide LGBT clients, particularly Black LGBT clients, with the strength to continue being resilient.

8. Summary

This chapter highlighted the findings of 10 interviews with a lesbian couple, narrating their stories and experiences of what it is like to be a Black married same-sex couple in South Africa. The chapter was based on themes that resulted from the data. The themes offered significant evidence of how the couple negotiated their sexuality through the intersectionality of gender, religion, and heteronormativity. The following chapter will present limitations of the study, conclusions and recommendations as the inferences they may have concerning future research.

CHAPTER 5

LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study investigated experiences of a Black married female South African same-sex couple. The aim was to explore how they navigated their lives as part of a heterosexist and heteronormative society, and how they created meaning out of their experiences. I followed a multi-layered analytical process, which required an analysis of themes and sub-themes. It was very important for me as a researcher to explore participants' experiences, from a 'not knowing' position. Participants' narratives were collected through unstructured interviews with the objective to obtain in-depth understandings of their personal experiences. This chapter will discuss the limitations of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

1. Limitations of the study

The study is not encompassing of experiences of all Black South African married lesbian couples. However, the qualitative method used allowed participants to delve into their thoughts, perceptions and feelings, thus creating an opportunity for them to assign meaning to their experiences. The approach also enabled an in-depth exploration into participants' personal experiences. Again, the participants are highly educated and have more access to information than other individuals who fit the criteria for the research but may live in less resourced areas. This information provided them with vocabulary as well as a critical lens that gave them insights into their identities. Black South African lesbian couples living in townships and without access to formal education, married or unmarried, may narrate their experiences differently.

Lastly, the interview questions were unstructured to allow participants to respond according to the way they assign meaning to and understand their experiences and identities. Due to the open-endedness, the interviews varied in depth and in length. This resulted in participants misinterpreting some questions and parts of some questions not being addressed. Despite this, I still managed to evaluate the tone, analyse data and create meaningful findings from the couple's experiences.

2. Conclusions

According to participants, being Black South Africans included holding on to a belief system which dictates that 'we have to do things the right way' as shared by P2; and acting out a distinct African custom by means of P1 paying lobola for P2. They discussed how being African can be performed and

personified. As a result, they were expressing that being African is not to be viewed as an essential identity, but one that comes into being as it is enacted.

In addition, by agreeing to acknowledge and follow the lobola process, the participants defied the discourse that homosexuality is un-African, since this argument excludes Black lesbians from their local communities and denies them the authenticity to identify as African. This narrative also falsely presumes that all African societies are heterosexual. Zanele Muholi (2004) noted that Black lesbians in South Africa are racially and ethnically regarded as ‘outsiders’ based on the notion that homosexuality is ‘un-African’ (2004, pp. 118-119). To remedy the latter Moreau (2015) suggested that “to improve relations between South African citizens, society ought to make an effort to understand and recognise that lesbians are also human” (2015, p. 507).

Furthermore, LGBT activism in South Africa, as alluded to by P2 in the previous chapter, has rapidly progressed since the democratisation of the country in 1994. LGBT activism in South Africa and Namibia, in particular, has a regional, national, and continental emphasis (Currier, 2012). ‘Movements remain nationally oriented in that they tailor some strategies to target state actors, such as by demanding that state leaders retract homophobic comments, and other strategies that target local institutions and cultural attitudes,’ explains Currier (2012, p. 21). South African and Namibian LGBT activists have also concluded that the law needs reformation as a way of protecting equal rights for LGBT people (Currier, 2012, 2015; Mgbako, 2013, Thoreson, 2013). Governments in few other African countries have also gone as far as adopting varying tactics to decolonise policies and laws concerning sexual diversity and gender². Again, with all credit due to LGBT organisations and campaigns, the South African government eradicated anti-sodomy laws that existed during the apartheid regime and eventually legalised same-sex marriage by means of the Civil Union Act (Currier, 2012). The Act was established in 2006 and automated a marriage contract in community of property, unless otherwise stipulated in an antenuptial marriage contract (Judge, Manion, and De Waal, 2008, Van Zyl, 2011a).

Importantly, Epprecht’s (2005) extensive scholastic work on sexual practices within different African societies demonstrated not only the heterosexual/homosexual binary, but also a variety of same-sex

² Sexual Minorities Uganda, INCREASE in Nigeria and Sister Namibia are abrasive activists continually challenging the stereotypes of how sexual minorities are perceived. The Gay and Lesbian Organization of Witwatersrand (GLOW) provides advocacy for Black LGBTI people (especially in from South African townships). In 2014 in Angola, the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights accepted Resolution 275 which prohibits human rights violations, violence, and injustice against persons due to their insinuated or real gender identity and/or sexual orientation.

sexualities found within the African continent before colonialisation. Hence the argument that homosexuality is un-African, made by most African leaders, must be disregarded if both heterosexual and LGBT Africans are to live together in harmony (Mawerenga, 2018). Obono appropriately states that 'Africa's sexual revolution can no longer be ignored', and that it is equally important to break away from discussing African sexualities only through the lens of sexual violence and HIV/AIDS, a goal which this study managed to achieve (2010, p.8). Appiah also suggests a need to prove the relational, dynamic, and the multi-layered nature of African sexualities in what he called 'discursive space-clearing' (1993, p. 240). To add to this, Tamale (2013) proposed a much more contextualised and complex understanding of African sexualities. She also edited a collection that contains work by a diversity of scholars and activists all highlighting the plurality of African sexualities and the need to overcome homophobia in a book titled, *The description of African Sexualities: A reader*.

Overall, the data collected proved that participants struggled to negotiate their sexuality within prescribed traditions, religion, culture and societal norms. Since their struggles were experienced in their everyday lives, it was important to learn about their complex sexualities within their contexts, as Tamale (2011) suggests. P1 grew up as a self-proclaimed 'hard core' butch/masculine-presenting individual and never had the intention to come out to her parents. She shared her experience that her parents perceived her sexuality as not being 'normal' because of her dress code and her interest in masculine gender roles, emphasising Butler's view that gender is performed and is a social construct (Butler, 1990). P2, on the other hand, felt that coming out to her mother would lead to her mother disowning her. This resulted in the participants internally battling with coming out to their parents since their parents had hoped that they would enter heterosexual marriages. This is evidence of the enduring existence of heteronormativity. As difficult and challenging as it was, the participants eventually broke their parents' expectations of sexuality and gender performance, not only by coming out, but also by marrying each other traditionally and legally. As a result, they proved that 'same-sex attraction, behaviour, and identity are all-natural parts of the human sexual experience' (The other foundation, 2016, p. 31). Eventually, their parents learnt to accept them.

Furthermore, participants live in a middle-class neighbourhood, have university degrees, pay taxes, have children, drive sport utility vehicles (SUVs) and work full-time. They may be seen as the epitome of mainstream South African society, which would have been almost impossible for a Black lesbian couple a few decades ago. There is no need to ask who is making dinner at their house since the most vital truth for them is that sexual equality runs much more broadly than gender roles, and that this equality continually reinforces the recognition and validity of their commitment to each other. Their understanding was also that sexual equality begets respect and honour to their union.

Moreover, although the participants' self-regard is based on spirituality, since they were both raised in religious backgrounds, they have often felt demonised by the church. The Christian religion, as highlighted by literature, was a major cause of the participants' internal conflict and sexual prejudice for years, before they could find a church that accepted their sexuality (Aken'ova, 2010; Francis and Msibi, 2011; Matebeni, 2014, Stobie, 2014). Therefore, for the participants, acceptance within the church meant healing from past experiences of demonization and homophobic sermons from religious leaders. It is noteworthy to mention that this demonization was exacerbated by the fact that the participants not only regarded church as a religious institution, but also as a cultural and a family institution. Due to this, it is important for South African religious establishments to consider churches a safe space of worship for all people, heterosexual, and homosexual alike, rather than as a place of potential harm for the LGBT community.

It is also noteworthy to mention that even though participants in this study expressed optimism regarding South Africa's progressive LGBT laws, especially those relating to marriage, civil unions are currently still administered under distinct Acts instead of being administered under the original Marriage Act (Barker, 2011). While heterosexual couples may decide whether to enter a civil marriage and/or a customary marriage, South Africa's law allow same-sex couples to only marry through a civil union. This surely implies a hierarchy in kinds of marriage, with heterosexual marriages being privileged over same-sex ones (Barker, 2011; Bonthuys, 2008). It is even more unfair that marriage officers trusted with the administration of civil unions by the South African government are allowed to refuse to marry same-sex couples based on their religious and or personal beliefs (Barker, 2011). However, the same does not apply to customary (heterosexual) marriages, suggesting that same-sex couples could be denied their constitutional rights. As a result, notwithstanding legal recognition, it seems civil unions remain inferior to civil marriage. However, the participant's narratives highlighted that their marriage is centred on stability and commitment and not only on legal recognition.

Lobola is another area of potential conflict for Black same-sex partners. Irrespective of the expectation that the partner being paid lobola for is expected to perform domestic and or reproductive duties (highlighting the gendered and patriarchal nature of the lobola practice as well as objectifying the female body), the participants proved that the lobola process can be re-established, re-claimed, and re-adjusted (Barker, 2011). They challenged the long-standing heteronormative nature of the lobola practice and, as suggested by Butler, became 'incoherent' sexual and gendered beings (1990, p. 23). Butler (1990) is not using the term 'incoherent' in a negative or derogatory way here. She means that gender is difficult to understand since it is something that keeps changing over time, a construct that

is decentred, rather than centred, that is adequate rather than inadequate, and that is fluid rather than static.

It was also clear that through the lobola practice, both participants had to compromise. P1 compromised when she opted to pay lobola for P2. P2 agreed to take on a new surname and to be the one who would carry children in the future. This suggests that, instead of approaching the lobola practice from a heteronormative stance, the participants viewed it as a practice that could benefit them. They believed that engaging in the lobola process would validate their marriage, as made evident by the data in the study. Personally, I believe that it allowed them recognition by their families and legitimised their being African. Nevertheless, the participants also expressed that their validation did not have to be at the expense of their freedom, happiness or stability. As shared by Brooks (2017), the stereotype that lesbian and gay people do not have lasting relations is not true since their relationships are as reliable and 'real' as those of heterosexuals (2017, p. 40). Everyone, regardless of his or her sexuality, must learn to deal with family expectations. Living for ourselves, rather than for our families is part of growing up. There comes a point in everyone's life when a person must learn, firmly but lovingly, to assert their independence from their families, and the participants, by marrying each other, did so, eventually.

To summarise: in South Africa the intersection of class, race, age, religion, education, geographical location, and socio-economic status of Black LGBT people have significant impacts on their experience. Usually, middle-class Black LGBT people do not experience the same degree of injustice based on their sexual orientation, as the two participants in this study. In addition, for most Black South Africans, including Black LGBT South Africans, family and church are the two most significant environments where communal life and socialisation occurs. This is also where morality and social attitudes are shaped. Unfortunately, these are also the spheres in which significant injustice, for Black LGBT people, occurs.

In addition, this research exposed how systems of dominance are maintained not only through law, but also through culture, customs and stereotypes. Despite this, the participants were able to marry each other in accordance with progressive LGBT legislation and a narrative that enables a happy life and a breaking away from intolerant religion and culture. They created a new tradition by marrying each other, going through the lobola process, and creating new surnames for themselves and their children. This was proof of their resilience, adaptability, and determination to thrive, whether their union was celebrated or not. They said that they value stable relationships, especially their own family formation,

and perceive their marriage as validating their family. Their narratives revealed that they have created meaning in caring for themselves and each other with unapologetic love.

Heritage month in South Africa (September) marks a period when different ethnicities acknowledge their cultures and how they have evolved over time. This can be a window of opportunity for LGBT people, especially Black LGBT people, to express who they are and a time to express pride in their marriages. This may be the time where South Africans recognise that homosexuality is not foreign to Black Africans. By embracing the lobola process and its significance, the participants in my study demonstrated that being Black is not only about race but that being Black is an experience, and that Black lesbians can participate, perceive and interpret African folklore in a way that is meaningful to them. By going through the lobola process, they challenged the notion of what and who is African and demonstrated that culture and customs are fluid in nature and not static.

Finally, according to the South African Bill of Rights, discrimination based on gender, sex and sexual orientation is prohibited, and everyone's dignity and rights must be respected and protected; same-sex relationships are to be protected and respected just like the rights of those in heterosexual relationships (Cockrell, 1997; Du Plessis and Corder, 1994; Currie and De Waal, 2013; Devenish 1999; Stychin, 1996; Van Wyk and Orange, 2014). Therefore, to create a just society, South African citizens who are aware of existing gender norms within the society and the damaging effects these can have, have an important opportunity and an obligation to break stereotypes, challenge gender roles and educate their children.

3. Recommendations

- Further research on the experiences of Black South African LGBT people is needed to explore how they navigate multi-layered systems of marginalisation.
- This research could be replicated with a larger sample that is more diverse with regards to geographical location, race, class and education.
- For a much broader sample, researchers may include other members of the LGBT community, especially Black transgender, and intersex people, since they would add a much-needed contribution to the complex understanding of sexual identity.
- Further research may focus on mental health and therapeutic interventions that could assist Black South African LGBTI people to cope with heterosexism and tribalism.

- Future researchers may investigate how Black masculine-presenting lesbian people experience their identity and the impact their experiences have on their psychological and emotional well-being.
- LGBT research should be aimed at exploring the experiences of LGBTI people in their personal and private spaces.
- Through LGBT research, researchers may assist by joining activists to raise awareness of the challenges LGBTI people face in South Africa, especially Black LGBTI people, and how authorities could work together with communities to combat homophobia and discrimination against LGBTI people.
- There is great need for research to continue disproving the belief that homosexuality is un-African.
- LGBT researchers should inform South Africa's Department of Basic Education to include discussions of sexual orientation as part of the national syllabus so that future generations can be educated about sexual and gender diversity from a young age. This might lessen the prevalence of homophobia, discrimination and violence against LGBT people.
- Lastly, LGBT researchers should consider investigating the negative effects that religion, particularly Christianity, has on Black LGBT people.
- More research with adults and older adolescents raised in lesbian households is needed before we can draw stronger conclusions about the long-term outcomes of being raised in these settings.
- Research with children raised by LGBT parents is needed before any conclusions about their development can be made.
- Research is also needed to review the implications of varied family forms, children's awareness of parental sexual identity and the impact of heterosexism and homophobia on children of LGBT parents.

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APPENDIX

Transcribed interviews

Interview 1

Interviewer: Okay, and thanks for letting me in your house. In that manner we have started.

Participant 1 (P1): Good. Amen.

Interviewer: Uhm... Let's just start with what does it mean for you to be South African. These days, or even before this day.

(Laughter)

Participant 1 asking participant 2 (P2): Do you wanna answer that?

Interviewer: Remember that there's no wrong or right, nê? Just as it is.

P2: To me, it can... it means that... as a lesbian person... it means that we... we have (pause) freedom to do what we want to do. And. (pause) Uhm... There are no longer limitations like before. You know, I can marry. And that marriage will be acknowledged and recognised. Even though there will be few individuals that might have issues here and there. But the bottom line is that the law has been passed, with regard to gay, uhhh... whatever, same sex marriage...

Interviewer: Uh-huh (nodding the head)

P2: And the ability to move around, as a woman. And the ability to be able to do what I want to do, when I want to do it. That's what it means to me.

Interviewer: Okay Beyond sexuality, anything else? About being South African. Maybe that you can talk about?

P2: I mean... I think that being South African for me again in terms of sexuality and whatever. South Africa is a great country to be in. Despite our issues, you know... politically. But I think we are... (it's a gr... *stutter*), we are lucky to be living in South Africa in this era. You know... there's a lot of

opportunities, business-wise...at the workplace... Uhm... So... I think (South A... *stutter*), I think it's a wonderful country too.

Interviewer: Okay. What are about you?

P1: Uhm (pause)... Okay. For me. For me, looking back and seeing what happened in the past in our country, and... I've actually experienced being a South African post-'94. I have none experience really before that, because I was younger. For me, the fact that I can have opportunities that my parents never had. The fact that I can, I can be able to live where, wherever I want to live. Be able to go to school. Be able to take my child to any school that I want to take. For me... for me, that is... That is a privilege. For me to be able to do what my parents could not do. (You... you... *stutter*) you look back to what the youth was doing politically. Uhh... The youth of 1976 in particular. And you look- comparing- to what they had- and what we have now. The difference is just huge.

P2: Ja...

P1: So, I'm... (I'm... *stutter*) for me (the...the *stutter*) the significance is for me, for me to do whatever I want to do whenever I want to do it.

Interviewer: And so far- are you getting to your goals? Are you doing what you want to do, whenever and however you want to do it?

P1: Uhm... I am... doing what I want to do, whenever I want to do, with financial limitations, of course.

Interviewer: Okay

P1: Because (a *stutter*) a lot of the things... whatever you want to do, you check the financial muscle, to be able to do it. So the limitations will mainly be the financial muscle. But, wherever the financial...the finance permits... I'm actually able to do that.

Interviewer: Okay. That's... that's you. You mentioned it's post-1994, *nê* ?

P2: Yes

Interviewer to P2: And you? Any recollection of pre-1994?

P2: Well, for me it was just the issues of the riots, I mean growing up. The students' riots were Afrikaans... It was not like 1996. Growing up in the rural place we had, serious riots in terms of school. Boys boycotting Afrikaans. Cause their next subject period started. Uhm... Uhm... but (at *stutter*),

at first you actually did not understand what it was. You just (pause) go with the flow, you know?. And... Other than that, for me, (bef... *stutter*), prior to 1994, those... those other things that I've experienced, I grew up in a rural area, I did not travel a lot- at all. So, it was, I was just confined to that little space. And the only time that I left that space, was when I was coming to university. So, I wouldn't say really what was the difference, (that *stutter*) what with that I did not travel much. All I knew was that space, that I was in.

Interviewer: Okay. All right. And then... and then... being in South Africa. Let's talk about from a sexual orientation point of view. Pre-1994. Do you have any recollection of that?

P2: For me, I was in the closet. I was in the closet. I was not out. Like I said, I grew up in a rural area. There was nobody (who *stutter*) who was out. Uhm... I just lived like a normal girl, who played soccer. Who... The only barrier that I broke, for me, was the issue of playing soccer... doing the things that boys did. And... you know... uhm... but... I was not out. I did not practice. I did not date. Uhm... Till I left, to varsity.

Interviewer: Okay. Through all your childhood years, you never had a partner?

P2: No. You know... Uhhh... and then is... Yeah, I think... By the time I was in grade 12, you have those nice in-out flings. And... But not out. You would not. You know?!... Ja...

(laughter)

P2: I hope you'll be able to hear me on the recording.

Interviewer: Ahhh yeah... we'll do something with it...

P2: I... I... I know... But, you guys have those flings, but nothing really concrete. Because, I mean... Because it was forbidden! I would not even start acting out. But my... my... my appearance was saying that this is not the girl that people expect to be. Because I'd wear my brother's trousers. You know... I would go to church in a dress, but before I would sit down and eat, I wanna change into my trousers (pause) and stuff, and, you know, start feeling comfortable again. So...

Interviewer: And... And... And now... what... what... what is your community saying about that look?

P2: It has always been (pause) "moshimane wa papa" (i.e.daddy's boy).

Interviewer: Okay... and where is this coming from?

P2: It's coming from... it's emanating from the elders.

Interviewer: Oh! Okay...

P2: You know... not from me... not from my parents... but from the community. They've always associated me with daddy's boy. Like because I would fix my dad's car with him... oils... whatever that needs to be done. I'll be the one to be told to, get me a spanner (car tool). I'll go and get number 10, 14... I knew what 14 would be, you know? So... It was one of those things. And, I think people associated that (pause) and then... then automatically they... they... they... would be saying I'm daddy's boy.

Interviewer: And Papa... how did he handle that?

P2: He never had an issue with it. He never had an issue that would... Even until today, they would still call me that. So, he never would have an issue with the fact that people would call me that. But he always had an issue that "Why you wearing trousers?"]], you know. Whether you were like that at home, or you can't wear trousers there-there-there-there-there. But I always defied that.

Interviewer: Any reason why you couldn't wear trousers according to him?

P2: It was religiously not (not *stutter*) allowed. And according to him, women are supposed to wear trousers, no. skirts.. ... (*stutter*) dresses. And they must, you know... look like... house Mamas.

P1: (jokingly), and must braid their hair!

Interviewer: now, what is your dad... ehh.. as far as what does he do? At that time. This time that you are talking about, when you were growing up. What was he?

A: He was a principal of a school. Who... who studied sociology.

Interviewer: Okay. Principal where? In the village or elsewhere?

P2: It was not in the village... a township.

Interviewer: Okay... so, he's a principal who did sociology, nêh?

P2: (affirms)

Interviewer: ... but who still says...

P2: Who still does not (u... *stutter*)... who still does not like... (id... *stutter*) identifying this homosexuality within his own house. He's always thinking that no, it can't be.

Interviewer: **And you are saying he's not identifying homosexuality in the house? Are you now at this age aware that you are homosexual?**

A: Of course I am.

Interviewer: **Okay. Err... err... err... (how do *stutter*) how do you even start to... how old are you?, , let me get it right... How... what... at what age?**

P2: ...Of me not identifying?...

Interviewer: **No. When you started identifying as a homosexual, how old are you?**

P2: For me, when... when... being called daddy's boy is not an identification of homosexuality. They just look like the girl who does... you know... boy things. But when I started to understand that I'm gay, I was in... grade ten? I was 14. But I did not acknowledge it. I did not act on it. I would just have crushes. Like, I had this huge crush on my teacher. Big time!

Interviewer: **(Jokingly) Ja! While other learners are learning... you are... you are fantasizing!**

(laughter)

P2: Nooooooh I feel like they were going to kill me. Yes. But I... I... I... at that point, I did not know what it is. But I just knew that no man (pause) You know.

Interviewer: **There's something about this teacher?.**

P2: Ahhh... there's something about Mary (a name of a movie)!

(laughter)

Interviewer: **Okay, are you talking... are you sharing this with anybody or are you just keeping all this to yourself?**

P2: you see. I'm keeping this to myself. Not my sisters... nobody, just me.

Interviewer: **Not even friends?**

P2: Not even friends. It's just me stuck in that little place saying... this is my little thing. this is my little stuff. Because, I wouldn't know what I'm going to say... what am I going to say – that I got a crush on my teacher? I'm like ai wena! (Hey you).

A deep sigh

Interviewer: Okay, now... the guys that you are playing soccer with- okay, now... I'm assuming that you are playing with only guys. Am I right to assume that you are playing with guys only?

P2: Of course guys.

Interviewer: Were you the only girl in the team?

P2: I was the only girl.

Interviewer: Now, how would they relate to you?

P2: Like a boy, totally. I never had issues with them. They were just my boys. Even today, they're still are... They're my boys.

Interviewer: No funny questions?

P2: No funny questions. No funny movements. No funny things. We'd go to the river- swim together. Go to the field, look after the cattle. And come back home ate. Nothing...

Interviewer: So, you are playing soccer, you are fixing the car with Papa... you are err... err... err... herding the cattle?

P2: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. And no-one is trying their luck with you- of your friends?

A: Of course they do. But then I tell them that I'll moer them. Like straight away. Like, you know. Like that. But, but, but... the immediate friends, they didn't. It was like the people from the other villages. That would... you know, make some moves. But then I'd just tell them "No. Fuck off". But then anyway, my father was very respected and they were scared of him. So that for me, worked for me. I'd just tell them straight away, "I'm gonna tell my dad, and he'll come and sort you out."

Interviewer: Umm, I am going to edit the strong language out, but lets try to watch it neh? So Why do you think the guys never tried- your closest friends?

P2: I don't know. I think... I think... they always... they just took me as one of them. Straight up, because I was hard-core then. The only thing that I probably did not do was to wear my brothers underpants but like... But like... that was the only thing that I did not wear.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Did you- at any time or ever wished you could have been the girl and did things with the female friends?

P2: I tried. I tried, for my mum's sake. You know. Church. You... you know they'd force you to wear a certain way. I did that. But, not that I wished that I could... No.

Interviewer: And what? You would wear that dress to church and then...?

P2: Then I'd come back home and I'd take it off.

Interviewer: With immediate effect, I assume?

P2: With immediate effect. The minute that the car parks, I would go and change, and then I eat. I would not... would not eat with my church clothes. Never.

Interviewer: So... within the church, they could not allow you to wear trousers?

P2: Even today.

Interviewer: Okay... okay... now which church is this?

P2: Lutheran Church

Interviewer: Lutheran neh? Okay... alright... no... thanks (to P2). And you (P1)?

P1: Yeah... I was too... too young, pre-1994. Ja. I'd... so there was... uhmm...nothing that I could have done, really. Uhmm... so... nineteen-ninety... (pause) six?... was when I started realizing that I had feelings for women. It was at the age of 12 that's when I dated my first girl. So... it was...

P2: (jokingly) Pretty slick (operating in a smooth manner), huh?

(laughter)

Interviewer: Why "pretty slick"?

(laughter)

P1: No... No... it was hidden! It was hidden. She was seen as my friend. So, it was hidden from my family. But it was known from her side of the family. So, we dated for almost a year. And I went to church, and I was told that it is “demonic”. I was prayed for.

Interviewer: Which church is this?

P2: It was the Baptist Church. I was... I was prayed for.

Interviewer: Where... where... where is this? Where is this happening- in which area?

P1: I was in Turffontein at the time.

Interviewer: Say again?

P2: Turffontein

Interview: Okay... and in today's termd, in which province is that?

P1: Mpumalanga... okay... and I was prayed for... and I was delivered. I had also believed that I was delivered. So... 1997... remember at that time it was still not legal. It became legal post-ninety... err... during Thabo Mbeki's era. So... post... even during the democracy, we couldn't get married. So, you would see people and you would not be discriminated upon in the area I was staying in at the time. But after that I tried to live a “clean-life”, I was born again and I stopped it. So, nineteen-ninety-six, I was clean... -seven, I was clean. Nineteen-ninety-eight... I... went back to Siyabuswa. So, 1998, I got a friend from church. Another “friend”.

P2: So, you pretended you were friends?

(laughter)

P1: She was a girl from church... who was my friend-with-benefits.

P2: It is truly slick... rolling down like that

(laughter)

Interviewer: She's the smooth operator... operating undercover.

P1: Yebo (yes). It's in 1998, we were “friends”. 1999 we were “friends”. Uhhh... so 1999 I met this other girl, who was uhhh... lesbian and out. And we became friends. We were real friends. We were not friends-with-benefits. I was then able to tell her this problem...mind you, I had this problem...

So... ahh.. We go... but I'm still at church... still born again. Participating... go on a fast, and go to the mountain to pray. Now the prophetess starts praying and say, "Hey, you must confess. Confess your sins." And now, I cry again. "Hey, hey, hey... I have this problem. And I'm attracted to women."

Interviewer: Now... are you saying this publicly in church?

P1: No. You had to choose somebody to which you would go and confess to. So, I go to this particular woman. And, she was the pastor and the prophetess. I go to her and I tell her that "this is my problem. And this has been haunting me." My girlfriend is there. We are... So I... thought, I don't reveal the identity of my girlfriend. So, we go... and then we agree, "No... we are going to go on seven days of prayer and fasting." We do that. We pray... and I am delivered. So... 1999, I'm clean.

Interviewer: But... but... but... this is the second time?

P1: This is the second time. This is the second time (laughter). This is the second time I'm delivered. 1999 and for a few months... for some in April... I'm delivered... until... 2000, January-February. I'm delivered [by the way. And then we decided, that this is not working. The very same girl again. "Let's do it," "No, no, no!" We picked up where we left off and we continued. Uhh... we continue... 2000... 2001 we see that it's not working out man! I'm leading... I'm leading a double life. I decided, that no... I'm going to do the fasting alone this time and I pray. And I help myself [long sigh]. And I stopped. Then I meet some boy. And I think "Now, let me try it with boys." I mean, it could work. I'm doing my matric then.

Interviewer: Okay... is this now your first time trying it with boys?

P1: Yes.

Interviewer: Ever?

P1: Ever.

Interviewer: Okay... so even back then when you spoke about "being clean", you were not?...

P1: No! I was clean. No boys..so

Interviewer:no dating at all?

P1: the first time... I'm 16 going for 17... I'm trying it with a boy.

Interviewer: Mmm-mhmmm... and this is in high school?

B: Yeah... I was in my matric at that time. I think “Ag, let me try... it’s the most normal thing to do.” I’m... I’m told about Sodom and Gomorra... I’m getting scriptures in the Bible against homosexuality. And I’m thinking “Ag man... the Bible is against homosexuality, but at least heterosexual relationships are better. Let me try this: date a guy.” I date a guy... uhhh... in the year... (Pause) 2001. <aside... my story is going to go on until 10 o’clock... unless I pause now... I can go on and on. (Reassured by interviewer that this is totally fine)>... okay... I date a guy, in my matric year... I started dating him about September-October... We dated until I completed my matric. Going to varsity, dating a boyfriend that’s a boyfriend... Convincingly, I’m crazy about him. I mean, it’s the first time I’m dating a boy. Crazy about him, I go to varsity... and I meet a girl. I meet the girl that I’m married to now.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay... where’s the boy?

P1: The boy is at home!

Interviewer: ...and you are still crazy about him?

P1: Yes!... I go to varsity, I meet a girl. And I *completely* (emphasis) forget about the boy.

(Laughter)

P1: Forget about the boy... because this girl, she drives me crazy. crazier than I ever thought that I would be in my life. And I’m thinking: “Okay”. Now, what happens? So, I can’t come out of the closet yet. I mean my mother is a Christian... she would literally disown me. So, coming out of the closet was not an option for me then. I would rather stay there and uhm... do it... do it underground. But this girl is not prepared now to hide it... And I can’t. I can’t... can’t go around holding hands and kissing, in public! And now it’s after it has been passed into law- it’s now allowed.

Interviewer: And you are still in varsity?

P1: Still in varsity. It’s my first year.

Interviewer: Let me... let me... let me now ask about the boy... is he aware now that you have moved on, or you just...?

P1: No, the boy is still in the picture.

Interviewer: Oh! Okay...

P1: So, I’m now cheating. I’m now cheating... on a boy, with a girl. Okay... continue... [some shuffling sounds followed by “ag man...”]... uhmmm... let’s see how it goes. The girl can’t take the

fact that she's sharing. And we decided, aubuti (brother), no... let's leave this thing. I... I don't want... it's either you're bi... or you're in the closet. But, I can't do this. So... I'm heartbroken. We've broken up. Now there's this boy... this boy is annoying me now. I don't want him anymore! And he keeps on nagging that he wants me to come... and I would make up an excuse. You know, nê, I never want to have sex with boys, nê?. I went to this... uhhh.. hospice... for people that are HIV positive. So, after seeing people that are so sick- I never wanted to date, until I'm married. So, let's leave this thing.

Interviewer: Is that you to the boy now?

P1: Yes. 'Cause now, I know... I know that this is not working out. "I don't want you."

Interviewer: But you are just not saying it straight out?

P1: Ja... so I'm making an... and now the girl is gone. And I can't... I'm shy... I'm... young... I'm four years younger than the girl... I can't go to her and say, "Dude, look here, I want you back". And she's dating this girl who is very scary to me.

(Laughter)

P1: And we gave this girl a name... called Ibughezi (lion).

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Oh yeah? Okay...

P1: This girl is Ibughezi (lion) now, and I can't... I can't even get a chance with her to say, hey yoh, I still want you back... Okay so... so... I stayed for a few months alone, and I decided... no man... let me look for somebody more educated. And I continued with boys... I continued with boys to the next year... and then I got another girl. I was prepared to do it undercover. And that was a perfect girl. And we did it undercover... everybody thought that I was "straight", because everybody knew my boyfriend... but I had a girlfriend.

Interviewer: So... you're living a double-life...

P1: Yes, So... I pushed that for... I pushed that for a good seven years. But between seven years... between seven years I had about 34 girls. Undercover.

P2: Ijoo (jokingly) Hey, you've been playing.

(Laughter)

P1: Until... Ja... until...

(Laughter)

P1: Until... oh... in the process, I had a child.

Interviewer: Okay... you are still... you are still in varsity now?

P1: No... I do my first year... and my second year... and in my third year, I fall pregnant. Then I go back home. I still have a girlfriend... It was like, I cannot date girls now. I'm pregnant... I'm frustrated... I need to go home and take care of the baby. So, we stop that and I go home. And I stay home for two years... So, I had a two year break in-between my studies. A year in which I was pregnant, and a year in which I had to take care of the baby. My mom was angry... so she felt... "Raise your child!... Raise your child until at least he's eight months old and then you can go back." Then I did... So... I continue with my son's father. That was the most natural thing to do now. Because, I have a child with him... now what do I do now?... I always thought that I would have child after I'm married. But there's a child now. So, I continued with him. Went back to varsity... Continued with him... Got back with the girl I broke up with... And then we pushed our thing undercover. So it was nice and easy for me to be with the boy. You know, when... when... when... when... there's that comfort you get from the girl, you can continue with that front. Because it's the most natural thing... it's the most acceptable thing to do. So, I did that. My story will never end.

P2: It will baby, keep talking.

P1: So... uhmm... then after (pause) six years of dating... Uhh... my son's father, I decided "I cannot take this". I'm now done. I've graduated. This man is too much for me. I can't take it. Break up with him... break up with him and continue with my girls... Still doing it undercover.

Interviewer: What is too much?

P1: He's demanding... he expects me to be this person he wants me to be... Which I'm not... Expects me to do certain things with which I am not comfortable with. And that is mainly because I am more comfortable when I'm with girls. I'm me. Everything comes naturally for me... don't have to force it. But with this one, I feel... I feel he's just getting on my nerves. So, I can't take it anymore. So, I decide it's not working out, let's just break up. So, we break up... I continue with my girl. My girl now meets a boy. My girlfriend meets a boy... and the boy impregnates the girl. Now I'm angry. My girlfriend is pregnant.

(Laughter)

P1: My girlfriend is pregnant... The boy proposes to the girl, the girl agrees... the boy marries the girl.

Interviewer: Okay... did you know she was... what sexual orientation was she actually? or you never even?...

P1: The thing is nê... it's just so funny that we both enjoy each other's company... I knew I wasn't straight... she believed she was straight, but exploring.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

P1: And she believes that... uhhh... that saved her from losing her virginity earlier, not necessarily losing her virginity but losing it to a man... earlier... Because you're still having sex... and everybody knows that you're a virgin. So you can continue having sex with girls and remain a virgin in everybody's eyes. So they paid lobola for her and she moved to a different place. My girlfriend is gone, I'm working now, I am single and I'm starting to look like something is wrong with me.

Interviewer: Something is wrong according to...?

P1: According to everybody!! Why are you not dating you were a student dating now you are working and you are single? What is up with you? Something is wrong with you! I decided argh man meet another boy, date a boy, a boy gets boring in a period of two years I moved from 4 boys because I would date you for 3 months if you irritate I dump you but funny thing is now I'm not meeting the girl that would be willing to go undercover with me, if I meet one we'd have sex and then the girl says I can't do undercover its either you go out or that's it... so I'm no longer getting the type that I prefer now

(Laughter)

Interviewer: The undercover chicks?

P1: Yes because for me that was the comfortable thing to do uhm... I was staying at my mother's house I was her perfect child who was just deceived by men and fell pregnant but in her eyes I was too perfect I could not do anything wrong and I could not bear to lose that status in her eyes so I stayed met the other guy and dated until 2012 and I met my girl again, my girl from Varsity now. I met her again and im like ohh... you are still alive. (Laughter) And then I see that this one... You see now that I'm at cross road. I'm a very spiritual person, I pray a lot. So I get a call from this woman, she calls me in the morning. So I met my girl, we are back together. I dump my current boyfriend.

Interviewer: When you say the boyfriend you mean the baby-daddy?

P1: No not the baby-daddy, the boyfriend after the baby-daddy.

Interviewer: Oh okay

P1: Cause I could not handle the baby-daddy, he was too [AL isxhefo]. I could not take being with him, his demands were just too much for me. I dumped my boyfriend and I date my girl. And I feel now what do I do? I'm old...I'm 28 at the time. What's a 28 year-old in the closet? I've moved out of home. I get a call from a woman, I'm confused. I get a call from a woman, who was interceding and praying, saying that I dreamt of you, you were at a cross-road, confused, which way to take. And that's exactly how I'm feeling, confused, about which way to take. Pray and ask GOD for guidance. And she asked me, Are you fine? And I said I'm fine, there are things happening in my life, which I can't really talk about. But I'm believing okay, I am at a cross road. I know for sure that me following my heart, meant losing my family. And everybody else that I've loved. So... so I needed to make that decision. And... in 2013, I decided that I can't live a lie anymore. Came clean, came out... and what I feared the most happened...

P2:Hell broke loose.

P1: Hell broke loose, my mother was just... dramatic. Uhm... my mom's health... took a knock. She... you know... she... she could not believe. Because for my mom... my mom is not really educated. And she's got... at the time... she still had a son and two daughters. So, of the three kids that she has remaining... I'm the only one who's completed matric. I am the only one who has a degree. And the whole family... in my grandmother's... grandkids. I'm the first one to graduate with a degree. So... I'm everybody's role model here in the family. Now, this person... that you all look up to... is the very same person who comes to us and tells us "but I have feelings for girls". So... everybody turns their backs on me. So...

Interviewer: Siblings, mother alike?

P1: Uhm... Mama decides... uhmm..that I wish I never had you. My sister decides "I can't take your side, over my mother's".

Interviewer: So... the sister goes with you?

P1: The sister goes with her mother.

Interviewer: Oh! Okay...

B: The sisters... the half-sisters... they call me... there's a serious meeting. They tell me that if I needed prayers, they will fast with me, and pray with me. So I can be delivered.

P2: I'm there by the way.

P1: "Because this demon... this demon... will kill your mother."

Interviewer: (to P2) So, you say you were there?

P2: I was there in that meeting.

Interviewer: Okay!

P1: Yes... So... if you need help, tell us.

Interviewer: And they're not shy to?

P1: No... they called me to the bedroom. But she's in the house. So, I'm called... and they say "Can we have a word with her?" But she's in the house. And they are just dramatic. Everybody's crying... and I'm the only one who's not crying... and I'm thinking "Why are they crying?! I'm not dead. I'm alive!" But they're all crying. And they're crying because they all say that they can feel my mother's pain.

So... but I just decided... I need to make me happy. Before I can make anybody else happy. So, I told them: "This is me. If you don't want to accept me, it's okay... you don't have to be in my life. But, I will not compromise for you. I will not even compromise for my mother. She has done her part as a mother. She has raised me till this far. Now, it's time for me to live my life." And that's how I came out. So, I came out, publicly at the age of 28, going for 29. After practising homosexuality... for over... wow... Over ten years. No... I started when I was 12 so for over 16 years.

P1: Slick...

(Giggles)

Interviewer: So... you first came out to your family then, I would say... before... you did publicly?

P1: I came out to my friends first actually.

Interviewer: While you were still in varsity?

P1: No... Yeah... in varsity, I did come out to my friends. But all of my friends thought it was a phase. Thought it was a phase. "You'll outgrow it". So, none of them took it seriously. And... when they saw me dating men publicly, they thought "Ag, we were right... She's over it".

So... so, then we... we then continued. So... when I stopped they all thought, "Ag good. We were always right. She's now over it. She's now over it. We were right all this time. She has outgrown it." I continued... then at the age of 28, going for 29, is when I came out. I said, "I have tried, and I've failed. So, this is me. I need to live my life for me."

Interviewer: You have tried what?

P1: I've tried to... (pause) be "normal" But this is my normal. I'll not try to be normal anymore, in anybody's eyes. That was my coming out. So, I am going to live *my* (emphasis) normal life. And... So, I've lost some of my friends. Some stayed. But I was happy. For those who left me, I got to know who my real friends were. So... yeah...

Interviewer: So, you continued...

P1: 2013 we decided to get married. I think I'll pause here and will allow her to say this story... and then I'll continue from 2013

Interviewer: No problem... uhm... maybe... maybe on the next interview. She should be the first one to speak.

(Laughter)

Interviewer to P2: Okay, let me go back to you... When now, she was trying to fight with this... "Abnormality" neh... she said then that because you couldn't handle the undercover business... you left her.

P2: Yes

Interviewer: And uhm... from the time you left her, until you got back to her... what were you doing with your relationship life?

P2: I was in a relationship with a girl. I never dated a guy. I was in a relationship with girls from then... till I met her. About how many? one... two... three...

Interviewer: So... with you... in your life... you've never dated a... a male person?..

P2: A man? No.

Interviewer: ok, ummh. So... you, you, you did say that you identified as homosexual at a very...when you...were a teenager?

P2: At an early age. Yeah... I was 14.

Interviewer: And you were very sure about that orientation?

P2: It was very powerful...

(Laughter)

P2: It was a powerful force... that I could not resist. You know... to a point that... you know... you want to see your teacher. You know... you must see that teacher. If the teacher's not there on Monday, you ask yourself "Is she not going to be there whole week?"

Interviewer: Ja...

P2: You know... and there are no phones... there are no nothing. So... you are in trouble the whole week.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: in trouble the whole week... ? (Laughter)

P2: Yeah... because that person is not there. To brighten your day. She comes and then you go and get her bag. You know, just so you to be able to spend those two minutes with her. You know... chat and... you know. Cut the nails... So it is like...

Interviewer: So... you even went that far?

P2: Yes. Massaging the feet.

Interviewer: Aaah, things you and your teachers did...

P2: You know....

Interviewer: At that time?

P2: Yes..because she looked at me as that little girl like, you know. She was my sister's best friend.

Interviewer: Ok...is that so?

P2: so they were both teaching at the same school. So it, it would...to her it was a pure, innocent, act you know...

(Laughter)

P2: While for me it was satisfaction (pause) guaranteed.

(Laughter)

P2: So Ja.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Ja. I, I get it (Laughter)... so I guess that is your, is your, is your story about your sexuality from a certain point to a certain point. Let me ask your wife this...uhm..?

P1: Mmmm

Interviewer: When you are going... you, you are certain that ...you are going back and forth between a guy and a female because ...you can't...there's too much at stake for you neh...?

P1: Mmmm

Interviewer: but let's talk sexuality wise....eeh at that time are, are, you, are you aware that you are only doing this to satisfy a certain type of people or a certain type of perception, but what about for yourself as far as...what do you identify as, as you are going back and forth?

P1: I... (pause) okay. I was, I had a conflict within myself...

Interviewer: Okay.

P1: It would be that thing that when I'm alone I'm sitting I'm thinking but you're not straight, I'd say heeh, heeh (great emphasis with tone of voice and facial expression) im straight, this is demonic...

Interviewer: (Laughter due to facial expression and tone of voice). Ok.

P2: So I I I want to identify myself as a straight woman..who ...who's going through a phase, or who has problems, or who is under an attack (long pause)...

Interviewer: I see...mmm, mmm,

P1: Form the underworld.

Interviewer: Mmm...mmm..mmm

P1: ...but I had been indoctrinated ...that it's wrong...

Interviewer: Mmm

P1: ...and I grew up cause, cause I got saved very early...

Interviewer: OK.

P1: ...I grew up knowing that it's a sin.

Interviewer: And how old were you? or young were you when you were when you got "saved"?

P1: um, 12 going for 13

Interviewer: Ok

P1: That's when I was delivered the first time.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

P1: so... I love it, it satisfies me, but I know (with great emphasis) cause I've been told (great emphasis) that it's a sin.

Interviewer: Mmmmhhh, mmmhh...

P1: So because of that I cannot allow myself...to do more than, what I can do undercover. Because I can't be a sinner in public.

P2: Mmmmmm (long affirmation).

Interviewer: Ja?

(Laughter)

P1: That is that is how I viewed it in my head

Interviewer: Ye, yes.

P1: But I know that there's ... this for me is too strong, to a point that I would, I would with during the breaks where I do not have a man I would not, not want to have a woman.

Interviewer: Mmmhhh...

P1: ...but I can't. I can't. Because it's... it's public sinning...(Laughter) ...for me that was a high way to hell... (facial expression) (Laughter)...I was going to go, get get to hell very quickly...

P2: Mmm

P1: ...and I couldn't.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: **It fast forwards your way there, huh.**

(Laughter)

P1:...I couldn't...

P2: Mmm 180 (demonstrates with hands)

P1: laughs... I couldn't, I couldn't... I had try and be clean in everybody's eyes so that I so that I'm not a sinner and I can be forgiven and go to heaven when I die.

Interviewer: **Mmm**

P1: That is what was happening in my head. And... it really took me to say eheh (saying No),...if all this years God could not save me, he's not going to save me cause there's nothing for him to save me from.

Interviewer: **Say again?**

P1: It took me to say if all (with great emphasis) of these years God could not save me...from this demon...then he's not going to save me because there's nothing (with great emphasis) for him to save me from.

Interviewer: **Mmmhhh...I hear you.**

P1: But it took me a very long time...

Interviewer: **Mmm...to get there?**

P1: ...it took me a very long time because I would say to people. You cannot claim that you are praying people and yet you have stayed with me sleeping with girls.. and you couldn't pick it up. Now that I'm out in the open you want to come and claim that I'm demon possessed. I've always been like this. so all this time your god could not reveal it to you? So now he's revealing it because I'm out in the open.

so then heheee you must go you must go back and check which god you are serving. Because I've been serving this God. And he's been seeing what I have been doing ...in the closet, behind closed doors where you could not see. So it, it, it took me to that to accept that there's nothing for me to be saved from...for me to come out of the closet. But I, I couldn't, it was, I could not, I could not leave Sodom and Gomora in South Africa.

(Laughter)

Interviewer: Ja, Ja.

P1: Laughs...So it was just something that I couldn't do for, for a good 16 years of my life.

Interviewer: Yohhh okay. We'll wrap it up there. We'll pick it up again next time.

P1 and P2: Ok then.

Interviewer: Thank you guys so much eeh...this was very insightful. Until further notice.

P1 and P2: For Sure...mmmhh-Amen.

Interview 2

Interviewer: Okay let us start. I am sure it has been long; Can you remember where we stopped... Naah I'm just pulling your leg, there's no way you can cause I've been gone for some time now. But it's okay I will refresh your minds.

Participants: Yes please.

Interviewer: Just to remind you, this is an unstructured interview, so we can go back and forward as much as we want. But I will refresh your mind. The last time we ended where participant 1 was..... (Paused). Remember your names will be anonymous for research purposes and ethics. Participant 1 was telling about her experiences coming out and having to face the church.

Participant 1: Yes

Interviewer: Okay then. Do you mind if we continue from there?

Participant 1: No, not at all.

Interviewer “ Ok there you are, they are trying to take out the demons, how does that go?

Participant 1: It was during a prayer we had that I confessed that eish...I am attracted to women. I was advised that I should go on a seven day fast and prayer.

Interviewer: Okay...mmmh

Participant 1: So the fasting went on and we prayed. It was in 2001 no no... 1999 then I was without a girl. The year 2000 I found somebody. 2001 I thought I'm uhhh... it's not working out for me, I will not be accepted. Let me try and be like everyone else, find myself a boyfriend.

Interviewer: Okay

Participant 1: Because I had to be “normal”. Good... got a boyfriend and now they found out in church and I was suspended and couldn't participant in church anymore.

Interviewer: So you were suspended because you are dating a man?

Participant1: Yees, because I was dating a man. So it was publicly announced on Sunday that I was suspended. It didn't matter because I was going to varsity anyway. I was going to be away from home, so that it is when I went to varsity and I met my girlfriend and we dated. So now I am in a predicament, I have a boyfriend who makes everything looks normal and I have a girlfriend whom I love very much so now I am in a serious predicament. So the girlfriend decided that no she doesn't do bisexual and I was not prepared to go back to the closet so we broke up. Now I am stuck...dololo (nothing), the girl who I love is gone now I am with the person I do not love. So eventually the relationship had to end we broke up. So I got another girlfriend who was prepared to go undercover with me.

Interviewer: Laughter... Okay.

Participant 1: And I got a boyfriend so I was straight in everybody's eyes but a sought of an after 9. Whenever it suited me I would continue doing my things. I continued for years, soon I met a girl, she got tired of me and I would get someone else, a male and people thought I was straight.

Interview: Which one gets tried?

Participant 1: The girlfriend but there always had to be someone undercover. And I will continue with my life people thinking that I am straight .Yes I was miss busy body like that (laughter). Until after 10 years I met my girlfriend and I decided that ah ah I am done, this is not me.

Interviewer: Okay

Participant 1: Deal with it. That was then it started being difficult because now it is not only being rejection from church but from everyone else. But the church, my family and my mother, who told me I should have killed you when you were born. I didn't give birth to a lesbian child. You are demon possessed, she will call me every morning just to give me lesbian verses. Read those verses and be delivered.

Interviewer: So tell me what goes through you? What goes on when you are reading because I understand you were rejected from the same church yourself and reading the same book?

Participant 1: So you see at first for me it took a while because I had to understand that I was me and I have tried to pray so that I can change but nothing has changed. So I had to come to a point at a time I had to pray to God to reveal to me if this is right. And I remember I said to him (God) if I still have feelings for a girl after this it means it is right. But if after this prayer I have no feeling for a girl then it is wrong. So I had that prayer and after nothing had changed, I wanted to be with a girl. I decided that I am doing this but because of how I was raised that was at the back of my mind. When I sat at

church and people started to talk about demons, I would think they are talking about me and would start being defensive and say God loves me as who I am.

Interviewer: Mmh, okay

Participant1: For the longest time that continued, until I had to say there's nothing wrong with me, when scriptures were written they were written for that time, they were not talking about me, they did not refer to me and I do not relate. When I reached that moment in life I was happy.

Interviewer: I assume you still connect with your bible in the same manner as you did back then now? If something is working you go with it and if it does not you don't. Am I correct to say that?

Participant 1: I actually think I am reading the bible differently now than I used to. Not that if something is resonating with me it's right or if not it's wrong. I have come to understand that everything that was written was not for me at that time and before I could go and quote the verse, I need to understand what was happening and why certain things were being said. Because there are things that are not relevant in that verse and there is nothing I can do in that scripture. Unless the holy spirit reveals something else. I think my reading and understanding of the bible is different for me. I would like to say I matured. I am not only going with what I was told, I still need to sit and find out for myself.

Interviewer: And participant 2 your side? I know you are still rooted in Christianity, right? How is your relationship with the Christian religion? How has it been until now?

Participant 2: Clearing throat!! It has changed in the sense of maturity just like she said. You start to understand that nobody can change or take the God in you and it has got nothing to do with the building (Church) it is about your relationship with the maker (God) and understanding. Because for me what made me wake up is that God is not going to beat me with a stick and say you are a lesbian. He is going to say what did you do with what I gave you. Sexuality does not even bother God. I do not think of it now but then at the back of your mind you will also have that thing when someone preachers, they will say homosexuals did not do the right thing, I need to read the bible and now I moved to a point that if you preach about homosexual for me it really does not move me anymore because I believe that God is in me, nobody can take that from me. He loves me as a homosexual actually as a person because homosexual comes at later.

Interviewer: Alright. So now would you say your relationship with Christianity is in conjunction with your sexuality? And I see you are also raising your kids within the church neh?

Participants: Yes!

Interviewer: What do you think your kids are getting out of...(Paused) Okay I know there are still young but are you picking up anything? Are they asking questions already about how God is relating to you as a family because I am sure there are starting to realize that you guys are not a heterosexual family. Are they starting to talk about it?

Participant 2: Truth be told, we have not yet received that question because the church we go to does not make sexuality and homosexual an issue. So I'm thinking because of that they have not really asked those questions. (silent hmmm) And from school we have not actually had any comments from them or concerns but what we have picked up something like a year ago, the young one would relate to the friends and say, I am with my mother and mother because we have made it clear that there is nothing wrong about the structure of your family and you cannot be at a point where you allow anyone to make you feel inferior. You'll find him saying me and my mothers we fly first class; we do not do economy class. And you see the confidence in him, that my mothers pay for this all the time because there is nothing my mothers cannot do better. So we teach him that there is nothing different to him about those with a mother and father. It is what we always wanted to instill in him and thank God we didn't have to do anything, it is happening naturally and what I have always wanted is that you do not have to tell your children that there is anything unnatural with their family structure. Because a lot of times as parents we want to detected or feed our thoughts onto children and it is even better when children see and believe for themselves because they come to their conclusion no one can tell them any different.

Interviewer: Great, okay. That is your life and the Christian religion. So in the house you are both mothers I assume?

Participants: Ummm...

Interviewer: Do they know you to both be their mothers, is that how they relate to you?

Participant 2: Yes but for me they relate to me more as their paps, actually as their mother and father.

Interviewer: Please elaborate?

Participant 2: Because I relate to them like that. I do not have time for the moosh moosh mum thing, I do not do that. Not because of my being "stabane" (township word for homosexual) but I do not know how to be mooshy with them. It is not me that is why I always say it would be difficult raising a teenage

girl. They are too soft for me. At home they (the children) relate to me as their dad and paps but they call me mom.

Interviewer: What do you call yourself? They call you mom what do you call yourself?

participant 2: I am the head of the house.

Interviewer: Okay you are the head of the house and gender wise, sex wise how do you relate to that?

Participant 2: I relate to it as a male.

Interviewer: Okay. When you are at work what do you prefer they call you?

Participant 2: Anything Mr, Mrs I do not really have a problem (laughing) it won't change me it is just a title. So I really do not have a problem. If it makes you comfortable to relate to me better as a man good! Honestly I do not have a problem.

Interviewer: What is your wife comfortable with, how does she relate to you?

Participant 2: Me bojita ntona (like a male), easy and chilled. No mascars (makeup), no mapondo niks (ponny tailed hair), just very simple. Takkie, tyama (sports shoes, male looking) look ke shapo (I'm okay).

Interviewer: Ookay, I get it. Now tell me, what is y'all's take on.... I am sure you are aware of these hate crimes happening to lesbian women in South African and Africa as a whole, especially who present themselves in a masculine way? What is your take on that?

Participant 2: It is umm! It is unfortunate that people see people like that because I believe that there is a person, there is God and God expresses himself in different ways, in his own ways. Before you can kill this expression of God why don't you see God or yourself in me because for me I do not see the reason why you would want to kill me because even if you can come and rape me, I would still go and have sex with a woman. Even more so yes. I feel like education, education and more education is needed. People need to... like your story that you are going to write. It will be nice to put it in simple form so that others could read about it. Because a lot of times your theses we do not read them because it comes with big words but just people get to see the other side of lesbians and we can both be working, have good careers, raising kids and have a family. Live your life normally. You do not have to be some skrafie (street person) who is going to drink.

Interviewer: I am glad you are raising that we could live normally as everyone else. I want to park this point here for now, we will definitely interrogate it deeply but not today but in another interview because like I said that is a story you want to come out loud and clear at the end of this thesis or research, is it not?

Participant 1: If I may just comment, you know I have had a discussion with people (my straight friends) who would want to understand what we call our world. Because we have a world where people's perception are that we do not live in everybody's world, we got our own world. So as participant 2 is saying that we need education that there isn't enough information out there for people to understand. It is like we make the rules as we go. If there are those who understand it is difficult to understand. Simple things like why would a feminine woman be with a woman. People want to make sense and ask who the man is. So there is that need for education, so let's start with people in our circles so that they are able to educate other people 'cause there isn't enough information out there about homosexuality. People will just look at you and conclude oh! You are a man, she is the woman.

Interviewer: Are Black African lesbian themselves perhaps adding to this challenge by relating and carrying themselves as males, must there always be a man and woman in our lesbian relationships?

Participant2: The thing is we ourselves do not understand the whole process of homosexuality as homosexuals because you will find someone as ummmmm... what do they call it... transgender, transsexual.

Interviewer: Remember there is transgender, transsexual and intersexual.

Participants: Yes!

Participants 2: But I am just saying that the transgender...But the transsexual is those who have changed the sex.

Interviewer: No not really, transsexuality has to do with the emotional or rather the psychological feeling of your sex, when one feels a strong emotional and psychological belonging to the opposite sex, but its just in ones psyche. Transgender on the other hand has to do with identifying with a gender that does not match your biological sex. Intersexuals are those usually born with two varying sex organs but one is not fully developed, like in Caster's case remember?

Participant 2: Well for me the problem comes with education, education, education and even us as lesbians. I am transgendered not a transsexual they do not understand that you're a woman but you

associate yourself with a particular gender and miss that a lot. We tend to find it difficult and it escalates.

Participant 1: But for me it's not that I find it difficult it is a preference.

Participant 2: That is what I am saying a lot of us, even us the LGBTI, when we see lesbians dating femme to femme we are like..aggh! (ba ya dlala) (they are playing), what are they doing? What are they doing together? That is what I am saying education, education must be relevant. We must just not talk this big words. I might walk in with my size 8 sneaker only to find out that I scream like a girl in bed (laughter). But you understand what I am saying (laughing) it's like I am screaming loud you know. People must just.... Pausing... it's one of these things that is what I am saying education, education and education must be relevant, you understand? We must not talk this big words as they do ka di conference tsa bona (as they do in their conferences). You do not even know what they are talking about, even us lesbians we are confused.

Participant 1: Meaning that education must start with us.

Participant 2: Yes!

Participant 1: We need to have enough research that people who are interested can easily access the information, cause they are people who are interested in finding out more but it is that it isn't just enough out there and the material that is out there sometimes does not make sense.

Participant 2: They just speak big things and at the end of the day it does not make sense.

Interviewer: Okay I hear you and now we are talking about education and awareness. What else? Remember we live in communities and in these communities as far as lesbian lives and livelihood is concerned, what can be done? I am talking about our communities before we started being urban type settings being part of the working middle class. We still have rural South Africa out there where literature prove that hate crime affecting Black lesbians is real. I am not saying hate crimea are not happening in urban South Africa, What seems to be the challenge?

Participant 2: For me looking from where I came from rural areas everything is very premature. You are not going to be a man you are a women, you understand period. They will not even allow you, so for me it is when people see that there is a lesbian who has changed the narrative then they start to open their eyes, you understand. For me if we can have lesbians who are not just drinkers and smokers but good role models to their kids. You can be a lesbian and have a career of your own and we have many lesbians who have businesses but they are not recognized. I only know six and they are many

however, we do not know them. The best way of teaching rural people for me is if we could have a series or television shows about lesbian lives, not even only lesbians, homosexuals including transgender and intersexual incorporated in there. There was a movie after 9 it used to be playing permanently and it was helping people, boys and girls were starting to wake up and say hey...the way our society is moving. We do not need to rely on the word of mouth but TV. Why can't there be a story on Thobela FM that speaks about homosexuality that reaches rural areas and is a continuous thing and not only play for 6 months. That could help people and reach them where we cannot reach.

Interviewer: All right, let me take you a little bit back. I asked you about how you identify and I also need to ask your wife the same thing, as to how does she identify with her sexuality?

Participant 1: I am a woman and that is how I identify myself. I'm all about long nails, hairstyles and makeup all the way. I am very feminine, I am a mother to a lot of children not only the child I give birth to. That is how I want people to relate to me and also be aware that I am married to a woman. How would you like to classify me whether I am a lesbian doesn't matter at the end of the day I am a woman.

Interviewer: Are you getting a lot of questions about it, your sexuality that is?

Participant 1: I am getting questions, very silly questions. Questions like do you miss the real thing (laughing) laughing out loud.... How do you do it? These silly questions people trying to understand what made me convert and I will be like aeh aeh (no, no)...I never converted, I was never straight (Laughter).

Interviewer: Okay okay...

Participant 2: I didn't have to convert I was never straight, I am a homosexual woman living her life.

Interviewer: Who is asking all these questions?

Participant 1: Umm okay...some are friends; some will be colleagues that just discovered that I married a woman. Because I will not go and say hey I am a lesbian and people will ask why you didn't tell us. I'm like... why must I introduce myself as lesbian if you didn't introduce yourself as straight.

Interviewer: and what is their reaction or response to your responses?

Participant 1: they find out in different ways, some see me with her or they have been told. So those who are brave enough would be like.... (Pause) Some people will intentionally talk about lesbians and gays when I am around and I would say what is wrong with all that? Do you want information? Because I would see that, it is about me and I am not hiding it. So it is those people who will question you.

Interviewer: Mmmmh...

Participant 1: But I have grown to be so comfortable with myself. If you have to tell me anything about me I will always say that exposes your level of ignorance, so it says nothing about me. So I do not care what you think and how ignorant you are because that has nothing to do with me it's about you. And if you need help do ask and I will explain to you but if you still talk out of ignorance I am not part of it. Because I am comfortable I love who I am, I have never been any happier in my life because I am me.

Interviewer: And you, are you getting the questions? Laughing

Participant 2: Always me is worse because okare ke taima wa bona (I an male looking you see). Yesterday ... or was it two weeks ago, I was talking to 260 people and they were staring at me. You know I laugh because homosexuality is like pregnancy and disability, you see them every day but every day when a person sees a pregnant women it's like they never saw a pregnant person before. It's like oh she is pregnant and look at them again. People do that with lesbians, they want to confirm that the eyes are not laying to them.

Participants: Yes yes laughing.

Participants 2: And I get a lot of questions from boys like how do you do it. I am like you bang this thing you do not play with it (laughing)..... And they will be like..what? and I'm like ja! JA those questions and the girls are asking out of curiosity because they wanna know and I will be like do not try it because you won't go back stick with what you know, your banana. (laughing).

Interviewer: But why wouldn't they go back. I thought we are born with our sexuality?

Participants 1: We are born this way.

Interviewer: Is it something we can change? What is this homosexuality?

Participant 2: You are born with it. What can I say it is like KFC. KFC..., you do not know KFC, you can eat it every day and forget that there is nandos you understand, because it is that nice. It's not like you won't go back, if you are gay you are gay. But you get those people who are gay and after ten

years they go back and marry someone straight. Those are the converts. But if you are gay or homosexual that is who you are.

Interviewer: So you are saying we do have people who experiment with other sexes and later on say this is not me, and we do have those who change because of social influences maybe?

Participant 1: And we have those who just want to have double, best of both worlds but there are those who decided.

Participant 2: Yes out of being hated. But for me they will not last because being homosexual is not the easiest thing in the world. I myself and my wife we feel very uncomfortable to go to Soweto because with her anything can happen. I cannot be seen in Soweto because for us is about safety.

Participant 1: It is not just that, everywhere else we do not feel safe. Some people will rather choose to be straight because...I went through it. There was a time in my life I thought it is not working out but for me luckily I was not granted that opportunity because I feel like I would have always been a lesbian undercover but I feel sometimes the pressure gets too much. And sometimes with some people when there is that need of financial dependency...when you are... Because I think, what helped with me is that as much as I love my family and my mother she does not need to buy me food anymore. When she disown me I will survive anyway, she has done her part and if she decided she doesn't what to see me I will still be able to eat and...and because she has done that parental role as a parent. Sometimes when you are depended on people we tend generally to conform just because there are still taking care of us. Sometimes you conform to a point that it is just too difficult for you to get out because you have conform all your life. We have people that are doing well for themselves now but they still cannot bear the thought of what will my parents say if I tell them that I am not straight, It is very tricky and for the people who have money, to come out we need to understand that it's not easy to come out.

Interviewer: Did you risk anything to be who you are?

Participant 2: you know what I was very fortunate because I was always a tomboy all my life I never umm...I don't remember!!! Have never come out to my parents that by the way I am gay, I didn't see the need. So I just lived my life, those who asked questions I told them that yes I am dating a woman and I am married to one. But because of the way I was dressing people associated me to a boy very early from grade...age 10, and my mom didn't refuse me to be, she just let me be. Even though Sunday you must wear a skirt to go to church but coming back I still was me, take off the dress and go to play. I won't say I sacrificed.

Participant 1: I wouldn't say it is about sacrifices but coming to a point and say I know that coming out I might lose everyone who said they love me. It is more about you saying I am risking losing you so that I can be myself. For me it's more losing everyone else and finding me, because you cannot make anyone happy until you are happy. For me because I have always been femme and I grow up as a girl and activates I did with girls. My sexuality was always undercover, so it was very difficult for me to come to a decision that am done hiding, I am going to start being me. So it wasn't easy. So when I say people risk a lot I mean that because you know. There are people I see that lost a lot where they were disowned by their parents and I knew I had to be one them but I had to say that it doesn't matter because I am happy. I still have a friend who is scared to come out she is in her 40s she is still unable to come out she is staying with a girl but... we know each other we are best friend for the longest time(laughing) ja so it happens.

Interviewer: Okay guys lets wrap it up here. But I will be coming often from now on maybe once a month or after 6 weeks.

Participants: okay.

Interviewer: No, I thank you so much for your time.

Interview 3

Interviewer: Ok batswadi dumelang gape (greetings elders). After a long time away, I am back, and I have gathered strength back. Err I want to thank you once more for allowing me to be here. As you know, I am here to gather data, (giggle) and I think today we can start on the time and day you decided now you want to tie the knot. I think we spoke a lot about how you met, how you discovered your sexuality, not that we cannot go back to those things, we can go as our conversation leads, but let me just break the ice with a question. When and how did you decide you want to take the relationship to the next level of marriage? How did it come about?

PA 1: Gunpoint

Interviewer: Laughter. I do not see you partners as that person who can twist your arm with a gun.

PA 1: (Giggle), like I said, you know the way we met again after 10 years, ehh, she was not into this gay and lesbian thing. She was very clear in terms of her expectations. That one is the truth. She said nna (I) can't do this. Uhhh...at the time I was very naughty you know.

Interviewer: Laughter

PA 1: I was not a Ya I was a bit naughty.

Interviewer: Laughter, a bit or too naughty.

PA 1: Too naughty. Let's put it that way to be clear. Then we just decided the both of us that you know marry, because we love each other, I love you and you love me. There was no romantic nonsense yago kwatama ka magwele (bending on one knee to propose). It was just me and her seating down and said: 'let's get married' and we said well let us do it in two months' time.

Interviewer: she is Saying that she is owing you that you must hold her to that.

PA 2: Of cause I am.

PA 1: Ya, that is basically what happened at the end of the day you know.

PA 2: Yeah I think that is basically what happened in a nutshell.

PA 1: There was no process of saying now I am going to think about it. It was just us saying "we are doing this, let's get married".

Interviewer: Right, you know Botho neh, a lot of, to my experience, a lot of lesbian couples, black in our country, they find cohabitation very safe and ehh, they find it very, some of them find it very assuring that I have spoken to. Why didn't you like this concept?

PA 2: I have seen a lot of people staying together for 5 to 7 years and breaking up, and I guess, at a very early age I had made up my mind that I will not cohabit with anybody. And uhm, though you still see that with heterosexuals but in my experience I've seen it happening more in the homosexual environment and I think where I was in my life, I think I was not going to give up everything for nothing. Because at that time uhm, me and my family was not getting along, so I was imagining me without having a relationship with my family, with my mother for nothing. So, I had to have a reason to myself. I had to justify it to myself why I was risking everything

Interviewer: Yes

PA 2: So for me a commitment made sense, because I knew I wanted to do this. But I did not want to stay with somebody who is going to decide after 2 years that they actually not the one for me. So married made sense and I was clear to say: if we can't get married then let's not be together. Because I am not in this to waste my time.

Interviewer: you know the reason why I am asking this is because you spoke a lot about how your mom was not for you dating this females, and the reason you had to say with her or without her recognition of my sexuality, I am going to commit. Am I right to say you were brave?

PA 2: it is true I was very brave, but I think the one thing that I knew for sure was I wanted to do this. I think that was the only thing that I knew for sure at the time, that I was in love with her and I wanted to marry her. And I was not going to scarifies that for anybody.

Interviewer: not even your family?

PA 2: No.

Interviewer: You had already made up your mind.

PA 2: My mind was made up about that.

Interviewer: Yeah, if they not going to accept my marriage let them stay there, and I will go on with my life and I will be ok.

PA 2: My mind was made up. It was either they became part of it or be without me in their lives. I was more than happy to be without them.

Interviewer: Wow. And you Thuli, this dilemma of I am getting to my married, you did not have any issues.

PA 1: Mina (I) never had any issues. The thing was that we decided that we not going to tell our parents, because if I told my dad he was gonna ask my mama why I am doing this without her. Because like I said, even me I never came out to my parents and say hey guys I am gay and whatever. And my brother and my sisters they were informed. Uhm, it was their choice not to come. Ehh gotlile omo one (only one of them came). Do you understand? So, my dad I did not tell him because I did not want questions from his family. Then he will tell us straight that what you are doing is wrong. You know, and we wait for another 10 years.

Interviewer: Ya

PA 2: For people to change their mind or to want to understand what we are trying to do. So we opted not to go that route. But my sisters and my brother did know.

Interviewer: So you basically just valued your piece of mind more that the sadders and drama that will follow?

PA 2: Yeah. Because I mean it is a special day for us, you do not want drama in there. You want when you get into it o tseba gore (knowing) your mind and your heart is there and the people that are there want to be there. That for us it was very important that we don't just want to call people for the sake of we've got a lot of people. Rather let's go get married the eight of us. But bring the people that want to be there and congratulate us wholeheartedly.

PA 1: Giggles.

Interviewer: so ok then you made your decision and then going forward with your marriage. Invites. Ok before I get to invites, any people from your family who were there?

PA 2: From my side it was my sister alone.

Interviewer: Of the how many siblings?

PA 2: Out of four.

Interviewer: the reasons for them not coming, others?

PA 2: I did not bother to ask. In my head they did not want to be there.

Interviewer: but you did send everyone an invitation?

PA 2: Yeah we did send everyone. I told my sisters and my brother. Yeah then only one came.

Interviewer: Even today, you don't know.

PA 2: I do not even want to know.

Interviewer: and they don't even talk about it

PA 2: And we don't talk about it.

Interviewer: Botho

PA 1: Me? No one came. But I only invited my sister. I only have one sister.

Interviewer: how many are you at home?

PA 1: Two, just two.

Interviewer: Oh ohk, so you told her and she decided not to come? As well even today you still dnt know her reasons?

PA 1: I never asked. But obviously I have my own...

Interviewer: assumptions?

PA 1: Assumptions because I had to ask myself why, and I think later on I realized that she was just play it safe. She did not want to be the bad person. She did not want to look bad to me, did not want to look bad to my mother. So that time she chose to side with my mother. I don't hold it against her.

Interviewer: Tell me, these siblings of yours today, especially those that did not come to the wedding. How do they relate to you guys now that you are a couple?

PA 1: The thing is neh, my family, they love her. I think it was the concept of marriage that was trauma to them. I do not know why they did not come, and I did not ask. But personally they love her very much. Uhm, even my father loves her to bits. It is just that nothing has changed from the day we met them. Well that is what I think.

Interviewer: Ya

PA 1: Well nothing has changed in terms of the relation towards Botho. I don't know from their side, but from my side towards Botho's family it was hostility from the day I said hello. Ok ge ba tseba ra jola (when they found out we dating) well till last year. I do not know if it is a genuine acceptance or they realized that e not going anywhere. It's been 5 years batho ba batse ba tsamaya tsela e one (this people walking the same road) I wonder if they have accepted, but what else can we do?

Interviewer: but there's a change?

PA 1: There is a huge change from family yabo Botho (Botho's family). Like a huge change.

Interviewer: from both mom and sister?

PA 1: The sister was always amazing, just the mother. At once she was even contemplating on killing me, you know, boiling water and pouring water on me. Things like that. You know, but now we seat, we chart. I can even go and sleep there when Botho is not there.

Interviewer: what do you think, ehh, have brought the mother's change?

PA 1: Giggle

Interviewer: Giggle

PA 1: Do you want to say it Botho?

PA 2: Giggle, when I came out, because mama has always been a Christian. She was told stories of how homosexuals came about. She heard that the snakes that we have will eat all our money.

Interviewer: What snakes?

PA 1: they say we have snakes; it is a spirit of snakes that is making you love girls.

PA 1: So I was giving her (Botho) the snake according to her mother.

PA 2: So those were the things that she said with her mouth. She said I am going to suffer and I will remember this day that I am going to suffer and lack.

Interviewer: she is telling you straight in the face?

PA 2: Yeah she told me that you will remember this. She said you won't have money to buy a toilet paper. And you will remember me. The truth is it actually go down, but we did not come to the part where we lacked to afford a toilet paper.

PA 1: It was tough.

PA 2: I saw everything she said manifest.

Interviewer: Your toughness was brought by?

PA 2: Poor decision making for me. Over and above that is believing, you see? I believe that there is no one that can curse you unless you accept the curse.

Interviewer: Yes

PA 2: I think above all, when she said it; I believed it because she was my mother. And only her could put a curse upon me and it would stick and it did.

Interviewer: Yeah

PA 1: I think for two rough years. Two horrible years and I think we needed help, we needed spiritual help and we got helped. We needed to just leave that and speak against it. I think when things took turn for the better and we started to be ok. She then realized that this person is not her to eat my child's money. This people can give me something. I think the fact that we not poor made her change her mind about us. So when we started doing things for her I felt like I had to buy the acceptance from her. That is a fact yeah, that the only time where she opened up. I think what made it even worse is when we fulfilled the Botho's promise that she made a long time ago. That she will build a house for her. And

shem after that yavuleka intliziyo (her heart opened up to us) and I became mpkgonyana (son in law). That is why I had to love. I do not think if I was a township lesbian running around coming to her, I did not think she was going to open up the way she has to date. I am just being honest.

Interviewer: of cause. Please I honor that honesty.

PA 1: I do not think it was going to get that far.

Interviewer: you are saying if you came as a township lesbian you do not think she was going to accept you. What do they (township lesbian) do?

PA 1: They rock up (laughter). They are just there. They do not bring anything to the table. They just come and relax. They are not trying to uplift themselves and all that you see.

Interviewer: Botho, do you think if you were heterosexual or married to a guy, ehh your mom will still have that expectation?

PA 2: For me to?

Interviewer: Complete building her a house?

PA 2: My mom is a selfish person, (giggle).

PA 1: I think she is.

PA 2: She still would have, yeah. Knowing my mom. But I think it wouldn't have been as bad.

Interviewer: Ok

PA 2: Because when things started looking good you know, I said to her you would rather have me dating men and stuff? And she said yes.

Interviewer: Ok

PA 2: So I think at the time, looking 3 years ago she would have preferred me marrying a guy who had nothing than marry a woman. Its only now when she is seeing that oh ok. So actually, this woman is not useless after all. And I think it was early this year were she uttered and said uhm, I thank God for Thuli because I don't think if Botho was married to a man she would have built me a house.

Interviewer: What a turnaround.

PA 2: I think for her it's that thing of this person can take care of my child.

Interviewer: Yes

PA 2: And then the fact that she thinks she's got no grounds to judge us because the church does not judge us.

Interviewer: Oh wow, that's something.

PA 1: I think that is another thing that I think maybe changed her mind. It made it easy for her because she had to leave her church and come to our church.

Interviewer: Oh, she did that?

PA 1: Ya, she left that church now. So when coming to that she realized that at our church we are treated like normal people. It helped her accept us. Where she was coming from what we were, doing was taboo. Coming to an environment where we are treated like everybody else made it easy for her.

Interviewer: She made the decision on her own to leave her church and join yours?

PA 2: Ya I think she got tired of them always making homosexuality a subject of the sermon.

Interviewer: Guys this is a very serious turnaround in somebody's life. Especially at that age. You know coming from that era, having her own beliefs, firmly rooted religious beliefs to actually make that decision and make a change.

PA 2: Yeah it was. I think it is not an issue of the house and the church. I mean there is so many events. There was a time when she came here with an operation, I think when she saw how we act towards each other, how we live in the house. We stayed with us for about 3 weeks. You know. She could see that these people are just normal people. We took care of her. She went for a checkup.

Interviewer: she was ill?

PA 1: Yeah she was ill. Before I go to work, I would go there, I pick her up, take her there. Even though I am still an evil witch with snakes. She would see that this poor child, what is it that she is doing and what are they talking about?

PA 2: I think she said it then.

I think her staying with us that long made her open up. even though there were a little bit of reservations. I mean we would drive to Siyabuswa, Sunday come back here. Wake up early in the morning 5 o'clock

in the morning with her before we go to work, take her to the doctor wait with her and take her to the bus then go to work. You know such things when you show mercy, the heart start to soften.

Interviewer: You said she said it then Botho what did he say?

PA 2: Uhm, she actually said, I think before she went home she said that. Ok she did not say in my presence. She said to Thuli that 'I used to hate you'. I hated you so much that I wanted to pour boiling water on you. She said but right now, I see that you guys are happy and that I am giving you my blessings to go on ahead and get married. Was it last year? Oh it was the year before last.

Interviewer: Wow. Yho, how did it make you feel?

PA 2: Of cause excited.

PA 1: It makes things easier because this whole thing was actually forced on her. For me it was that of not going to comfort, it was either you accept you or me not in my life. So for her to say I accept you, it was a huge weight lifted off our shoulders. The truth is as much as I was willing to leave without her I would rather live with her in my life.

Interviewer: it is much easier that way neh?

PA 2: Yeah

PA 1: That is why we decided that whole issue of marriage, we do not want to put it out there to their face. Let's rather do it on our own and wait for them. Give them time. To process it and make sense of whatever they want to make sense of, but we know that legally we are safe. Do you understand? It does not really matter what they do. Another thing that made me want to get married was that I see a lot my gay friends who die while cohabiting and the family shun the poor girl away and this poor girl has been staying with this person for 5, 6 or 7 years. Botho's family would come here and say this is my child, then you are stuck with what?

Interviewer: Yes

PA 1: So for me it was that thing of lets rather protect each other. When they deal with their nonsense nna lwena re sharp (you and I are fine). Should anybody die in the process, we know what to do and how to do it.

Interviewer: And your sister Botho now that your mom is on board her as an individual? I am assuming that each had his own issues. She was always siding with mom.

PA 2: Actually not siding, I think, uhm, growing up I was always perceived as mom's favorite.

Interviewer: Ok

PA 2: Yeah, because I did what she wanted me to do. I was a quite one, passed at school. So everything went right. Uhm, my mom had 4 children and two passed away. I was the first one to get matric and the first to get a degree. So I was this child who is just shining in everything. So when mama was talking about her children she never forget to mention me. So for once, she was happy to be this child who is now better. So for her it was that fact of I do not mama to think that I am siding with you. So in mama's she always she was siding wit her. When we were at home she played as if she's ok but not ok. When we were alone she was very nice to us. But I think it was that thing of I want to remain the favorite child and they will each other and have discussions about me. Because she was just happy to be that child.

Interviewer: now that mommy is on board is she still the favorite or the positions have changed, what is happening?

PA 2: I am back to my position, there is no way, you can't you and buy acceptance. Cause that was what is it. Because I do no accept you with your shirt. I only accept you when you are good. Or what you can do for me as a mother or as a parent. It is quite sad that we find ourselves in such spaces.

Interviewer: Wouldn't you say yes she started off as, you won't be good enough for my child, you probably won't take good care of my child. You proved her wrong. Don't you think now whatever the person she is she is genuine now. Maybe she started of saying let me see what she can do. If she can prove me wrong, you proved her wrong, and then she was like ok I accept you because you proved me wrong. But right now because she is spending time with you more than before, she sees you. Don't you think she is becoming genuine about this acceptance? I am asking this because I am seeing the moving in and out of the church to come and join you. Her not understand the people she used to worship with when they badmouthed homosexuals, you know. Is she not gradually being genuine about the acceptance? I don't know.

PA 2: (Laughter) I think there is a part of her that is genuine.

Interviewer: Mhmm

PA 2: But I think she is trying to get this to make sense to her.

Interviewer: She is still in that battle?

PA 2: Yeah. Because you can easily pick up what is said. And somebody says that if an anointed man of God accepts you, who am I not to accept you. A man of God does not judge you, why should I judge you. So it is still a struggle. There is an element of her still dealing with full acceptance, for her is I am accepting you because.

PA 1: I don't think it is that I accept you as my child thing. I don't think she is there yet. It's that thing of accepting you because umfundisi (pastor) has also accepted you. And also because my fears are not true, I do not see what I feared. Do you understand?

Interviewer: Yes

PA 1: so such thing I think are a struggle and I think she is working on them day and night. I do not think it is something we going to get right probably.

PA 2: I mean she still struggle with the introductions. When she introduces us she says; hi this is Thuli Botho's friend.

PA 1: Yeah I am still Botho's friend, six years later. Do you understand?

Interviewer: Yes

PA 2: Yeah. I do not know post November what is she going to introduce me and Thuli as.

PA 1: Haa, I am not going to pay lobola and be introduced as a friend. It cannot work.

Interviewer: you said what November?

PA1: Post Nvember 10 whats gonna happen. What is she going to do. Well for me I think we just need to be patient with this guys. It does no matter how long it takes. You just need to be patient with them and allow them to process all this the way they how. You know

Interviewer: I am getting a paper idea from you as you are talking.

PA 1: Oh wow.

Interviewer: Remember after research it would be nice if you publish. I am just getting a paper idea of after this research coming back to you guys maybe after two years or after some time. Coming back to check how she is handling this whole thing. I am an optimist, I feel she will get there.

PA 1: No she will.

Interviewer: And I will tell you why I think she will get there. It is because remember now the believe system she had was deeply rooted from a long time. So for us to expect it to be undone soon would not be too realistic and I sort of loved this journey. It is very interesting.

PA 1: Mmm, it was not interesting when we were walking on it. It was horrible, believe you me it was not nice.

PA 2: Thing is do not know but I do not hold it against her.

PA 1: Never, me too. I don't.

PA 2: The thing is that though we are aware what is influencing her change of mind and heart I do not hold it against her.

Interviewer: Yes

PA 2: But we are not going to be blind to it.

PA 1: No I don't. I am saying we must allow people to process things. We are not the dame. If you look at my dad, I never came out to him. I went to him and said dad I want to get married. Like straight up, I never said I am a lesbian blah blah blah. I told him straight that I want to get married. And what he said to me was that oh, who do you want to get married to. I said Botho. And he said oh does she want to get married to you? Botho said yes. Then he said my child if you want meat, I will give you meat. You see. So for my father is a different breed and Botho's mother is a different breed.

Interviewer: Wow. I love storytelling. So that I where you are with mom and this is where you are with your marriage?

PA 1: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok, and the pastor. Who officiated the marriage? How did you choose, how did she feel or he feel?

PA 2: What we did was that we had a friend of ours, pastor Nokuthula, whom we knew and I introduced t Botho and she was the one that referred us to this lady. So we did our pre-counselling marriage thing with pastor Nokuthula and then from there and then the lady officiated and solemnized the union. We did not do pre-marital counselling with the lady. The lady just came or the officiating.

PA 2: I think we met her a few days before, just wanting to find out. I think when she realized that we had a few sessions with pator Nokuthula she was comfortable with that. Because she actually

solemnized the union. So that is how we were then referred to her. So it was easy she actually found out that we had pre-marital counselling for her to conduct the whole thing. Then we met and she explained everything to us and then we met again on the day of the wedding.

Interviewer: Where was the wedding?

PA: It was in Arcadia at church. Schoeman and Lytts.

Interviewer: Is this now the Jamaine's church or another church.

PA 1: I don't know if it's her church, but she normally bring the whole solemn team and then also the Sunday services for lesbians. So she organized the church for us. We did not even pay. We only just paid for the solemnization.

Interviewer: Yeah. Are there people in the church then?

PA 2: Yeah how many were we?

PA 1: Seven.

Interviewer: Ok, who are this seven people?

PA 1: It was me, you, Nokuthula, the pastor, Botho's best friend and the husband and Genine and Puseletso.

PA 2: From my side it was two people, my friend and the husband, from her side it was two, Puse and Nonfunto and then us and then Genine.

PA 1: It was perfect.

Interviewer: you preferred it that way? Is that how you send out the invites?

PA 2: No, we did not actually make invites. Uhm mfundisi (pastor) Nokuthula was definitely going to be invited as the person who did the pre-marital counselling. Puse and Nomfunto was taking photos and the video. Then my friend and her husband were witnesses because we had to find witnesses. Everybody had their role.

Interviewer: Yes. So you did not want to extend it. You just kept it that intimate.

PA 2: I think it was because it was during the week.

Interviewer: Alright, alright.

PA 2: Yeah.

PA 1: Despite that, sorry love. We did not want Botho's mother to know.

PA 2: Yeah.

PA 1: Remember at the time we were still harsh. So as much as we did want to invite more people, we did not want her to know.

PA 2: Because you invite Nono, Nono invite another person and the other person tell other people. Before we even sign you would find that my mother knows.

PA 1: Do you understand? And it is a problem.

PA 2: And she is here.

PA 1: So we did not want that.

Interviewer: Wow. So the marriage is continuing, the church, you fins everything, you get out of the church a married couple.

PA 1: Yebo (yes).

Interviewer: Ok. You get the certificate, there and there?

PA 1: No, you get a copy and then you get marriage certificate. We don't even have the marriage certificate.

PA 2: But that is a marriage certificate. Because remember that, a then you couldn't marry homosexuals and heterosexual at them same time, you couldn't do both legally as a marriage officer, I do not know now. You must register either.

PA 1: You still cannot.

PA 2: Then you get your book as a marriage officer.

Interviewer: What is this book about?

PA 2: It is like when you are a traffic officer you have a book were you issue traffic fines on.

Interviewer: Ohh ok.

PA 2: As a marriage officer you get a book were you issue marriage certificates. So it is a duplicate.

Interviewer: Yes.

PA 2: So the original is then issued to the people who are getting married, and then you take the duplicate to home affairs to have it registered for them.

Interviewer: Mhmmm.

PA 2: So that is a marriage certificate. Because we do not have a printout from Home Affairs, we did not get that one. But the marriage has been registered. When you go to the system it says that you are married from the 21 November.

Interviewer: Oh so you just left and you haven't went to fetch your certificate.

PA 2: Ya, we have not been there, but she did everything. But that is what we use for now.

Interviewer: Yes. Is it expensive guys?

PA 2: No it is not. We paid about R3500.00 I think.

Interviewer: This s for?

PA 1: Everything. We do not know if it included the venue or what. But that is what we paid for everything. So we did not know how much was the solemn, the music and everything, but that's all we paid.

PA 1: That is our wedding picture. I know if you can see it

Interviewer: ok. She can't see I can see.

PA 1: (Laughter)

Interviewer: Ya. Now you are married. Eh, you come back, you finished your ceremony, registered the marriage at Home Affairs when did mom know about this thing that you have married somebody?

PA 1: Se does not know.

PA 2: But she knows. I just have not confirmed it. On Saturday we then had a celebration.

Interviewer: This is the Saturday ...

PA 2: We got married on Thursday, so Saturday we did a celebration and I invited my childhood friends.

Interviewer: Ya.

PA 2: That is the day mama found out we got married.

Interviewer: By the friend?

PA 2: Of course. There was only one friend who pitched. The other ones who did not pitch were asking photos from the one who pitched and arrived very late, after everything was finished. So they asked for photos, not from me, but from my friend. And I think the time she came we were drinking, changed. But on that day she was in Siyabuswa saying that we had thrown the biggest wedding and the most expensive wedding and invited everybody. Oh I think when she asked I could not say anything. He asked why are you wearing a ring and I said I did not get married. But she knows because I said to her I want to get married and he said what you mean you want to get married because you got married a long time ago. Then I said I want to get married your way.

Interviewer: Yes, and her response?

PA 2: She kept quiet. But she has known. It is just that I have not confirmed it.

Interviewer: Even today?

PA 2: No. that was me saying I want to get married her way and I want to do it the right way. I will tell her when I get married, that actually this happened many years ago. In front of everybody. With my microphone.

Interviewer: And you Thuli, who knows in your family, anyone?

PA 1: Everybody. Except for my cousins.

Interviewer: And then your sister?

PA 2: My sister knows.

Interviewer: She talks about it with you?

PA 2: Yeah we talk about it.

Interviewer: Ok. Madala does not know?

PA 1: I told you that I do not tell him such.

Interviewer: Yeah but I understand why you would say that because he already told you that go and marry if you want to get married, so I do not think.....

PA 2: He would have a problem.

Interviewer: Yeah.

PA 1: He would have it because I did it without him and I do not want to have too much discussion, you know my dad o rata (loves) drama. He will just make a big issue out of nothing. So ya.

Interviewer: Guys it is late. I have exploited your marriage day. This interview was just based on your marriage day. Thank you so much. Let me get to the marriage life he next time since now you are married then we will talk about this marriage life. I appreciate it.

PA 1: No you are welcome.

Interview 4

Interviewer: alright guys I think the last time when I was here we poke a lot about marriage, how you go to that decision. But Thuli mentioned that she is entertaining lobola right. So tell me more about that.

Participant 1: Uhm, the lobola though was well entertained, to a point where I even went to speak with my dad an uhm when I was done talking with dad we reached an agreement that we will pay the lobola amount for Botho. We had a conversation with the delegates Botho as well went to her family and spoke about the lobola. There was no resistance from my side and Botho's side because we prepared them. We first told them our intention and then the family. My family and Botho's family seat down to conceptualize the who lobola thing. They said its fine lets arrange and tell us a date and we will meet. The date was set, it was November 2018.

Interviewer: Oh you deprived me the lobola celebration (laughter)?

Participant 1: (Giggle) No it was just families. It was first introductions. So we went and the negotiations went very well, we paid the price, but not the exchange of traditional goods. During this process you are not treated and woman to woman. From my side and Botho's family we did not. It was just an issue of we are creating relations and our children are getting married they love each other. They treated in that way, the way they would when there was a man and a women. With respect and everything was done according to Botho's family tradition.

Interviewer: Oh ohk ok.

Participant 1: Yes.

Interviewer: So Botho's family is **Ndebele** right and you are **Pedi**?

Participant 1: Yes

Interviewer: Ok, you had a **team negotiating** for you?

Participant 1: Yes.

Interviewer: That went to Botho's family?

Participant 1: Yes.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 1: I took my uncle, his wife, uhm my brother, his wife and my other cousin.

Interviewer: Oh so there were **females** in the table?

Participants 1: Yes.

Interviewer: How did they take it?

Participants 2: **Ndebeles** do not negotiate **lobola** with **women**.

Interviewer: Yes, that's what I thought.

Participant 2: But uhm, they were accommodative and in doing that they then said let us also invite my aunt.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 2: That there's also a **woman** from our side.

Interviewer: Well then that is beautiful because they were able to bend the rules here and there. And the team how was the feedback, how did they find this whole **negotiation**? I believe it was the first time they were exposed to such.

Participant 1: my uncle when I spoke to him at first he was very honest about it and told me that my child I do not know how to go about it I am going to approach it just like any child of mine who wants to get married. You just be willing to pay the price because we are going to regard you as the man who is going to ask for a wife. The one thing he was stressing about was that the family must be aware and understand that arrangement because we didn't want to go there and start making issues.

Interviewer: Ya.

Participant 1: So from my side they were ok.

Interviewer: Botho?

Participant 2: Well that is fine because I am aware that there were no issues brought up regarding gender. So that was known by both families so they were not discussing that they were marrying two women, they were marrying their children.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 2: So the negotiation from our point was that we are giving our child to you as we would if you were a man.

Interviewer: Yho, you have come a long way.

Participant 1: Yes I think it is the greatest achievement thus far, because it makes it easy.

Interviewer: Tell me then, what is your understanding of **lobola**? I am not married and I have never been married so I've never gone down the route. Why do we pay **lobola** as black people, what does it signify?

Participant 1: For me personally, and I am not saying that's what it is.

Interviewer: Yes

Participant 1: It is just a token of appreciation that your child is taking my surname. I am not saying he is going to lose her identity. So the least I can do is to show that appreciation. And again for me

paying lobola is a sign that you will be able to take care of your wife. It's a matter of appreciating the other family to say thanks this woman is going to take care my surname and any offspring coming from her will be in my surname.

Interviewer: Botho's laughing what am I missing?

Participant 2: Laughing, no I am not **pregnant**.

Interviewer: Are you planning of getting **pregnant**?

Participant 1: Yeah we are planning on **having children**.

Interviewer: Nice.

Participant 1: though I think **age** is not on our side. One or two would be lovely.

Interviewer: So you are going to speed up the process?

Participant 1: Giggle yes we need to go drink a lot of **imbizas** (medicine for manhood and womanhood)

Interviewer: Stop shooting blanks please. Your kids, do they know about the process of **lobola**.

Participant 2: No they know and they are excited. I think what they appreciate is that they have seen us in this journey. My mom said when she was greeting the delegates, she thought they were just playing.

Interviewer: Oh, but why was she thinking that?

Participant 2: I think that in her mind she thought that I would outgrow this at some stage. So she said I thought that they are playing until she said to me Thuli want to come and pay lobola, then I realized this is actually serious.

Interviewer: (Giggle) our **parents**.

Participant 2: I think even the children and people, they have seen us grow together and I think that's why now they are appreciating. If you have seen is 5 years back you would see that there has been a hug growth.

Interviewer: And the other **family members**, you sisters?

Participant 2: they are fine but we did not even consider to think how they feel, but everybody has accepted. I think for us if parents have accepted then everyone else has no choice but to follow suit. Because who are you to disagree when the parents have agreed.

Participant 1: just to add on that. Lobola validates. I've seen it at home during my uncles wedding. I hated the fact that they were calling her my friend, but after the wedding they called her mosadi was malome (uncle's wife). Even the introductions. From a random grandmother they would know how to address her. She would clearly be introduced as uncle's wife. That's what I always wanted. She is not my friend, and that thing of always explaining to people is irritating.

Interviewer: back to your **sister** Botho, I was asking because you mentioned that she was siding with your mother all along you know. Remember the mother is an individual who is walking in the journey to understanding sexuality. So I am trying to figure out when the **mother** is progressing, is she also progressing? You know, because she was on her side.

Participant 2: you see my sister never has an issue with us, but because ii am different and iv always been this quite person and I always did what my mom wanted me to do as opposed to my sister who has always been a rebel. So she happy once having our mother agree with her, so our mother was more happy to her being the favorite child. So now things are back to normal (laughter)

Participant 2: I have not changed, the only thing that has changed is the fact that I have married a woman, but my behavior, my attitude is always the same.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 2: if I go home on Friday I would get in the house on Friday and I will leave my house on Sunday. I would stay indoors the whole weekend and that's what my mother likes. But she (sister) would just be in and out, from Friday. So I think for that, they have never gotten along because of her character.

Interviewer: Ok. So the **kids**, did they verbalize this excitement?

Participant 1: Very much.

Participant 2: I think Sekgabo is the most excited. Truth of the matter is that you realize that when you are fostering children that even though you take them like your own children, they know in their hearts that this is not m biological mother. So the excitement is over congratulation but the biological one is asking but when I am changing my surname because to him it is real. The other one is more

saying you are asking care of me until a certain point in my life. With him he understands that's this is for life. So he was saying mama you are delaying me, you must change your surname so that I can change my surname. So I said wait we will do it at the right time.

Interviewer: He has not asked **about kids**?

Participant 1: I think he is traumatized.

Interviewer: Why?

Participant 1: imagine this, from 2013, 2014 and 2015 we have been taking care of. The impact of their presence was not that much because we would host them during the holidays and even during that holiday, the impact is not as much and he was still growing. Suddenly 2015 they now move into your house and replace you. That process and much as he is a very sweet boy it kind of messed his mind.

Participant 2: I remember last year I said that its time now we get another child. He said no I don't want another child. Do you understand? You can see the trauma.

Participant 1: I think what happened last year is just too much for the child.

Interviewer: What happened?

Participant 2: We moved from being three, one year we were four and one year we moved from four to being seven. Younger kids were not taking his place. We would go play your games. I think that pulled a strain on him shem.

Participant 1: Cause everyone when I talk about kids he's like oh not again.

Interviewer: **Where are the kids** that you were staying with now?

Participant 2: Uhm, they still here. One is still here but there is a plan for them to move them to another place the beginning of next month.

Interviewer: So you going back to being three again?

Participant 2: No four. With the four it was not an issue because the other one is older, so there is no invasion. They both in their separate rooms doing their own things. So the four I think he is used to that and for him that is not an issue.

Interviewer: Talking about being used to something, it leads me to asking you guys about a **ritual**. Every family has their **ritual**. Things you do as a norm. When I say ritual don't go deep into thinking

I am talking about ancestral. I am talking about just your daily living routine. What is keeping your family together? The simple small things that you would say: 'us as the Mabuzas we do this'. It brings us more together. And what are some of the family rituals that the kids are not readily accepting, that you need to enforce. What comes easy for them and what is more challenging for them?

Participant 2: I think we are actually blessed with easy kids. Because for us they must wake up at 4:30 get ready, clean up themselves, have breakfast at 6:10am we meet here and have a prayer.

Participant 1: If we are not awake they will knock and say it is prayer time. Then we pray and they say their goodbye to school. I think we have actually had it easy. The schedule is clear, you come back from school and you do your homework, there is cooking. At 19:30 we pray then you go to bed. I think it has been easy because they go to schools that are nearby, we do not know how it is going to work out this year because we've got a child who's got a very hectic life.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 2: We have actually have had t easy and think the one thing that the on child we were fostering had was the issue of if we pray then I would go to the bedroom, he would leave and go to his bedroom without saying goodbye. Think that was one difficult thing. I mean you can't just disappear. After praying you must still come and say goodbye I am leaving. I think for him he is not a touchy touchy child. He is child that does not show you his emotions.

Interviewer: Who's that?

Participant 2: Ndoda

Participant 1: giving him something shows love.

Interviewer: Oh to show that you **love** him you much give him something.

Participant 1: For him if he gets stuff then you can see his appreciation is genuine from the heart. Whereas this one is touchy touchy. Even if you do not give him anything as long as I am here he is happy.

Interviewer: Has **Ndoda** always been that way with her mother?

Participant 2: No.

Participant 1: Ndoda was always a **touchy touchy** child all the time.

Interviewer: His brother?

Participant 1: Not so much. Msizi is the only one who would **show emotions**, not even show emotions but h would be there. I don't know if I am making sense.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participate 1: He would try to be nice. I think it's because of the fact that he grew up alone from grade 1. He was taking with his mother when he was doing grade 2. From then we went to boarding school. So he is not that kind of person. The only time where you would hear Msizi talking about his feelings is when he is drunk. He would tell his feelings about situations. Otherwise normally you have to dig deep.

Interviewer: Would you say maybe he was affected by **his mother passing away**?

Participant 1: Of cause, yes.

Participant 2: I think for him at times he wouldn't want to be close to you because he feel that he does not want to betray his mother. So he does not want to replace his mother. He wants to but he can't. Once in a while he would do it but not too much.

Interviewer: **His father** after the passing he never contacted the boy or are they in contact.

Participant 1: Yeah, he's there in his life.

Participant 2: He comes and goes.

Participant 1: December he was with him you know. But he's that kind of a man who would...I mean it is January the child is here and he did not come. Does not know how the child is going to school.

Interviewer: Is he married **this guy**?

Participant 1: Got married and the wife died. You could see the yearning of the child to want to spend time with his biological father. That's the only parent that is still alive.

Interviewer: Does he have kids, **the father**?

Participant 1: He's got kids.

Interviewer: he was with them?

Participant 2: Yeah uhm the first two week of December.

Interviewer: It might be painful because here you are looking at other siblings enjoying the presence of their own **father** and wondering why I can't get that.

Participant 1: I think he also try to keep a distance because he comes and disappears for the whole 6 months without calling.

Interviewer: That's sad.

Participant 1: it is small things. I mean you promise a child to buy him Christmas clothes then you do not buy him and you do not even have the decency to tell us that guys ke palletswe ke go rekela ngwana diaparo (I couldn't buy the child the clothes).

Participant 2: we took out other kids to buy them clothes we did not include this because he was with you.

Participant 1: It was an agreement that this is what will happen. Those are the things that we find ourselves dealing with. Sometimes they are not easy.

Interviewer: What does he say for himself **this guy**?

Participant 2: He doesn't say anything. Like literally he hasn't called this guy explaining himself, nothing.

Participant 1: Such things can really add to the child's stress, and the fear of opening up.

Interviewer: Does **Ndoda** hint anything about his relationship with **his father**?

Participant 2: the father is a hero.

Participant 1: think the father is a hero in his head. I think he know that me and Botho have always got his back. That one he knows.

Interviewer: You mean who knows?

Participant 1: Ndoda.

Interviewer: have you guys or you specifically spoke to him (**Ndoda's father**) about it?

Participant 1: I did. I remember there was a time when we had discipline issues. I had to tell him that if you want to raise your son, I will not deny you that. Go home I am relieving you from your duties. He was having problems with us.

Interviewer: Who was having problems?

Participant 1: The father. You can't stay with a child in my house and ...

Participant 2: for example I get to the gate and call and say hey I am at the gate to see Sekgabo I spoke with him. That's not how it should happen. The parents must speak to each other and agree that you may come.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 1: cause this is not Simphiwe's house. This is my house. He can't just rock up in my house without talking to me. So now they have communicated without us, and he would come and give him money. I think what help is that I had to seat him down and said all four get one R100.00 and cut it equally for lunch. If you father comes and give you R400.00 you will have more. And you going to use that money to sweets or McDonald and come back here and want us to provide dinner for you. It does not work like that. I even said to his father that you rather not give a cent if you going to do that, because I provide solid basic food. If you want to give money give all of them R100.00. With all this kids you are their father and their mother. So I had to. I do not know if he is doing it anymore.

Participant 2: Anyway we save money for them every month and we give them spending money during December. They do not carry pocket money to school. So the relationship he has with his father is an ATM relationship. That is a very complex situation. It is not an easy one.

Interviewer: What types of things does he say about the **father**? Like, why do you say, he regards the father as a hero...

Participant 1: He will like, simple things, at first 'nnah' I was rude I guess, but I was blunt in my approach with the whole issue, cause I would tell him 'kere' your father can not just come and buy you phone while you don't have shoes for school, yes. Like every time when I say I must tell your father to do this, my father doesn't want, you understand...hhmmmm. 'Nnah' I have mine, 'yena' he doesn't. But he's got money, he can afford. 'Nnah ngwana ka ever since o beleha a zanke kaho rekela A-class, keho rekela touches' cause that's what I can afford.

Participant 2: Actually he comes with those nice things.

Participant 1: He comes with those nice things 'areketswe (being bought) what-what'. Brand shoes....

Participant 2: Brand shoes....

Participant 1: 'Nnah bana barena haba apare (our children do not wear) brand shoes cause kebabanchi', (they are many) you understand. We only give them what we can afford at that particular time.

Interviewer: Do you feel he is **understanding you guys** where you coming from?

Participant 1: Hhhhhmmmm...I'm not sure

Participant 2: Hhhhhmmmm...the father or the boy?

Interviewer: the boy

Participant 2: Ahhhhahhh, I don't think so

Participant 1: I don't think so. There is an element, and I understand that mostly because of the death of the mother, the trauma, there's an element of selfishness in that, because you can't wan't to have more than others, you understand. With say parents, 'wena' you've got extra, you understand. 'Yena' he has that comfort that my dad is there, but still on top of that he doesn't want to stay with me.

Interviewer: who doesn't wanna stay with you?

Participant 1: The boy, full time

Interviewer: 'heban' why not?

Participant 1: I don't know. Sale kammutsisa gore hebanna onnyaka go dula le papago na? (do you want to stay with your dad?)

Interviewer: he doesn't explain why?

Participant 1: 'Akere wabona hore were the security emo kae? (You see where the security is).

Participant 2: Ke security (its security).

Participant 1: Where am I; this is home, you understand. There is love even though I don't give it with money, but its fine, I am very well. Like you saying that it's a bit cold.

Participant 2: 'Yena' he is a good boy overall. I think the small things cannot take away the fact that he is not a difficult child.

Participant 1: And 'ke ngwana ramotsha hore' you're wrong. Now you're wrong

Interviewer: Yah, yah, I was very into that 'gore' how is all of this shaping your **parenting?** Towards him and towards all the other kids you have.

Participant 1: Kids are different, are totally different. That's one thing that I've learned daily. That's individuals, you can't put a blanket to all.

Participant 2: I think it's hard at first 2 years, because they all complete different to this one boy that we had. The other two, there's one who is infected 17 years old turning 18 that one is used to defending himself...

Participant 1: Everywhere.

Participant 2: So, he is that child that he's always on his defense mood.

Participant 1: He wakes up and he on like, I want to fight.

Yes

Interviewer: this is the first one?

Participant 2: No, the second one

Participant 1: The 17 year old

Participant 2: He does not feel protected with the maternal grandmother, so he is always in that uhhmm...im ready to defend myself mood.

Participant 1: 'Ene ke survival'

Participant 2: And if something goes wrong he's the first one to say it wasn't me, cause I wanna protect myself, cause there's no one to protect me. So, you must know how he is like if he's lying and all of that, so you can't approach him like you approach others.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 2: Than we've got one who is not about protecting himself but is about getting everyone into trouble. This other one is about protecting himself, if you want to attack me am protecting myself, this one is whether or not am attacked, I must get everyone in trouble. So, he goes looking for trouble so that he can say it's the others.

Interviewer: how old is that one?

Participant 2: 13 turning 14, but that one he goes looking for trouble so he can say get other people in trouble.

Participant 1: And he is going to break everything in this house.

Participant 2: So I need to than check, if there's something wrong you must check who is involved, yes. If it's him than 90% of the time, he is the one who caused the trouble, but he will not say it's him, its everybody else and he's the only innocent one. He carries the brother, he just bullies everybody else. He is a mid-life crisis child. He is caught up in the middle because he doesn't want to play with the younger ones, he can't play with the older ones as well because they see him as a child, so he is that child when we together is in some crisis and Sekgabo is the baby...hhhhmmmm.

Interviewer: And where are the other two (**kids**), the one that, are they staying alone?

Participant 1: They are staying with their maternal grandmother

Interviewer: oh, the one with the maternal grandmother.

Participant 1: They are staying with their **grandmother**, 'ko' Witbank.

Interviewer: it's only the 3 of them there?

Participant 2: Yah, the two boys and the maternal mother.

Interviewer: they don't hint wanting to come stay with you guys as well?

Participant 2: They do, but I think we have had to accept that we can't.

Interviewer: Yeah, of cause.

Participant 2: And make it clear to them that we are going to support you from a distance, because the truth is ...

Participant 1: Truth be told, even me, if my mom was still alive we were gonna support them for that, you understand. The main reason the kids are here because there's no one.

Participant 2: Maternal grandmothers' dead.

Interviewer: are you saying if **your mother** was here you would send the kids to her?

Participant 1: Of course, they would be at home, that is a better care, you understand that. We would support her and support the kids.

Participant 2: Make sure that they've got clothes, they go to school, they've go stationary.

Participant 1: But 'etlo fella mo' cause now you taking over from medical aid to.....

Participant 2: Hhhmmmm...it can be hectic, it can be hectic and the truth is they are combined they are not easy. You just need the grace of God.

Participant 1: Like we saying, at the end of the day they are a blessing to us and we love them, they really made the house alive, 'heba tsamaya' its quiet, not that we don't miss the quietness.

Participant 2: We can't live with them and we don't wanna live without them, it becomes difficult.

Interviewer: yah... would you say that its helping you somehow to tackle life differently, is it helping you grow this **parenting**, having to adjust your life here and there, how do you sum it up?

Participant 1: It does, I think it does.

Participant 2: It helps, I think in a way it helps you individually, because for you to be able to look at any child, because we have got 5 children, for you to be able to look at them and treat them as individuals it means you must than start by understanding yourself as an individual before...like for me when I start looking at myself as a mother I need to started by looking at myself as an individual and said I am different from any other mother than it becomes easy for me to than relate with these children as individuals before I can relate with them as my children, because, over and above, at the end of the day they may be children, but we not raising them to be children, we raising them to be adults. So, we need to be able to relate with them as individuals before now you can say now I am a mother I need to put discipline, I need to put my foot down. So, it helps one grows a lot, because you are forced at that stage 'uguthi' understand this child and treat them like you gave birth to them.

Participant 1: And just the other, for me its juts an issue of a simple thing that this, especially Sekgabo has taught me, forgive yourself ad everyone. Because how many times will it mess you up. He is a day dreamer. At the end of the day you will scold him with a belt you know. But in the car when he leaves he gives you a hug.

Interviewer: Shem

Participant 1: Do you understand? He wants you to say I love you. Even though we chasing each other with a feather dust (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Participant 1: yeah anyway, in those things I am learning that move on and stop holding on.

Interviewer: the father have you introduced **Sekgabo** to him?

Participant 1: A long time ago.

Interviewer: How is the **relationship**?

Participant 1: Sekgabo is a very quiet child. You need to put yourself out there for him to come back and give you that. Do you understand?

Interviewer: Uhm

Participant 1: Unfortunately Sekgabo met his father at a very difficult time in his life a godile (grown). Wa lwala, waethotela (sick and peeing himself) so you see he's not there. But should he have met my dad 10 years ago they will be best of buddies, because of the kind of person he is. Sekgabo and the books you know. So will get along very well. Not that they do not get along, but the relationship is not the best. For me that is what it is now.

Participant 2: He knows grandfather.

Participant 1: No he knows him very well.

Participant 2The other day he was saying him err under theology, when are you writing my name here.

Interviewer: (Giggle) Sekgabo was saying that to him?

Participant 2: Yeah why is my name not here?

Interviewer: Wow

Participant 2: When are you writing my name?

Interviewer: And he said?

Participant 2: No go and buy paint the next time you come, so that we can write you name.

Interviewer: Shem (Feeling pitty)

Participant 2: So there is a relationship, it may not be very strong, but there is some relationship.

Interviewer: And you're other family members Thuli how do they take him? Your siblings.

Participant 1: They are fine. I don't think anyone has any resentment. It is just that my family is very complex. My brother I know does not have a problem with Sekgabo, it's just that he doesn't have strong disciplinary characters, they do not care much about disciplining children.

Participant 2: I think you were saying discipline, I think that's taking it far. They hard on children. You know children warm up to your heart. The heart that you have toward them. They do not have that.

Interviewer: Yes, like **my mother**.

Participant 1: Yes like your mom. Like Smango does not give a damn about kids.

Participant 2: it is hi from a distance.

Participant 1: How are you Sekgabo, Sekgabo I am fine awesome. And move on.

Participant 2: Sekgabo being a touchy touchy child, if you don't give him that then he shuts down towards him. Because for him his language is touch. You see him you hug him and give that 5 minutes 10 minutes time he warms up to you. But once you miss doing that then he just shuts down.

Participant 1: With Ndoda and Sekgabo, they grew up with that.

Interviewer: They grew up with **(Kids)**?

Participant 1: they grew with that thing ya gore, hey howzit. Are you ok? Sharp. Food is in the kitchen, go and sot yourself out, do you understand?

Participant 1: And Sekgabo did not grow up like that. Madikizela was more of a mother to them, even though she was not there full time. But when she was there.

Participant 2: She would spend time with the kids, talk to them, and want to find out how they are.

Participant 1: I think Madikizela could get along well with Sekgabo if she was still alive. Mara abana stress bona (but they are not stressful). Botho's family funny enough will all the kids, they are very receptive, like they have opened up their hearts and their hands warmly. Not that my family is not warm.

Participant 2: its not that they have not accepted. It is just that they do not have that warmth. And I think Sekgabo is a warm child because he is from a warm family.

Participant 1: A family were they would hug you. When you leave they would give you perfume. Nna my sister will never buy you anything. Not that we doing comparison but you know those little small things that you do. I mean I don't know how many times Nhlanhla has bought Msizi clothes, Botho's sisters, before we could even get married. When the family was still fighting with us. Because ne amo tsaba (he was scared of her).

Interviewer: which is understandable. Because I mean like you said Botho that how you raise you **kids**. Your own **kids**, so you are going to be like that with every **kid**.

Participant 1: Yes.

Interviewer: **Guys let's end it here for tonight. Thank you so much. Its fine, next time I come, I'll come early because the kids sleep early.**

Participant 1: Yeah come early, if you are not back at work neh, don't mind to come around 16:30.

Interviewer: **Oh ok.**

Participant 1: They will be here. I'll be here. Uhm and then we will wait for Botho if you want to see her or both of us or just the children. Ndoda is here around half past two, to three

Participant 2: I think that is too early baby.

Interviewer: **Half past four you guys will bond.**

Interview 5

Participant 1: When you feel like you want to think about him.

Interviewer: mhmm

Participant 1: You know you can always come to us, and if you feel like you want to know him, we will make sure that it happens.

Interviewer: It's funny, what made him change his mind?

Participant 1: I do not know.

Participant 2: For me I think it's, its. I grew up without a father and he was alive, and I think, subconsciously every child wishes, my father was in my life. But when you are done with that wishing you can see that practically it's not possible.

Interviewer: mhhh

Participant 2: So, I think you want to know, you want to feel what it's like to have a father. But it does not mean it is something you entertain every day. Once in a while when you see kids with normal families, you envy that. But it's also not something you envy every day. It's that time. So, for me I just took it that way that it's just something that will happen and it will come and go.

Interviewer: Ya

Participant 2: Some days will be better than others.

Interviewer: Were there no behavioural changes unknown to you after that time?

Participant 2: No

Interviewer: Grades dropping?

Participant 2: Noo

Participant 1: It's just that he started in a new school.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 1: The grades have dropped, and I don't think it's because of that. It's a new school, and they doing IBO. It's a totally different spectrum, with this ipad, and all this thing, so he is learning this new self. I also the workload.

Participant 2: he has average grade. Its only maths and science. Like even the first term they were not good. Everything else was just average. He passed everything.

Participant 1: But not the way that we know.

Participant 2: The teacher said that they understand, since it's a new school. He was on public school, and now he is on a private school. The level is different. So, give him a year or two for him to get used to it he will adjust.

Participant 1: T the school now they are using tablets, so it's literally computer classes. You know if you not fast, if you do not record, if you do not, soo. But I think he will be fine.

Interviewer: Ok

Participant 1: the person who gave us a hard time is Ndoda.

Participant 2: But it was not, it was just him being a teenager 16.

Participant 1: So, we tried a lot of things at the age of 16, we were trying to see if he can get away with it.

Participant 2: He went to a bash, never came back home.

Participant 1: But he did not leave from here. Went to visit his father and then never came back home.

Participant 2: Cause apparently, he was telling the kids that he was going to be allowed, that's why he had to go to his father.

Participant 1: No but we had to...

Interviewer: to nip it in the butt.

Participant 1: there are certain things that do not need a talk. I think that there are certain certain that needs a parent to be a parent and act immediately. I said I am not gonna beat him. I going to take him, hold the bed, I smacked a child. I am not going to beat you like an old person. The minute you raise your hand then its abuse. Then I told him ama beat you like a child. To show that he is a child he also saw his mistakes. He was never angry at us.

Participant 2: He was sulking up the next few days after.

Participant 1: you know a lot of kids would be all moody you know. With him no, he came back to apologise and he said I am sorry and he gave me a hug and then life goes on. He told us that he will never go back. Then I told him he must finish his punishment, cause I do not want to about it anymore.

Interviewer: No, that's good. Ok if there were no ant other abnormalities, then I am happy. That was my worry. If he is fine, he is fine. If you see anything, let me know. But I do not think he can go because it was bound to happen if it was bound to happen. You see?

Participant 2: mhhmm

Interviewer: So, it's all good and well. Ohk. Then it's fine, let's get back to our stories then. I think the other time I was just with the kids nee?

Participant 1: Yes.

(Note: up till here it's been about parenting)

Interviewer: So, let me come back to you guys. Let me talk more of the emotions ST. I guess I was gathering info all this time. We have spoken about quite a few things. How you met, how you came out. When did you realise that you are not mainstream heterosexuals or however way you want to put it? Let me ask about any issue around **coming out**. Just on the emotional side. How was it for you?

Participant 1: For me there was no emotion.

Interviewer: (Laugh).

Participant 1: Maybe I do not understand the question, **I was never scared to be honest**, as I said in the beginning, I never came out to my parents and said, hey I am gay. The only time I spoke to my father about my sexuality was when I was telling him I am getting married.

Interviewer: Laugh ... ok

Participant 1: Do you understand?

Interviewer; Ya

Participant 1: So, it has never been an issue of hey, what is he going to say. You know all those things. My sisters I told them. One of them do not understand, but for me that was not an issue, cause I was not there. So, I wouldn't say I was scare or I had issues. **The turmoil that I had was between me and my sexuality**. That for me was the biggest challenge. To say can I be lesbian and Christian at the same time? You know those type of things. Because I am rooted in that religion, do you understand. **But as we grow, we become comfortable with yourself. Uhm, you start to read a lot. You start to realise that actually.**

Interviewer: uhmmm

Participant 1: **there is really nothing wrong with you being who you are and being a Christian, you know. (Reconciling Spirituality with Homosexuality)**

Interviewer: are you saying that growing up helped you **reconcile the two, spirituality** and sexuality.

Participant 1: Reading about it.

Interviewer: Reading?

Participant 1: Reading about it as helped me a lot to make sense of it because what we were feed growing up sometimes it can be a prison in itself. The more you read; you start to liberate yourself. You find yourself. I think that for me is what helped me. Not that I was scared to tell people that I was lesbian, but it was always an issue to say lesbian and Christian. How does that marry, you know? But me coming out as not a...

Interviewer: What were you reading?

Participant 1: I read conversation with God. I read uhm... unwitting the devil. So, they really brought me to myself. I've learned that this God we serving is not a pity God to be worried about who we sleeping with, you know, so ya.

Interviewer: And you said something about being raised... you say **growing up** in a certain way can be a prison sometime. In what way?

Participant 1: You know parents usually **indoctrinate** you that is a fact. So, growing up being told that you are a homosexual and you gonna go to hell and the devil is gonna poke you with a fork. So, you find yourself imprisoned to say, as much as I want to express myself, I am unable to. Now around the believers you always have to tip toe around them and even in church, you find that I am even unable to express myself.

Interviewer: Yes

Participant 2: You find that you are unable to express your being in church because of those things. You ask yourself, can I even speak in tongue, can I preach, can I pray loud. Do you understand what I am saying? So, it's one of those things.

Interviewer: Ya

Participant 1: Ya like I said, when you read you find your own truth. And the minute you become comfortable with your own truth, then people start to see you.

Interviewer: Alright. Botho

Participant 2: Yoh for me it was actually difficult emotionally. I think I had lot of things to consider. My biggest fear was actually coming out and actually finding out that I was actually demon possessed.

Interviewer: (Laugh).

Participant 2: I think for me that was my biggest fear. I had been told that I need deliverance. But then I thought what if I actually find out I actually had demons and come out. And my child above all. You do not want to expose a child to this line of life. You have found the truth and suddenly you are now straight. So, I think I had to battle with myself, and I had to understand if this is really me. And the parent for me, thought I had issues with them, but those were minor issues. For me I needed to understand if this is who I was, so that I do not confuse my boy. And uhm it took me a while because I had to, think I did a lot of soul searching and for me. You know sometimes you find yourself wanting people to affirm you. To assume you that there is nothing wrong with what you are doing and it was a time where I could not find that. Until I really had to search myself and find my own relationship with God. I think that was when I developed a prayer. I think I started praying a lot at night when I am alone, so I can then understand is God connecting with me or my sexuality?

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 2: Before I can just invite anybody in my life, I needed to understand that can God still uhm relate with me in this journey? When I realised that actually we do have a relationship with God and I realised that this is who I am, and when I accepted that, then my life became easy. That is why it was even easy coming out to Sekgabo because for me him, everybody else I felt they have their lives, but this is a child that I have brought into this world so I have the responsibility to make sure he is ok.

Interviewer: Hmm

Participant 2: So, I think that for me was the greatest issue. But once that was sorted out then I became ok and then I was also wondering that what if we do not work out. Not because I am not lesbian, but because we do not work out. What happens there after?

Interviewer: hmmm

Participant 2: So, there was a lot of things to consider. But when I accept and I came out to Simphiwe, life became easier.

Interviewer: What made you convinced that God is ok with you. I mean how were you convinced? Yes, you prayed. Then after praying, then what?

Participant 2: There was peace in my heart. I think in my prayer I would say God give me a sign that I am fine. The signs that I expected would not come. But after a while I felt peace in my heart and I was fine. That battle I had was gone. And that's when I knew that we are fine.

Interviewer: you mentioned that after finding that connection, that relation with God you were able to come out to your son. How did you do the coming out?

Participant 2: We actually called him. We were about to explain to him that we are dating and then he was aware and we were not aware that he was aware. So, we were trying to tell him that you see we are girls that are attracted to other girls and we are dating. He said no I know you are lesbian.

Laugh from everyone.

Participant 1: He was doing Grade 3?

Participant 2: He was in Grade 2. He was seven going for eight. I think there was nothing to tell, but I think we had planned for it.

Participant 1: No, we prepared a very long speech. What do we do if he cries? We were ready for the tantrums. I was even ready to move out of the house.

Interviewer: hmm, so he never showed any signs of discomfort or anything

Participant 2: No.

Interviewer: Ok. Does he talk about it with you guys at all about having two moms?

Participant 1: Funny, you know what no he does not talk about that part. The thing is that in his own world he put us into different roles. Do you understand? Roles that makes sense to him at the time. As much as he calls me mom, his phone, you can take it, it is written daddy. That is what I am saying. In his own little world, it makes sense to him. He categories the relationship when it matters to him, and that why I am not going to say anything to him and disturb him. When he is ready, he will put it the way he sees it at that particular stage in his life. But there has never been an issue where he speaks about our relationship, there has always been they love each other, they are good parents, and you know. Let them live their lives. The last time you were here they said well it doesn't bother us; I mean it's their life.

Interviewer: Ya. Alright, alright. You know what? Just pause for me let me use the bathroom.

Interviewer: Alright then, lets speak a little bit about the term lesbian culture. There is language out there that is being formulated that there is a lesbian culture. A lifestyle, lesbian lifestyle, lesbian way of living. What's your take on that?

Participant 1: Elaborate a bit.

Participant 2: It's a perception.

Interviewer: yes, you could say it's a perception. Some people strongly believe it's a lifestyle or sometimes they call it its fashionable. So, what is your take on that one?

Participant 1: There are those people who get into lesbianism because its fashionable thing. Do you understand. But the real lesbian who are literally attracted to a girl, who them is not a lifestyle, it is who they are. There is a difference. But you find there are girl who just want to explore that life, but a person knows that I'm not really lesbian, I just want to see what do they and how do they do it. How do they have sex. Or wanxaza (I like you). Or I like you at work because you are lesbian. I mean I dated a girl who was like that. She was just excited for having a girl boyfriend. But after a couple of months she got tired of me and the poor girl dumped me straight up.

Interviewer: Did she give you any reasons?

Participant 1: No, she told me that I am not lesbian. She was very fair, clear and straightforward with me.

Interviewer: Oh she told you?

Participant 1: she sends me a two-pager email so I did not need to go call her and ask her what do you mean. It happens. Someone will like and want to get to know you, but not because they are lesbian. Its like a man who is not bisexual who is not gay will not go and get attracted to anther man. Just like me as a lesbian, I will not just and... and I am talking about us. Me myself, I would die if I go sleep with a man. If I get raped, I will take pill and kill myself because I do not think I will be able to live with myself, after being violated that way. It is a lifestyle for some people and for some people it is who they are.

Participant 2: We cannot dispute that there are people who think it is fashionable. But that does not mean it is a lifestyle for all of us. For some of us it is wo we are.

Interviewer: Have you ever been told that you are in fashion?

Participant 1: My sisters told me that she knows me, I like new things (laughter). She comes from Pretoria, it's something that they do in Pretoria. She will come back. Bu for me those things did not really bother me.

Participant 2: I was also told that I am going through some phase. It will pass, you will come to your senses. By then I knew that it is not.

Interviewer: Who is she to you?

Participant 2: She is a woman I have known most of my life. She is known at Siyabuswa as a good Christian woman. She has known me all my life.

Interviewer: Do you still see her?

Participant 2: uhmm we do talk some time.

Interviewer: What does she say about you.

Participant 2: Uhm we do not talk about us.

Interviewer: She knows you are married?

Participant 2: She doesn't know that we are having a celebration in December yet. But she will get an invitation.

Interviewer: But she knows you are married to a.

Participant 2: She knows. No, she has met Tsheko.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 1: it's like people saying bad shit about you. When they see you not giving a shit about it and doing you, they end up being angry for you being you. At the end of the day there is nothing else that they can say but just to shut up.

Interviewer: Yes, as we were speaking on the lifestyle issues, so you saying it is a lifestyle because you saying they are experimenting, so when they come to their sense they.

Participant 2: But it's like people who marry older men for money. There are those who marry thm for love. Then there are those who marry them just for the lifestyle, it doesn't mean they do it for the same

reasons. There will always be those people who just do it for the other reasons, and those that are genuine.

Interviewer: Yes. Hence, we have to embark of this research because remember I want to write finish and conclude and people would want to hear you say. To stop generalising. You know, you can't brush everybody with the same brush. And the parents are not hoping you get out of this...

Participant 2: no not anymore. I think the parents are now fine with us. They have accepted us; they have accepted that this is who we are. They are looking forward to showing off in December.

Interviewer: Yoh, what a journey.

Participant 2: Oh, it has been a very long journey.

Interviewer: Remember Botho you spoke about your sister who was on your mother's side, who was supporting your mother when she was steering the boat, she is on board as well, I believe now?

Participant 2: Yeah, she is on board and the mother is on board. Everybody, even my aunts. So, there is a Ndebele saying that goes "iskhulu mauskhonza, sbuya ngomkhozeleli" meaning when you making fire careful not to burn yourself. Meaning they have realised that if they do not do anything "taba e eltlo sala ka bona" (laughter). Because now we can't continue supporting somebody who is not there anymore.

Interviewer: And your sister, you have never spoken to her about your sexuality, ever?

Participant 2: No, I have never. My sister and I have never been close. We have been always very competitive. She is older than, but with just only two years.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 2: So, there has always been that competition between us all our lives. Who is better? So, we have never had an open relationship with each other. My late friend knew that I have a history of dating women. The people that I could confide in were in church, the two ladies knew that I have a history of dating women. But my sister. My sister heard it for the first time when she met Thuli. It was quite a shock to her.

Interviewer: Did she say anything?

Participant 2: No. She was not supporting it when mama was there but when mama wasn't there, she was fine.

Participant 1: she wasn't playing both sides. She was neutral. She did not want to make anyone angry. She did not make me uncomfortable. She has always been great. I have never had negative experience with her.

Participant 2: No there only problem was that mama is unhappy because you no longer give her money. If you want her to be fine just pup her with money.

Interviewer: I want to believe you have single lesbian friends. Do you know their concepts maybe?

Participant 1: with regards to what?

Interviewer: Marriage. What is their general view on your marriage? What kinds of things are you hearing?

Participant 2: Our friends who are single? Single as in marital status or alone?

Interviewer: Both.

Participant 2: We have friends that are not married, but they stay with each other.

Interviewer: What is their stance on marriage?

Participant 1: One do not think he will get married to this woman because they do not see eye to eye, but she believes in the institution of marriage.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 1: But she wants someone who will be able to together with her this journey of marriage. There other one they believe in it. The issue is parents. Or the issue of maybe the other partner is not sure, but they are doing it. I feel like the partner who is really lesbian want a serious relationship and they are committed, but I feel like this girl is there but still struggling with their own issues

Participant 2: we just have a variety, but in general they believe in marriage. They find how we relate to each other weird.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Participant 2: they are shocked ach time.

Interviewer: What

is shocking them?

Participant 2: Maybe it is because I have given myself to Thuli. So, there is a lot of things that we would do. I mean we talk about people who attract us.

Participant 1: Ya, I mean we know each other's type and we laugh about it. I think for us we had to understand that once you have a secret the devil capitalises on that. Once you have something the devil has got something to accuse you on. But once you say I find this person attractive, once you say it the temptation goes away. So, our friends find that very weird about us.

Participant 1: they are too serious. If there something we do not like about each other we say it out loud in front of them, and say listen I don't like what do you doing.

Participant 2: Yes, I don't like that period.

Interviewer: Do they express the view that one day they would love to get married?

Participant 2: they do, I mean one just got engaged with a partner. The other one, she wants to but I do not think the partner wants to. Like I am saying they are not walking the same path you know.

Participant 2: Actually, we have got four pairs. There is one that have been marriage for ever, for about eleven years now, and they have got a child. Then the other two is engaged. The other twos engaged. They grew up together, they have known each other forever but the relationship is still fresh. Then this one they been together for years but the partner dos not believe in marriage, does not believe in having kids, and the other one wat to have kids, want to a get married.

Participant 1: they are walking parallel.

Interviewer: They have been dating for a while?

Participant 2: Yes. Actually, have been dating longer than us. Cause when we met again, they were still together.

Participant 1: over six years.

Participant 2: No, it's over seven years. It's been forever. For me I think I've grown to understand that this is not an easy road, and I would want to enforce the view that stop tip towing around people, and people will understand. Until I understand myself that we do not deal with issues the same way.

Interviewer: hmm

Participant 2: I may have dealt with it quicker, but in that process, it was very difficult for me. It's not an easy thing. I think growing up being everybody's favourite, that becomes even worse because some of us live to please people. So, coming out and wanting to get married, that becomes the greatest disappointment to other people because when they see you, they see you as a disgrace. We are all in a journey and some people take longer. We just need to be there to support each other. When they need support, we've been there to support them as they go through it. I have been through that journey of coming out. Cause I think for me the greatest battle is self-acceptance. Once you are able to do that, then you are able to discard and disregard what other people are saying.

Interviewer: I hear you. Are we seeing black lesbian couple marrying lately?

Participant 2: No, they are **cohabiting**.

Interviewer: **Cohabitation** (laugh).

Participant 1: a lot of black lesbians can engage you for 20 years, a lot of black lesbians.

Participant 2: then they leave you, and six months later they marry someone else.

Participant 1: Do you understand. We can stay together for years. You find normally one has a flat in Pretoria and the other has a house or flat here. If that is the case then one has to sell and come and stay with. That is normal, it's very normal.

Interviewer: What could be the cause, if we speculate?

Participant 1: I think its easy. To be honest it is easy to cohabit with someone else. To move in with someone else, then to commit to marriage. If someone piss me off, I can pack my shit and leave. Do you understand? But if I have given my life to the other person and I am stuck here with you for life and I get angry with you because you do not want me to go to the beer place and I am angry with you, that is childish. If I have my own place, I can say I do not want to see you this week. Now no matter how missed off I am I just have to come back home.

Participant 2: Marriage forces you to work on your issues. I think it doesn't matter what type, COP, with or without accrual, it doesn't matter. Once you are legally married to somebody, that forces you to work on your issues.

Participant 1: Yeah to work on your issues and make sure you find space to work hard o this marriage so that you do not lose what you've work all this year. Because it is easy when I am not married to tell Botho that I am not coming this weekend. Do you understand?

Participant 2: You are not accountable to anything.

Participant 1: Do you understand. But the minute you re married you are accountable to with what you are doing and who you are with?

Participant 2: That accountability is on everything. The accountability is on your whereabouts, how you send your money. So, you must fully account to somebody, and once you have worked on it, it becomes difficult for you to give it all up.

Participant 1: Maybe it's because of age guy. I don't know. But to go and start again. Yoh. It's difficult. Starting from the beginning is difficult for me, I think maybe it's because of age.

Participant 2: I mean a 25-year-old lesbian is not invested in time, efforts, money in the relationship.

Participant 1: And whether you like it or not, divorce will strip you up.

Participant 2: There is greater amount of loss, not just financially, but emotionally. And I think nobody needs to go throw that.

Interviewer: this leads me straight to wanting to finding out about your values. As you are talking, your own values as a married couple.

Participant 1: Drink and be marry.

Participant 2: (Laughter)... my values is respect, love or the other party. An I think for me its treat with respect. And that will teach the other person how to treat you. If I want you to do something to me let me do something to you and let me expect you to do the same to me. Cause for me I think that this are the core values. Other thigs are there, but I think for me those are the core once.

Interviewer: And you Mrs drink and be marry.

Participant 1: as a married couple lots and lots of sex is important.

Interviewer: is it not as important when you are not married?

Participant 2: No, it's not. Honestly, I promise you it is not.

Interviewer: Ya ya educate me. Why is it not important when you are married, then it is when you are?

Participant 2: For me it's this. There are many things that can go wrong in a marriage.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 2: it is easy for you to sort things out if there is intimacy. Because if you cannot find each other anywhere else...

Participant 1: At least find each other in the bedroom.

Participant 2: After that you will be able to be calm and talk about those issues. Because it happens that we are disagreeing and nobody wants to say I am giving up and everybody is saying I am right. So, you need to find a place where you can find each other. (Laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Participant 2: (Laughter).

Interviewer: have you since you are the bearer of news, have you experienced that and said I was wrong?

Participant 2: I hardly admit on that. I hardly admit after sex. Maybe after praying I would admit. Ya. But I would be calmer after sex and expect somebody to apologise, but I will not be as aggressive as I was before. My apology is very far, it takes everything in me to come back and say I was wrong. I don't believe I can be wrong. I believe that I am very considerate.

Interviewer: I love your honesty.

Participant 2: I believe I am considerate and I put others first. that's what I believe. (laughter).

Participant 1: That is true, that's how she is. She is right, she is like this. For me the most important thing that I value in my relationship is communication. It doesn't matter how much or how long we talk about it, as long as we talk about it, but let's get it out there. Because a lot of relationships out there really get messed up because people don't talk. I can have integrity and love you, but if I don't communicate my true self and feeling I battle it up in the corner and I explode. Next thing we find ourselves distant. So, for me I really value communication. I really communicating freely in a safe environment that I am going to be protected even while my thought I vile. That for me it's everything. Let's us not refrain from telling you something because I am scared of how you going to react. That is where things go wrong in relationship because someone does not want to say something because they are expecting negative feedback from you. Even if it can be negative, Mara put it in a way that can be

comfortable. That safe comfortable relationship, communicating our thoughts and know that my thoughts will be well received.

Participant 2: we try and get it right; we don't always get it right.

Participant 1: No, we don't. We struggled at first, I don't want to lie.

Participant 2: For the longest of time. Hence the sex would then help to say let us set down and discuss the issues calmly and if an issue is not resolved we park it and come back to it until it is resolved. Because as you do that people get time to process it. That issue of 3 days ago is still there, lets us come back to it and resolve it. You find that now we have some different views on it and we find common ground.

Participant 1: Honesty is key. It nearly broke my marriage.

Interviewer: you mean not being honest?

Participant 1: Not being honest and doing stupid things you know and I have learned. Be honest. I think the thing that helped is that I was able to communicate my emotions with my partner, and she not being judgemental about it. Well sometimes she would be. But eventually we would find ourselves in a happy space. So, I came to space where I had to up you know. But honesty and communication for me they are ... or be transparent with your partner as much as you can. A lot of times we do not know how to but we must a way to do that.

Interviewer: I hear you guys saying you are becoming better in this commitment by the day.

Participant 2: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: So, I am glad that you are finding things that re working as you continue. Ok last question for the night. Ehh at work, church, I know I have asked this before, I am asking it again just to get the validity of it. At work, church, family spaces, societies, around where you are, are you finding or are you feeling heterosexual dominance in those spaces? Work church, family, friends, society. Remember my take is that homosexual marriages are fewer that heterosexual marriages. Do you feel that heterosexual? and I am taking acceptance, tolerance the day to day, how are people treating you in those spaces, especially the straight the people would they want to dominate you. Especially the ones that are married. How do they relate to this marriage? Do they take this the same way the take the heterosexual marriage? Do they feel this marriage just as they feel a heterosexual marriage?

Participant 2: The truth is heterosexuals think they have something better than we do and the thing is, the married ones think that their marriages are more authentic than our ones. It took me a while to be able to stand up and express that I will not take any nonsense. I will allow anyone to make me think that I am in a friendship, I am in a marriage. Of late I have learned not to miss an opportunity to educate people who think they understand us. And they do not understand who we are. Do not box us. Don't think that you know Botho the sexuality, this is us, this is our journey together. You may find other people doing it differently, it's their journey. I've learned to stand for myself. Some will say it is easier for you because you are married to a woman because women are more understanding. Such statements will make you feel like you having it easy or more difficult because of your choices. I have also experienced people who are trying to create a scenario and compare to heterosexual for it to make sense to them in terms of role playing, who is the wife and who is the husband. Such questions. Hence, I am saying, I will not miss an opportunity to educate. When I get a sense that you are doing with a good spirit, I allow you to make sense of it. Though I always say that if you see me as Thuli's wife then its ok, and if you see me as a partner its ok. I don't need you to define me in order to have my role. If you defining me as a wife, make sense to you and make it easy for you to relate to me its ok. For me it's not a problem. But do not make my marriage seem less of a marriage because it is not a man.

Interviewer: in which spaces do you have such, do you see such do you experience such?

Participant 2: in the society and at work. I think at church they stopped because they do not have the opportunity to ask it. At our church it was made clear that do not go there. Now having said that they have also made it easy for them to relate to Thuli as the man and me as the wife. Now they say this is Mr Mabuza and this is Mrs Mabuza. And I think it's because of how our pastor is pushing it. For me it's not a problem, I don't have an issue with it. It only becomes an issue if I see you or hear some disrespect n I have a problem with it.

Interviewer: Tee

Participant 1: For me I have never found myself in a space where I have define myself, I don't even have to wonder, it's a clear cut. Its written in bold betters (stabane) gay. I don't shy away like she said to educate people about my relationship and my marriage and whatever. But at church I was very uncomfortable to be called bab Mabuza, until I got to understand that people have to make sense of this thing that took years to dissect. So whatever box that they want to put you in, as long as it does not nyenyefatsa (belittle) me as a person, I don't care whether you call me Mr Mabuza, you call me mma Mabuza, for me that is not an issue. For me you are respecting and honouring a marriage. I have

issues with my sisters and I always try to teach them. They like to say you and Botho are woman, hence you are able to... then I tell them that is not the case and it has nothing to do with being a man or a woman. They would start to talk about their husbands and I would crush their husbands then they would say that I am saying because I am a woman. They like to tell me that you must always remember that you are a girl.

Participant 2: Yeah, they rub it in.

Participant 1: you will never understand how men behave or think or you can never think that you are a man.

Interviewer: hmm

Participant 1: Because you are not. You are a woman.

Interviewer: And when they say that, what are they meaning?

Participant 1: hey are meaning that I can't go and say that their men are acting irrational or stupid.

Interviewer: Ohhh like you do not have the expertise to analysing a male's point of view.

Participant 1: Again, for me it's that thing of disrespecting what me and my wife are doing ... pila pila. And for me it has nothing to do with being a girl or a man, it's just a thing of let's seat down and look at an issue and let get a reasonable and proper solution out of it, do you understand.

Participant 2: And there is nothing that says because you are a woman you must be ok and because you a woman you must be expected to be responsible in marriage.

Participant 1: So, to them a man is supposed to be irresponsible and do stupid things ad when I tell them that its not the case, then they come and tell me that, but remember you are a woman. You may have an image of a man but you not a man. I have learned to accept that this is something we will have to deal with for the rest of our lives.

Interviewer: The struggle continues.

Participant 1: I always find myself in the middle of nowhere. I go home neh, they do not want me to cook in the pots. The big old men, they do not want me in the kraal. I am associated with my brothers when they are cooking meat. But if they are cooking meat with their big guys, I can't seat with them beaus I am a woman. I am like, what am I? and where do I fit in, he society, especially in the rural

areas where it is black and white. So, at home I am comfortable to do what I want to do but when I get around society people. And people always say I can't keep following your wife.

Participant 2: They say your wife has feed me a love portion.

Participant 1: then on the other hand is my brother cooking meat with my dad, I can't go to them, I have to hang out with the little boy and they are talking shit the whole night.

Interviewer: Where would you rather fit?

Participant 1: I feel comfortable with amagents (males).

Interviewer: You want to be fitting gentleman in all spectrum and all ages?

Participant 1: All ages I don't mind, young old, all ages whatever. It's comfortable for me. But again, it's complex for me. We are there talking about women and their wives and then I want to give an input on the matter. And if I deviate from what they are saying they will say it is because you are woman. I always have to find myself saying your wife is full of shit, otherwise I will not be taken seriously because I will be speaking from a female point of view. It's not even a female point of view it's just a wakeup call to say hello, wake up. You can't go out and sleep out and then come back and expect your wife to be happy do you understand. But majority will be like, haai but she must understand.

Interviewer: you are one of them when you are agreeing? When you disagreeing?

Participant 2: You are a woman. Enklek wena omosadi (in actual fact you are a woman).

Participant 1: enklek why are you commenting, you are a woman. What do you expect, do you understand? But when you agree with them my brother will say ke nfanaka o (that's my little brother). (Laughter). This is when I have said something stupid. Because I am in that space, I have to join them. Like I can't come in that space and say what are you doing. I just say, when the wife calls, I just say Hai don't answer ignore her, batho ba batshwenya. That is the struggle that I find myself in when I am spending time with my brother and his friends. Let's just say you want to make sense, you can't, you just say ok, otherwise you doing to be called a woman a lot. Not that I mind being called a woman, but how.

Interviewer: your brother and your father just as a family are, they accepting like you can cook with them.

Participant 1: Yaaa yes, I do everything. Like I go to the kraal, I do everything. That one has never changed from the age of 10 I mean I would take care of my father's cattle from tuka af. I am the first woman in my village who went to the kraal. It was a taboo; my dad has never said anything. The villagers would say your cows are going to die, how can you let a woman who's in her periods to get into a kraal. Anyway, my father had no issues.

Interviewer: why do you think you dad was like that?

Participant 1: I think my father o thusitse ke sociology. Because of his studies, I think he kinda like opened up his brain a bit. So, he studied sociology until masters so I am sure he came across those terms in his studies.

Interviewer: So, you agreeing that academics are playing a role in educating people.

Participant 1: Yes, even us lesbians who rare educated, we we we do not do things like lesbians whoo are not educated. I do no know if it makes sense love.

Participant 2: its not even just lesbians it is general, like that is the expectations like I am not suppose to do things like a person who is no educated. You are expected to react to situations differently.

Participant 1: But I think in your brain, like its not even the expectation of society, like yourself because you are learned you are able to look at a situation and break it down into different aspects and come up with a conclusion or view from two different scenarios. If someone is no educated, if you were taught that lesbianism is a sin, that is all you know. And if you were taught that way you read do you understand. Because a lot of times people get shocked to find decent lesbians who are academics who are contributing into the society positively. We do not walk with bottle like batho bako lekeisheneng. We spoke but we do it in respectful manner in our own space, you know. I can't just ke tsamaye mo strateng ke tshwere beri. But some other woman ga bona lesbian, that's the picture they see.

Participant 2: if they see something that Oh, I lesbian. If they see something that is inappropriate and they say oh ilesbian. It is not surprising for the to see us doing wrong thing. Like they would say ohh you are beautiful and you are lesbian. Like the minute you are lesbian everything must be going all wrong in your life.

Participant 1: The other day Bekele mo SAQA and then the other lady said to me, you ant be a lesbian, you are too pretty and intelligent, and then I am like what do you mean?

Participant 2: You must be ugly and ..

Participant 1: like they said I don't want ke go nytsa or whatever, like where I come from amalesbians baetsa carwash, do you understand. They are doing restaurant work.

Interviewer: hmmm

Participant 1: You are the first person ke kopaneng le yena wa lesbian into the education first who is doing well for herself. Kere wow welcome to Gauteng. I said to her, is a lot of us. We just don't, are bonagale because we live in our own little spaces and our own little world mara re babanchi.

Participant 2: it is going to take a while for people to start noticing us.

Participant 1: I told him rebabanchi, I can also put you in a group my circle of friends nje, ka ba beya so.

Participant 2: Everybody is gone to pass matric qualification.

Participant 1: Ke mmolellayalo.

Participant 2: Yes.

Participant 1: Then I told him we've got doctors, we've got lawyers. Are what? The they said are you serious, then I said I am the least educated person in my circle of friends. We've got masters, we've got degrees, we've got doctorates, they were like what. So, it's a shock for them to see how. So, they were saying how did you get into this group? I think I am the only one who is not a doctor in that group. So, you see, that societal thing yare mora.

Interviewer: What societal thing?

Participant 1: Ene ya gore goba (and as a) lesbian you not supposed to work.

Interviewer: Oh, the stereotype.

Participant 1: Yes, that we not suppose to work. When you see a lesbian, you see a dom kop, a bartender or a petrol attendant, do you understand, or motho wago tlhatswa dikoloi (or a car washer). But in fact, we are super intelligent. You know. Modimo o bone gore batho ba batlo remora, nerecase tlhalefe. (God saw that people would give us stress, we wouldn't be smart)

Interviewer: Hee monna nkabe ke ke gone jaanong? (Geez, where would I be by now?)

Participant 2: No, we were not gonna get married, I think if I did not come right, I was still going to be an uncover lesbian (laughter).

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Participant 2: Because how do you come out if you are dependent on somebody to buy bread for you?

Participant 1: You can't.

Participant 2: Oska bora moreki.

Interviewer: Mhmm (laughter)

Participant 2: (Laughter). For as long as I buy you food, you do what I want you to do. Its like our children, you can come to my house and want to make rules.

Interviewer: Mhmm

Participant 2: The day you are able to fend for yourself, then you can decide for yourself who and what you are.

Interviewer: Ladies, thank you so much, because of time. This is getting juicy. I wish I was not this late. But let's stop it here.

Interview 6

Interviewer: we are also rolling here

Participant 2: hhhhmmm, let me cancel

Interviewer: why are you cancelling?

Participant 2: we rolling, we rolling...

Interviewer: Ons kan begin...

Participant 2: mpeelee moo lenna

Interviewer: ohk, bagolo, batshwadi, bana, phutheho yohtlhe e fleets fa...

Participant 1: Amen

Interviewer: alright guys no...hhhhmmm...last week, thanks again for the opportunity and thanks again for doing this when you are so exhausted, it means a lot, I pretty much owe you my life.

Participant 2: just make sure you mention us in your book.

Interviewer: No, I have to. But I can't, I can't...remember, I can't, I can't disclose your names for safety ankere

Participant 2: ohhh

Interviewer: yes, but I will mention you as participants, of cause...on the, on the first page acknowledgment, yes.

Participant 2: ooohhh, yeha

Interviewer: that's where you feature

Participant 2: asomblif

Interviewer: (laughs) alright, we started having a...interesting conversations, hhhmmm, last week. I remember we were talking, I asked a question about how...how do you...how do people relate to you at work, you know, to your marriage, do you remember?

Participant 2&2: yeah

Interviewer: the marriage itself, at work, church, all the spaces, where ever you go. You started to explain that as long as they respect us is fine, if they not coming with negativity and stuff. I'm moving, I'm starting now from that type...uuuhhhmm. Discussion, then then, like tell me, how do you handle criticism? Has it been there already about your marriage? In those spaces or elsewhere.

Participant 2&2: (laughs)

Interviewer: or not only criticism, rather how do you handle the discrimination? The rejection if there's anything...the stereotypes...the everything negative that comes with...

Participant 1: ohk, with the stereotype neh, mina I always say I never, I never...it's an opportunity to educate someone....

Interviewer: yes

Participant 1: when that someone person...I know where I am right now it happens and I'm...I'm...I'm working with a team of prophetess, if we may call that. How...were we going we handle boundary and alles, you know. And who view my...my sexuality as something that is not Godly and they find it very difficult for them to marry my Christian belief and my sexuality. But for me what I always, I think what helps is the fact that when you know who you are you not moved, you are able to be able to educate someone, so that...

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: not that for them, not that...not that they can see thing from your own point of view, but for them to know what is a lesbian.

Interviewer: hhhhhmmm

Participant 1: because people will keep on coming and saying someone else is saying, well, last week there was a lady who said she was lesbian and we delivered that person and that now she's straight. And I always tell them that it's impossible, because, and I always give them this scenario with the guys. And I say, can you come wena now and say you are homosexual?

Interviewer: yes

Participant 1: and they come and say “never”! I will never do that. Kere why not, if I pray for you now for you to be homosexual can you be homosexual? And they say “no”, kere why not? And if...you must be able to understand there are different types, we’ve got bi-sexual, we’ve got transsexuals, we’ve got a-sexuals...it’s a mixture of us. So, if someone is bi-sexual, yes they can love two at the same time, but nnah as a lesbian I can’t, it’s impossible. I’m not...

Interviewer: don’t...don’t worry

Participant e: ok...kere, as a lesbian, nnah I’m not, I’m not, like there is no way...I will never sleep with a man, do you understand? Because this is who I am

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: I don’t find men attractive that’s the first thing, so (claps hands)

Interviewer: what are they delivering?

Participant 1: they delivering a spirit, apparently sexuality, homosexuality is a spirit

Interviewer: hhhhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: and I say if homosexuality is a spirit then heterosexuality is a spirit too, you guys need to be delivered from it.

Interviewer: hhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: And because, you see the problem with the bible...the mind is a crazy thing and how you were indoctrinated growing up or taught, maybe not using indoctrination, but taught gore a man and a woman are supposed to marry, you...you...you...you don’t see anything else but that...

Interviewer: yah

Participant 1: as your reality

Interviewer: hmmm

Participant 1: so when something else tries to etla, you try to make sense, and if it doesn’t make sense, you just want to convert this, you want to come to the side.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: you know

Interviewer: hhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: so, I never miss an opportunity to teach someone else who's going through that space and say you can't...and

Interviewer: hhhhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: what I've found the question that would be the weirdest one...it's always been "is your son gay?" and...

Interviewer: hhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: hhhhhmmm, no...."what you mean no?" kere but he's not gay. His as straight as they come, the boy loves girls, he's like sucker for girls, does expensive gifts for the girls.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: you understand?

Interviewer: yah...

Participant 1: and find it odd. And they like "I don't understand" and I tell them my Participant s are not gay but I turned out to be gay.

Interviewer: ohhhh

Participant 1: you...you...you...you must always understand that God is a very versatile somebody, if I may put it, kore, He's got so much sense of humour. He always wants to brrrr...bring stuff in the mixture, if He want to put them.

Interviewer: hhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: because if God really wanted everybody to be the same, man and a woman, they will not have been different flowers, and because plants, these and these, then the lion and all these things....

Interviewer: hhhhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: you know...yeah

Interviewer: hhhmmmm...you said, you said you don't want to call it indoctrination, why not?

Participant 1: because

Interviewer: if that's what you feel is, if you do so...if you do so

Participant 1: I really feel like we are indoctrinated but when Participant s are teaching someone something, you know...for them is like I'm trying to give you the better way...

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: because I was taught, as I've said maybe it's teachings, I don't know...

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: you know...hmmmm

Interviewer: and you Bee, how do you handle it?

Participant 2: hhhhmmmm, I guess with me it comes in different forms. Hhhhmmmm....because I'm firm looking, a lot of people think I'm straight until they find I'm not...so I always get comments like "why didn't you tell me your lesbian?"..hao, "but did you tell me your straight?"

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: "...but you assumed that I was straight, I never told you I was straight...you did not tell me you were straight" so I find such comments a lot

Interviewer: hhhhhhmmmmm

Participant 2: uuuhhhmmmm, and then, those that now know that I'm not straight they want to understand that uuuhhhmm..."so you not attracted to men?, is your son adopted?, if you were impregnated by a man and had a child what has changed?" so it's such questions I...I...I come across at work and, uuuhhhmmmm....The people that have been around me for years, uuuhhhmm, I think they more accepting. Is the people I only find that as they found out, uuuhmmmm, it becomes such a shock to them, but for me it's not really... I think...maybe it's because I don't even allow you...when I tell you that's how you feel, so I tell you keep your opinions to yourself

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 2: I don't allow people to over express themselves...

Interviewer: yeah....

Participant 2: on how they feel about what I'm doing, it's none of their business.

Interviewer: yeah...

Participant 2: if you dating a man or a woman and your straight, I'm not going to give you all of my opinions, so keep it to yourself.

Interviewer: hhhmmm...the question "did you adopt him?" I can't...I can't...I can't help but itch to ask this one. Would you adopt kids?

Participant 2: what we want to do now, we want to fall pregnant...I mean like, we have....

Interviewer: (laugh) Halililililili....

Participant 2: No we do, we do...

Interviewer: yeah

Participant 2: we have, like...like not really legally, but we've got four kids...

Interviewer: yeah...

Participant 2: five actually...after this one, that we...we...we, they our kids, you know....

Interviewer: yeah

Participant 2: all of them are orphans

Participant 1: expect for one

Interviewer: all of them are?

Participant 1&2: orphans

Participant 2: except for one

Interviewer: hhhhmmm

Participant 2: Msizi, Sekgabo, Ndoda, Mbongeni,

Participant 2: Kagiso and Sokologang

Participant 1: Kagiso and Sokologang, they are two kids are

Participant 2: they don't have both parents....

Participant 1: both parents are....my brother and sister-in-law passed away and then there are two my sister's ones and Neo. And there one, best friend yah ae died, the boyfriend killed her, while the child, waboraro

Participant 2: three...

Participant 1: yah, yah, yah...so there's about five kids...

Interviewer: aaahhh

Participant 1: and...and...and that's all...maybe six

Interviewer: hhhhmmm

Participant 1: so there must be another one

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: that one is a definitely, it's a definite

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: but the answer to the question is here we will not adopt

Participant 1: we will not go out to and adopt unless the situation has presented itself to us

Interviewer: hhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: but we will not go out and say we are looking for an adoption agency and go through the process of...

Participant 2: we are going to ivf-pro

Participant 1: what do you call it?

Participant 2: keyona ankere?

Participant 1: yona eo

Interviewer: (laughs) the ones that you already have, are you thinking, are you entertaining the thought...uuuhhhmmmm...of adopting them legally?

Participant 1: they are old. There's only one...there are only two who can really be eligible

Interviewer: ooohhh

Participant 2: because the other....

Participant 1: one we fostering

Participant 1: yeah, we only fostering one

Participant 2: now we fostering one, Ndoda

Interviewer: oh

Participant 1: yeah, like, legally, like Social Workers, the work, court orders and everything...we are fostering one.

Interviewer: ooohhh

Participant 1: and then the other two are staying with the grandmother

Participant 2: yeah

Participant 1: the maternal grandmother, but we just take care of them, but if the opportunity comes, and someone is willing...flip, I wouldn't mind.

Participant 2: there are two, the other ones three are...they are 18, about 18 and above. I don't want to start adopting an 18 year old

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 2: they are at the legal age now, just want to take care of them until they start working and they can live their lives.

Interviewer: so, ivf-pro you are not saying anything?

Everyone: (laughs)

Participant 1: we are not changing the plan....

Interviewer: (continues laughing)

Participant 1: woman you shall fall pregnant

Interviewer: (continues laughing)

Participant 2: (laughs)

Interviewer: hhhhmmm, if...if...if they are signs of abuse please hala

Participant 1: I know...I know

Interviewer: there shall be not women abuse

(Laughs in the background)

Participant 1: no, no, mara...there shall be a child in this house

Participant 2: I'm not sure, I'm still praying about the ivf

Interviewer: hhhhmmm

Participant 2: one day I want to fall pregnant, the next day I feel like with so much that is happening in my life there is no time for a baby, I don't have the time for the kids that I have.

Participant 1: she must finish her masters in two years then fall pregnant than she can go back and do her doctorate, its ok. It's allowed

Interviewer: you will do the child-rearing from...

Participant 1: mina, I'll do the child-rearing as she's going back to school to do her doctorate then.

Participant 2: (sigh) I don't know. There was a time when I wanted to have a child as well, but right now my life is so strict

Participant 1: Botho, lets tone it down a bit...

Interviewer: she says she will compensate for the hecticness...

Participant 2: no, I shall do the carrying, the carrying is not a problem, carrying and giving birth, that's not a problem....the waking up, that's an issue.

Participant 1: there'll be an auntie who's here to come and wake up and say....

Interviewer: and what about you?

Participant 2: haaheeehh, mina I'll wake up when I'm awake

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: auntie will be paid to take care of the child...no, no, no....

Interviewer: (continues laughing)

Participant 1: you don't, you want your child to start calling somebody else mama

Participant 2: never, I will give the child so much love they will not even know what to do with themselves, don't worry about that.

Interviewer: eeehhh, no, I can only wish you the best there...may it be as you wish.

Participant 1: it is...as the prophetess has spoken

Interviewer: what the phropheh...as the propheteesing...(laughs)

Participant 1: yes

Participant 2: Amen

Participant 1: yes

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: so now guys we are talking adoptions, marriages, hhhmmmm, everything else. Le...let's talk ahhhh...politics a little bit.

Participant 2&2: hhhmmmm

Interviewer: our politicians, are they, are they helping us? Are we making strides? LGBTI policies, constitution obviously, just taking everything into consideration.

Participant 1: you see, you see for me...(sighs)..it's like theory and practice.

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: when it comes to issues of constitution

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: the laws are there, there laws are there past to support us, to...uuhhhmmmm...protect us

Interviewer: yes

Participant 1: but the practice, is a totally different story

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: I don't know if that mean that there still need to be more awareness into the gay and...hhhhmm...lesbian living or what. But the government to be honest, I feel like they have done their part to...to sign laws, to put thing into...(claps hands) you know...but it's...it's us the people that are finding it difficult to marry the law and hence we can still see people feel like they can do corrective-rape twenty twenty nine...twenty twenty...twenty nineteen.

Interviewer: hhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: you know...and I told some mothers that we don't feel comfortable to be honest, I don't wanna lie, I will not go here with my wife...oh, moskond, kana today ke pride ya...

Interviewer: yes

Participant 1: shit, love, later tomorrow I'm going to arrive...you know...the...the...the...the...the...I can't go to Ekhuruleni, I can't go to Soweto...you under...for me I find it very uncomfortable to be in that space. Even though the law is there...mara...

Interviewer: (sniffs) hhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: gao kopane, I don't know how to put it...like, but we don't. The law and what people are on the ground...I mean there's so many organisations that are doing great stuff in terms of...of...of...of...of...of...doing awareness of lesbianism and all this LGBTI stuff, but because the people are still stuck in their own ways of doing things, hence I find it very difficult and kea kwata when someone comes and says I've prayed for someone and someone has changed.

Interviewer: hhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: that's the craziest idea and yang mora. Because someone in the church when they see me walking with my wife they say...

Participant 2: is a demon

Participant 1: there's a demon, it's a spirit. Because I always ask them, sexuality...what does sexuality have to do with a spirit?

Interviewer: uuuuhhhhh

Participant 1: you know....

Interviewer: uuuhhh

Participant 1: so, it's that thing of theory and practice, they are too different...they are living in two different worlds.

Interviewer: hhhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: we can put it in law, we can put it in whatever, but when it comes to practice...

Interviewer: wha...wha...what could be the reasons?

Participant 1: ahh, people are just stuck in their own ways

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: which is?

Participant 1: which is a man must marry a woman

Interviewer: ohh

Participant 1: it's like...it's like...it's like...it's like....we are fighting woman's rights, but we still find women that are being abused at home till today. So much publicity of 16th...whatever...of activists and all those things...but we still find men that are abusing their wives till today, and you ask yourself, what more do you want the government to do...so much campaigns that they put up there, you know, death and all those things, but still people are still stuck in their ways of doing things, I guess.

Interviewer: cool

Participant 2: my...my view is a bit different

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 2: I feel though the government has done their part in legalising our way of life, there is little education about us...that has actually happened. I think for me it was something that they just wanted to, they wanted to look as if they have accepted, but they actually haven't. You know you...let's go back and look at apartheid, when we had bantu education, there was a department of bantu education that specialised in developing curriculum for bantu education...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 2: there were laws that said bantu must not be here, bantu must be there

Interviewer: yes

Participant 2: and it was drilled from kids

Interviewer: yes

Participant 2: right now you ask a...a 4 year old going to crèche, (claps hands) they will tell you you beat me I will call the police on you. But you will not find a 4 year old that understands that kuthi there are people who are different. So then the education is then selective.

Interviewer: yes

Participant 2: as much as it's legal, but nothing is being said kayona. That is my...my...my...my first part. And secondly, church is playing the biggest role. You see this corrective rape; church is contributing largely so, cause church has pronounced itself on this...aaahhhh...homosexuality issue...so that is why you will not find pastors openly condemning corrective rape.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 2: they will do and say everything else, but they will never say "it is wrong to correctively rape somebody" because they believe now that there is something wrong with these people and we need to correct them.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 2: so, in terms of education, nothing has happened.

Participant 1: yah...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 2: what the kids know is very minimum, like, you find there are kids that are still confused what to call Thuli. There was a 10 year old who was calling Thuli...ah...ah...ah...bab-Thuli. They struggle, are you a man or a woman.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 2: cause they have no idea

Interviewer: hmmm

Participant 2: what this creature is, because nobody has taught them that there are people that are different. Because nawe uyazi that in terms of education, nothing has been done. They just go and expected that a miracle will happen and will learn to live amongst each other...I remember what happened. After making it legal, there's something...there must be some form of education. Look at what happening ka women abuse, the women abuse, sorry. Excuse my English. There nothing that's been said about it (high pitched voice) until and incident had occurred that is scaring all of us. You won't find a child at school saying ko L.O they are teaching us...aaahhh, against women abuse, they teaching us how to stand up for each other. But ka 10days, everybody now, all the land want to stand up and pretend to be against, the very same men that are practicing it, because nothing is being done about it. That's why I'm saying education goes a long way, education at home, education at in the...in the curriculum. So that people can start knowing that it's part of us, it's part of our lives

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 2: it's normal...

Interviewer: and I believe you...you are probably forgetting the church as well, spaces...

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: that as well religious leader must be

Participant 1: must be....

Interviewer: must be also educated

Participant 2: they must be, because I think they...they...they are reading e bible, but anyway, its...it's the doctrine as well, they have been taught

Participant 1: yoh

Participant 2: ...ukuthi according to the constitution of the church y must marry a man and a woman. If...if...if you don't fit into that box we will chop you (claps hands). You must fit into this box, you must either a man and a woman (claps hands) and we gonna take you.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm...and because the bible said, homosexuality is an abomination is a sin. The bible never came back maybe later on, in the new testament, or whatever, to say, no it's ok now.

Participant 2: hhhhmmm

Participant 1: you see, you see...I'm sorry to interject on that...

Interviewer: hhhmmmmm

Participant 1: I've read an article neh...

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: it shock me for days...

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: about that statement "homosexuality"

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: those who are homosexual will never...

Participant 2: enter the kingdom of God

Interviewer: yes

Participant 2: ...enter the kingdom...Wha..Th...The original text of that...

Participant 1: yes

Participant 2:it talks about sex, sexual molesting, baho molesta bana

Participant 1: defeminisation

Participant 2: no...no...bana ba ba nyane, baba bitsang kana?

Interviewer: Paedophiles

Participant 2: Paedophiles...

Interviewer: Paedophilic

Participant 2: those who molest kids

Interviewer: yes

Participant 2: it actually it speaks about boys.

Interviewer: uuhhh...uuuhhh...uuuhhh

Participant 2: not homosexuals

Interviewer: yes

Participant 2: it speaks about men who molest young boys

Interviewer: uuuuhhhh

Participant 2: and...and came to the Roman Empire when that started to take over the whole nonsense, and then they caged it...

Interviewer: uuuhhh

Participant 2: because another bible was written by people, translated by their people and all those things...an...

Participant 1: and eventually lost its meaning; some meaning was lost in translation

Participant 2: the meaning was never about homosexuality. I'll look for the article and I'll email it...I'll show it to you....

Participant 1: hhhmmm

Participant 2: ...I've saved it somewhere. It speaks of sexual molesters and molesting young boys.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 2: and...and...and unfortunately, like you are saying, it's a written, people are taking it as it is.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: hhhhmmmm

Participant 2: you know...and...send me this...this...Kgomono, kene ang rometje this thing.

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 2: he said dude, we are lost. How can people read such stuff...well we far

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 2: you know, so for me it's one of those things that (sighs and slaps hands)

Interviewer: uuuhhh...talking about Khumalo cause that's where you ...you ...youuhhhmmmm
....what's the English word

Participant 2: worship

Interviewer: that's where you worship

Participant 1: hhhhhmmmmmm

Interviewer: is he, in your opinion, is he doing something about it? Since you are members in the church, do you think he's doing enough about the topic?

Participant 1: you know what, I think he's trying...I wouldn't say he's doing enough neh, but he tries to have panels where people talk about homosexuality education and stuff like that...

Interviewer:...it's a start...hhhhmm

Participant 2: I don't think he's even doing it enough, but I think he's not doing it enough himself because he once said "I am still researching".

Interviewer: oh ohk...

Participant 1: but then he's trying

Participant 2: I...I do not know much about the subject, so me myself I'm still doing my research.

Interviewer: yes

Participant 1: and you can't be pushing yourself and say you people don't understand....

Participant 2: no....no

Interviewer: ofcause...

Participant 1: because he tries...he does try

Participant 2: he's trying, yeah...

Participant 1: and it is known in the ukuthi church that we will not be discriminated, no one will...that he will address that no one will discriminate anybody because of their sexuality

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: I remember there was this girl from Botswana neh, is it a girl from Botswana?...

Participant 2: it was a pastor from Botswana

Participant 1:...who came to preach and she started talking about homosexuality and he stopped her immediately...

Participant 2: hhhhmmm

Participant 1: in front of everybody

Participant 2: he said I've got homosexual in this church

Participant 1: he said he was blessing him...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: tlhokomez...so

Interviewer: who...who was blessing him with what?

Participant 1: when he was saying....

Participant 2: himself

Interviewer: ooohhhh....oooohhhh....yeah

Participant 1: and he was talking how he's blessed and whatever...whaa....whaaa....don't forget, that lady, Barbara, she's not a....

Interviewer: and....and....and....

Participant 1: and now the spirit is no longer there....you understand. It's one of those, that's why I say for me he is trying...

Interviewer: yes..yes....yes

Participant 2: he is trying

Participant 1: even though in the process he if not figh....like

Interviewer: ...not teaching about it as yet

Participant 1: ...not teaching about it as yet

Interviewer:... but he's anti-homophobia

Participant 1:... but he's anti-homophobia, yes. He is. And again, the difference between what you are saying and Nosiswa, you know one thing I've learned is that people they are anti-homophobia when it's far away from them. I don't know if I make sense....

Participant 2: hhhhmmmm

Interviewer: yes, you actually...

Participant 2: but when is...

Participant 1: but when is my son

Participant 2: when is your child...

Participant 1: I don't know how he's going to react if one of he's kids comes home and says "Thelma, I'm gay".

Participant 2: but I don't think he was gonna have a problem because he was saying that...he even said it someday, I think he told the wife is the one who is trying to change uMphumi.

Participant 1: oh, the young girl

Participant 2: because she's saying that this girl is comfortable in jeans and sneakers.

Interviewer: the...the last born...?

Participant 1: hhhhmmmm

Participant 2: uMphumi, Mphumi is tomboyish. Don't know if she's straight or not, but she is tomboyish, like, you need to see her earring heels...like...and the father always said ukuthi, if she came and said I'm not straight, I'll be ok with it.

Interviewer: yes

Participant 2:... but the mother there...she's the one who puts dresses on her, puts clothes on her and yah she looks weird, she can't even walk in heels...

Participant 1: you know what, it is that thing were you don't know, but but yena I think he's trying to educ...and I feel like even the people at church have gotten they've gotten to

Participant 2:...most people have gotten to accept us

Participant 1:...accept us though...

Participant 2:...yah those, are some tolerating us?

Participant 1: I think others are tolerating us, especially me. This one I do not know. They dnt know what to call me, baba, mama, sesi, auntie, Thuli, bra Thuli. And I am like dude ke Thuli, like you don't really have to go and put me in a little box...

Interviewer: hhmm

Participant 1:...if you feel comfortable to call me bra-Thuli, ntwana kena lewena. Hao nyaka hong pitsha Ausie-Thuli kenore bathing praise the Lord Jesus, I'm there still, you understand....

Interviewer: hhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: I really don't have a problem

Interviewer: hhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: but for me, be comfortable...

Interviewer:...yeah....

Participant 1: ...like all those old mamas at church kufika bathi (shocked expression)

Participant 2: hhhhhmmmm

Participant 1:...you know

Interviewer: (laughs) and...and...and sex roles, are you asked about the sex roles by...?

Participant 2: no...for me...

Participant 1: we do get that...

Interviewer: if yes...asked by who?

Participant 1: ...friends, not church, I don't think we were asked at church...

Participant 2: ...no...

Participant 1:...not at church...uuuhhhmmm... there is family, for me, I think the people that will ask me are people that are close to me. There is one who...who insinuated that we were doing stuff on this other clip that she showed me and...

Participant 2:...who's that?

Participant 1: Nomashigo, and I gave her this look, this like ya "don't, don't, don't go there" and she never mentioned it.

Interviewer: from home, from the family?

Participant 1: hhhhaaahhh, from work

Interviewer: ooohhhh

Participant 1: then somebody said to me, "so you can chose what colour you feel like today, if you feel like brown, or purple..."

Everybody: (laughs)

Participant 2: (continues laughing)...so you can have it in your favourite colour...

Participant 1: Somebody was saying to me, so you can Choose which colour you feel like today, you can choose brown (laughter).

Participant 1: So, you can have a relevant colour.

Interviewer: Are they talking about toys now? Laugh.

Participant 2: Yes, yes. You are lucky because it does not fall.

Interviewer: Oh, those are the comments.

Participant 2: (Laugh)... we just look at them. When they talk about this, I pretend like I am not hearing.

Interviewer: You did not tell her she could use the same as well.

Participant 2: No actually I missed that opportunity to educate that if people are not gifted, we can always give them. We get that a lot. Like people would ask kuthi how do we have sex. I am like we have sex like you.

Participant: When they ask me that, this doctors that I work with now. And they are Christians in higher positions in church, they will say Thuli we do not want to offend you how do you guys have sex. And I ask them the same question, then I am like you what mama, I do not want to offend you and your husband, how do you have sex. I ask them and they like haa. I don't know, educate me, maybe then I will be able to fill you guys about how we have sex. Then they say haa we do it natural. They will ever give you an answer. This other lady said Thuli I m going to do a research about lesbian partners. Are I need to know more, she said she there were more books so that we can understand this because I am 65 and, in my life, I have never sat with a lesbian like this ad engage? If there were books about you guys ad journals, where we can read and make sense but we don't have. Kere mama if you have sex with your husband, I have sex with my wife.

Interviewer: hmmmmm mm

Participant 1: What we do is what we do.

Participant 2: Like we do get that, I do. I think actually its one of the first questions people want to know about and, and if you not close to me I will always give that look, do not go there.

Interviewer: Mhmmm yay a

Participant 2: Because it is none of your business. I would say to people; you cannot say lesbians have sex like this. As much as you can say heterosexuals have sex like this. People have sex I ways they feel comfortable. So, the way we have sex may not be the way you have sex. If differs, it depends on preference.

Interviewer: And it can also be the very same way you have it.

Participant 2: Yes yes... its just that if differs on preference, it differs on days. (laugh).

Interviewer: is there hope for Africa Continent wise?

Participant 1: I think you know what, if you look at organisation yabo Steve, don't know what they call it, ill find it out for you. They doing an amazing work in Africa. It is incredible. Even though recheya nako but a brick gets layed day. I mean today there is a case, I mean there is n issue ya leagalizing gay marriages, you know. They are tying, they are trying Africa is trying, it is just that there

is something that's is holding us back. I feel like we are trying. Area tlogelela. There is a lot of things that still need to be done. Yet I feel like there is progress. And I think you should make time wena to meet up with Steve and see what those guys are doing. Its amazing work in terms of sexuality education in South Africa.

Interviewer: Is it chapter 9?

Participant 1: Oh, you know it.

Interviewer: Ya. Now I remember.

Participant 1: They are doing amazing work I mean they have partnered with a lot of government in different countries, especially Africa.

Interviewer: I know Steve, I've met him.

Participant 1: She is my cousin akere watseba?

Interviewer: Is Steve.

Participant 1: Wabo Rakgadi.

Participant 2: Laughter.

Interviewer: Laughter. Botho is laughing. Is she not from Rustenburg?

Participant 1: No.

Interviewer: Was she staying in Rustenburg.

Participant 1: No, she used to work. Ogodisitse ke ...

Interviewer: No, its fine maybe I am mistaking her for somebody else.

Participant 1: Botho ke lecoloured, ke Koning, nna ke mopedi ena o goditswe kwa geshu. Watseba regotse jwalo. Long long extended family (laughter).

Interviewer: Bolela phela.

Participant 2: Laughter. Ke ngwana malome o mofeng?

Participant 1: O godishitse ke.... Wambora. O gudishitshe kebo rakgadi ko Atteridgeville.

Interviewer: Mme wena Botho ke go tthaloganya sentle because mobotsalanong bale le mmeo for so many solid years, she never mentioned anything about Steve. Ke mutlwa today, but anyway gosiamé. Aremo allowe opportunity ya Steve.

Participant 2: Nna shem, she did mention Steve.

Interviewer: Mmm... no its fine Steve Letsika.

Participant 1: Wa motseba neh.

Interviewer: Like you saying she is very.

Participant 1: look at what work they are doing.

Interviewer: I will, chapter 9.

Participant 1: Chapter 9 ya. O kgone o kopana le bona and just see. You will get political (pause) bare ke eng.. yona eo in terms of what they are doing to ensure.

Interviewer: No, I will check, especially when I get the last chapter on conclusions and recommendations.

Participant 1: Your results will be amazingly gorgeous, like you gonna get so much more than from us.

Interviewer: No. remember I will look at what they are doing for purpose of referral and recommendations.

Participant 1: He's gonna...

Interviewer: Remember the research's about you guys as a married black couple in South Africa

Participant 1: I am just saying from that angle...

Interviewer: No no, I will look at it, like I am saying, I have to look at it and many others and mention what they do and see if I can make recommendations for people that you talking about who are abused. So, I will see what they are busy with.

Participant 1: If you want to, I can make an appointment for you.

Interviewer: For sure. Steve. No, I've seen her around.

Participant 1: Even lebo Nokuthuma. Nokuthula they are doing amazing work in churches which is for me the crucks.

Participant 2: Remember they are doing it but there is no platform. You and I know because we are close to her.

Participant 1: Remember this thing estartile neng, this year.

Participant 2: Mmmmmhmmm. Year before last. They call it homosexuality and spirituality.

Participant 1: its just started. E needa funding to be where it is supposed to be. So, they are still starting small small. But for me what I am sayin is that there are few steps tse badidirang that arein the right direction, they are educated teachers bako Roman Catholic leba Luter wa understander.

Interviewer: Ya I know she is part of the church.

Participant 1: Yes, they are doing so much. Its just that gaebonagale. Ekasebonagale gona nou. Its like a...

Interviewer: Drop in the sea.

Participant 1: Mara eventually etla fihla where it is supposed to be.

Interviewer: Nnnn. Work policies. Is there anything that is happening?

Participant 1: Ha anna sebampitsa Mr. Mabuza

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Participant 2: You see now the thing is uhmm the only thing that the government did was to legalise it and for them to say you cannot be discriminated on the basis of your sexuality.

Interviewer: You were talking about a kid that you are planning to have that you might have. Are you going to be given maternity leaves?

Participant 2: Of cause.

Interviewer: Like heterosexuals.

Participant 2: Ya, maternity leave they... remember that with your PCA is clear, even when you are adopting a child that is younger than 3 months. You must be given maternity leave like somebody who is on maternity leave. But there has not been an incident, its just that for me there has been a lot of

stereotype because there is a lot of heterosexual that have gave birth through IVF but it's not spoken of, and then we assumed that they had sex naturally and they had a kid. Bu with us its going to be clear, its either IVF or Botho cheated. There is that stigma as well, that this child is handwork. You do not want your child to grow and know khuthi this one was hand manufactured.

Interviewer: (Laughter) what do they men by hand manufacture?

Participant 2: No, they say that, they say that this one ke hand manufacture.

Participant 1: Ya they literally say that. They say this was literally manufactured on the table.

Interviewer: As if there was no sperm involved.

Participant 1: Eng like a table, we crafted it.

Participant 2: The was a friend of mine who would say... eish but some things cannot be recorded, I'll say them off record (laughter). With IVF and he came out with very small things and you could see that they are hand work (laughter).

Interviewer: No say it, its is good for the research. remember you are also educating.

Participant 2: They would say it makes sense this was art work that why the child came out with a very small penis.

Interviewer: So, it's part of stereotyping.

Participant 2: Yes.

Participant 1: Thank you.

Interviewer: Mhmm mmm

Participant 2: She is just making joke while the poor child is struggling to even pee. I think his penis was just too small for him to hold. But then there is such for you to work on. I remember I said to them, no one will call my child hand work, because you do not know how many handworks are there between people. People do not say it. People struggle to have children and they would do things and they would fall pregnant and they would come to church and say praise the lord we have conceived and they could not have children.

Interviewer: Mmmhmmhm. You will get there some day. Medical aids. How does it work?

Participant 2: We on the same medical aid. They did not give us issues. They didn't because initially Thuli has her own and it was expensive so then we decided ukuthi we have taken mine. All the requirement and the marriage certificate were asked, then there were no issues.

Interviewer: Oh, ok. And the...

Participant 2: We registered as spouse.

Interviewer: And when you visit the health facilities?

Participant 2: Our gaenie is actually educated when it comes to homosexuality. I think she was the one who actually advise us on how to go about getting AVF and the best facilities for that. Our medical aid does not cover for that. Its classified and they do not cover anything that is fertility. But us also for straight people. So, any infertility is not covered.

Interviewer: You said any...

Participant 2: Any infertility. But with advice ngiyazi ukhuthi we would get the best treatment for free... ahg man she doesn't have any issues with us. We've got two GP's, they actually learned to. I think one is white and the other is black, ke mopedi, so they have learned that we are a pair and we work together. So, when the other is not there they would ask you were is the other person, why are you coming alone? Our exposure is just this three people and Sekgabo's doctor. He is still going to a paediatrician. She, she's fine. I think we discussed it previously ukuthi with educated people it is easier.

Interviewer: Well I think ehh I covered my questions for today. Ill just go and listen, read and come back with more. Sometimes you would find that it sounds repetitive, I am just trying to make sure if what I had is wat I had. So that when I analyse I do not have to struggle neh.

Participant 2: Mhmmm

Participant 1: Mhmmm

Interviewer: But ya, hmmm that's it for today, its fine let's call it a wrap and thanks you guys once more. Thank you, a lot. Ya we can stop it

Interview 7

Interviewer: Thank you, haai, I will hear it...like your mother said, if you want to speak in your own language its allowed neh, it's ok. If you want to mix English with your own language its fine...If you want to speak your own language its fine. If you want to speak English only it's ok. As your mother has already said, I'm doing my study, I'm writing a little bit of a research, a booku nyana about how you guys and other people outside are making sense of two people raising kids. But these people are not a mother and a father, its two mothers this time right. I already said it's not common, do you agree?

Participant 1&2: Yes

Interviewer: Why do you think it's not common?

Participant 1: uuhhhhhmmmmmm

Interviewer: Why is it not common?

Participant 1: Cause it wasn't allowed before

Interviewer: huh...before it was not allowed by who?

Participant 1: By who...?

Interviewer: who was not allowing it?

Participant 1: The.....I'm not sure

Interviewer: ok, its fine. If you not sure, you not sure. If you don't know, you say you don't know. Bbbuuu, was it the law

Participant 1: Yah, the law and religion.

Interviewer: religion, oh ohk, so you have an idea.

Participant 1: hhhmmm

Interviewer: Piwe, why do you think it's not seen that much that people of same sex, female-female or male-male, are marrying, and they are raising happy kids? Why is it not popular?

Participant 1: hhhhhhhmmm

Interviewer: (laughs) ok, ok, let me rephrase. How many families are like yours here, that you know of?

Participant 1: None

Interviewer: Why do you think is that? Are you guys too special? Is there something wrong with you? Why do you think...why are you the only few...yeah I knew few, they're not even more than five myself. You don't know zero, zero...

Participant 1: Zero

Interviewer: Do you know any?

Participant 2: (Laughs)

Interviewer: Do you know any male-male raising kids and married, female-female raising, you know...

Participant 2: One

Interviewer: One...how many married?

Participant 2: Married, raising kids, single, uuummmmm four.

Interviewer: Four...

Participant 2: (snaps fingers) Portia,

Interviewer: (laughs) Portia...

Participant 2: Kgabo Zitha

Interviewer: Kgabo...

Participant 2: Nomacina aaa..and

Interviewer: Nomacina

Participant 2: and the partner

Interviewer: so about 5 couples..see it's not a lot neh

Participant 1: hhhmmm

Interviewer: It's not a lot. It's fine if you can't rap your head around why you think it's like that. But uuuhhhhh, Sekgabo are your friends aware that you have two mothers, do they know, they know?

Participant 1: Yes, they do

Interviewer: They do. Who are your friends?

Participant 1: Like do you want their names?

Interviewer: Yes, if they have name. And for the record, we are not going to write about their names in my book neh. If it's, let's say their name is Deon, I won't say its Deon, I will give it another name, I'll call him Kay neh, so that people don't know who we'll be talking about. But, who are your friends? Who do you call your friends?

Participant 1: aaaahhhh, this other guy his name is Lusaine

Interviewer: You go to the same school with him

Participant 1: Yes

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: and there's Ofentse

Interviewer: Ofentse

Participant 1: his not going to the same school, but he was in my primary school

Interviewer: uhhhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: and there's Lesedi

Interviewer: uuuuhhhmmmm

Participant 1: and there's Onthathile

Interviewer: uuuhhhmmmm

Participant 1: and there's Leandro

Interviewer: uhhhhmmmm...so you quiet a popular guy, a lot of friends. I don't have a lot, my only friends is two. (laughs) Anyone else?

Participant 1: uhhhhh, he is, he's name is Travis

Interviewer: uuuhhhmmmm

Participant 1: there's another one, Victoria

Interviewer: uhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: there's Mpho

Interviewer: Yes

Participant 1: Mmadibotse

Interviewer: uhhmmmm

Participant 1: Rrr...Refilwe

Interviewer: Yes...so you are raising all them now, galoxed...

Participant 1: (laughs)

Interviewer: uuuhhhmmmm...What do they say? Do they know that you have two mothers all these people you have mentioned, or most of them?

Participant 1: hhhmmmmmmhh

Interviewer: no one knows?

Participant 1: no they don't

Interviewer: all of them?

Participant 1: some of them know

(phone vibrates)

Interviewer: some of them don't?

Participant 1: uhhhhmmmm

Interviewer: some of them do and some don't?

Participant 1: hhhmmmmmm

Interviewer: the ones that are knowing, what do they say?

(phone vibrates)

Participant 1: they didn't say much about it

Interviewer: when you told them, how did you tell them you have two mothers? How do they know you have two mothers? Where you telling them, where they asking you?

Participant 1: they saw them

Interviewer: where?

Participant 1: when they were fetching me from school

Interviewer: oh, ok

Participant 1: and the others came here

Interviewer: oh, the others they came to your place, they play..they both play...you play with them here

Participant 1: hhhhhmm

Interviewer: and they don't ask question

Participant 1: not so much

Interviewer: has there been a time when somebody said "Sekgabo, are these two people your mother, both of them?"

Participant 1: Yes

Interviewer: who was that?

Participant 1: Ofentse

Interviewer: and then what did you say?

Participant 1: I said yes

Interviewer: and then what did he say?

Participant 1: he said...uuuuhhhmmmm

Interviewer: he did not say anything?

Participant 1: no

Interviewer: did he tell his parents, you think?

Participant 1: uuhhhmmmm

Interviewer: or you not sure?

Participant 1: I'm not sure

Interviewer: you didn't ask him?

Participant 1: I didn't ask him

Interviewer: after you told him did he keep coming to play with you?

Participant 1: yes

Interviewer: you still friends with him?

Participant 1: yes, I'm still friends with him

Interviewer: so after him, nothing changed, you still friends like before?

Participant 1: yes

Interviewer: ok...Mahapa, and yours your friends know

Participant 2: yah

Interviewer: and what do they say?

Participant 2: first time they felt gore...mara as it goes they just....sometimes we make jokes about it
gore....

Interviewer: what types of jokes (laughs)

Participant 2: (laughs) they will ask me how is it to have two...

Interviewer: two mothers...yeah

Participant 2: yeah...I'll be like its fine...they'll be like ahhh (laughs)

Interviewer: (laughing)...you won't get into trouble

Participant 2: how do they....

Interviewer: oooohhhh, ok, how do they become intimate neh

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: how do they appreciate each other

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: ok, and how do you answer?

Participant 2: I said I don't know

Interviewer: you don't know neh...clearly you don't know

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: (laughs) and there, it doesn't bother you?

Participant 2: aai, not really

Interviewer: do you think it feels normal or funny, or how does it feel?

Participant 2: it's normal

Interviewer: it's normal neh

Participant 1: its normal for us, the family, mara for other people it wouldn't be normal

Interviewer: why do you think, why do you say that?

Participant 1: cause obviously they'll be shocked when they hear it and like most people live with their mom and dad, because like first thing it comes with mom and dad, the first time, then then the dad will leave and then the other mom will come.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: or the mom will leave and then the other dad will come

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: so other people, they'll...they'll feel like

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: it's not a good idea

Interviewer: why do you think they feel like that? Why do you people think it's not a good idea? Some people think it's not a good idea? Why you think...

Participant 1: cause, cause some religion say that if you like, they say if you are like gay

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: they say like is not real like manhood

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm...hhh...this religion thing is a problem neh?

Participant 2: hhhmmmm, it is

Interviewer: anything else that is a problem to gay people and lesbian people, you think?

Participant 1: the law

Interviewer: the law, religion, anything else or people who are

Participant 2: yah

Interviewer: ..who are nasty neh

Participant 2: yah

Interviewer:...as you said. Anything else?

Participant 1: hhhmmmm the

Interviewer: you guys are growing up, how old are you Ma...

Participant 2: uhhhmm, I'm turning 16

Interviewer: turning 16...and you?

Participant 1: I'm turning 14

Interviewer: turning 14...you have heard about boyfriends girlfriends

Participant 1: yeah

Interviewer: ko...at school they teach you...

Participant 1: yeah

Interviewer: neh...would you ever be gay in your life if you think about it? Do you think you can be gay?

Participant 2: no

Interviewer: no...why do you say no? How do you know you won't be gay?

Participant 1: cause I'm not attracted to men

Interviewer: hhhhuuuuhhhh...you not attracted to men....are you attracted to women?

Participant 1&2: yes

Interviewer: hhhuuuuuhhhh...so you already know these attraction stories

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: I see, I see...what if you were attracted to men?

Participant 2: what if?

Interviewer: hhhhmmm

Participant 2: I would explore it

Interviewer: oh you wouldn't be scared neh

Participant 2: no

Interviewer: do you think your parents, your mothers would be shocked if you were gay?

Participant 1&2: no

Interviewer: what do you think they'll say or do?

Participant 1: they'd say aaai (claps hands), go on its fine, live your life

Participant 2: ...there's nothing wrong

Interviewer: so your parents are cool like that

Participant 1: yes

Interviewer: hhhuh...it's easy to live with your parents or it's easy to be yourself with your parents, they allow you then? Are you yourself, or you pretending to be something? hheehh

Participant 1: most of the times I'm myself

Interviewer: (laughs)...most of the times, when are you not yourself?

Participant 1: when I'm in trouble

Interviewer: oh (laughs) ok, that is for all of us, when we are in trouble we are not ourselves neh, we try to be...ssss...ohk you trying to act something else, but obviously that is not who you are neh.

Participant 1: yes

Interviewer: cause no one likes to be in trouble....ok, uhhhm, anything you want to ask me? Let's say at school neh, at school, your teachers do they know you have two parents? I mean, two mothers

Participant 2: yeah, one does

Interviewer: hhhmmm...did he..is it a she or he...

Participant 2: it's a she

Interviewer: what did she say

Participant 2: she doesn't talk about it

Interviewer: how do you know she knows

Participant 2: cause..i don't know..ahhh (addressing parenst) leba gotsi wena le Mem Phasha

Parent 1t: not that we friends, but we do talk, we talk a lot

Interviewer: oh ok, ok

Parent 1: I always like to befriend teachers, so I know what going on

Parent 2: (laughs)

Interviewer: oh, smart move, that's a smart move. Ok, anything else you want to ask your kids, or anything, comments?

(silence)

Interviewer: ; what do you...what do you like about your family?

Participant 2: it's unique

Participant 1: we're unique

Interviewer: hhhuh...its unique, you like to be different?

Participant 1&2: yes

Interviewer: is it good:

Participant 1&2: yes

Interviewer: why

Participant 1: cause we not trying to act like other people...

Participant: cause we not like other people, yeah...

Interviewer: you just being yourself

Participant 2: hhhmmm

Interviewer: that's nice, I like that. What don't you like about your family?

(silence)

Interviewer: aaai, act like they are not here.....(laughs)

Participant 2: they're too strict

Interviewer: too strict

Participant 2: hhhmmmm...sometimes

Interviewer: my mother is way too strict sometimes I feel like I want to kill her. Ok, they too strict because they do what?

Participant 1: hhhmmm

Interviewer: why do you say they are too strict? What do they say? What do they want you to do? Or

Parent 1: what do they want you to say? Just be honest, what do I do?

(silence)

Parent 1: you can take it out, I can take it, I can take the punches

Parent 2: uhhhmm we are protected

Parent 1: all these things they helping me become a better parent by the way

Interviewer: does she give you a sss...hiding?

Participant 2: yes, she does

Interviewer: she does....

Participant 2: hhhmmmmmm

Interviewer: when you did what?

Participant 2: something wrong

Interviewer: like?

Participant 2: uuuhhmm, when I'm in trouble at school.

Interviewer: ohong...oh

Participant 2: yeah

Interviewer: oh, that's a...that's a ok, that's not

Parent 1: and when they don't make their walldrops, the walldrops is messy

Interviewer: oh

Parent 1: hhhhmmm

Interviewer: you think other kid's parents are strict?

Participant 1: no

Participant 2: some of them

Interviewer: (laughs) Sekgabo is saying no. Why do you think they are not strict Sekgabo?

Participant 1: they not strict at all

Interviewer:...at all...so both of them are strict or it's only one?

Participant 1&2: both

Interviewer: both...yoh, yoh, yoh...you don't have a place to run to...

Participant 1&2: hhhmmmm

Interviewer: its...its...this strictness, what has it taught you? Does it make you a better person, or is it breaking you up?

(silence)

Interviewer: Do you think it's making you a better person?

Participant 2: yah, it is....

Interviewer: is it helping you or is it not helping you?

Participant: it's helping me not to do the things they don't want me to do

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Parent 1: that you want to do..

Participant 2: that....

Parent 1: that you want to do and I don't want you to do

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: the things that I want to do but you guys me to do

Parent 1: that I don't want you to do

Participant 2: yes

Parents 1: and the things that you want to do, is it helping you?

Participant 2: some of them

Parent 1: some of them...

Participant 2: yes

Interviewer: ohk, don't worry...they, they, there's going to be an age where they let you do things that you want to do, neh. It's coming, don't be impatient neh. For now, at the age were you are, ankere you are still under their parental guidance, you know that neh?

Participant 2: hhhmmmm

Interviewer: you're not 18 yet mos neh

Participant 2: hhhmmmm

Parent 1&2: they're not 21 yet

Interviewer: huh

Participant 2: 18

Interviewer: I mean sorry 21

Parent 1: the day I don't buy them under pants, than they can do what they want...

Participant 2: 18

Interviewer: (laughs)

Parents 1: that's how simple it is

Interviewer: at 18 will you be financially ok to not want underwear from her?

Participant 2: it dependents

Interviewer: she's saying as long as she's buying your underwear, you are....

Parent 1: my rules, my money, my way

Participant 2: but I won't, I won't be here mos in the house

Parent 2: it's ok

Interviewer: it doesn't work like

Parent 2: but when you come here...

Parent 1: ...you are a child in this house

Participant 2: ah it's fine, when I come here it's fine

Interviewer: (laughs)

Parent 2: as long as we understand each other

Interviewer: that's how life is Smangali. You see how old we are, when we go home we become...

Parent 1: we become children

Interviewer: we become children again, do you know that?

Participant 2: no

Interviewer: oh you don't neh. That's how it is. You must look at them when they are at their homes, you must watch them.

Parent 2: he knows

Interviewer: you must watch them. You must watch the mother, the father

Parent 2: you don't see how I react when we go?

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: no, but no...

Parent 2: but what?

Participant 1: uuhhhhhh

Interviewer: it's because they are well behaved, they are not in trouble like you guys cause you guys don't want to behave. So when they go home they behave so they not in trouble, but you'll see, if they can misbehave, they'll be in trouble.

Parent 2: ask when...when...what do I do when I'm at home with alcohol?

Participant 2: you drink

Parent 2: I know, but how? I only started this year

Participant 2: yes

Parent 2: yeah but the previous years when I did drink I'd hide it exactly, why and I'm that old?

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: respect

Interviewer: respect

Parent 2: that's why she was saying that when you at home you must be and obey the rules of the particular homes. And when you are at your own house we come and respect, even in your house, you smoke weed, we sit inside there.

Participant 1: wait, if I have my own house, and the dishes are bbbbbbbrrrrrruuuuuuuu

Parent 2: oh

Participant 1: what are you going to say?

Parent 2: how can you sit inside a dirty house? Yeses Sekgabo. That's me, that's what I'm gonna say.

Parent 1: what are dishes?

Parent 2: but am I get out of there

Parent 1&2& interviewer: (laughs)

Parent 2: but am I gonna get up there and give you a slash

Parent 1: no

Parent 2: of cause no, but in the house if I go out and come back and the find the dishes then I take out the feather dust and i....

Participant 2: keho tshwaretse

Interviewer: utlwa are ogo tshwaretse

Everyone: (laughs)

Interviewer: ...yah, we will talk in your house but there's nothing we can do

Parent 1: we can't do much

Interviewer: but here there's something they can do...

Participant 2: of cause

Interviewer: ankere

Participant 1: hhhmm

Interviewer: fair enough neh

Participant 1: hhhhmmmm

Interviewer: it's a fair train...Botho you said that is your, how are you related to her?

Parent 1: she's my...

Participant 1: they not related...

Parent 1: what did you say?

Participant 1: they not related

Parent 1; what did you say?

Participant 1: they not related

Everyone: (laughs)

Parent 1: She's my daughter

Participant 1: no

Participant 3: let me explain, let me explain

Interviewer: do you mind if I ask her some things that we

Parent 1&2: of cause, of cause

Interviewer: she's here, we can hear another voice and...come, come closer

Parent 1: she's part of the family

Interviewer: akere

Parent 1: she's my late friend's child. Her mother and I were friends more like sisters. And our parents were cousins, so, here mother and I were friends since the early 90s, since I was a baby and then so when she was born I was there and then so...

Interviewer: yah

Parent 1: we have known each other; I've known her from day one.

Interviewer: ohk, Nobanthu how are you?

Participant 3: I'm ok

Interviewer: (laughs) are you ok

Participant 3: hmmm

Interviewer: what do you make of this family here? What do you think of it? What do you say about it?

(silence)

Interviewer:...Sekgabo (laughs)

Participant 3: a lot

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 3: a lot

Interviewer: like

Participant 3: discipline, love...uuuuhhhh

Interviewer: there is discipline here, there is love...

Participant 3: they love discipline

Interviewer: they like to discipline?

Participant 3: hhhhmmm

Interviewer: hhhmmmm, they already said, they didn't hide it.

Participant 3: hhhmmmm

Interviewer: ok.but then also, they balance with the love neh. Do you guys feel the love?

Participant 1: No

Participant 3: I do

Participant 1: Yes

Everybody: (laughs)

Interviewer: How do you feel it? When do you feel it Sekgabo?

Participant 1: eehhhh, when they don't hit me

Interviewer: when they don't....ahhhh, what are you're only problem in this house, just the hiding

Parent 1&2: (laughs)

Everyone: (laughs)

Interviewer: we minus the hiding everything is perfect neh...

Participant 1: yeah

Interviewer: hhhmmmm...I see...anything else Nobanthu, are they asking people, are they asking you about your guardian, If I so call her? What are they saying?

Participant 3: the last time, my grandmother....

Interview 8

Interviewer: I am going back to some questions just for clarity. Ehh... you spoke about growing up in the rural areas and you did not see a lot of people you could classify as LGBT. Why do you think its like that in the rural areas? Are they not there or they are there we just not seeing them?

Participant 1: I think they are there but people are not comfortable.

Interviewer: Reason being?

Participant 1: reason being fear of being judged and cast out you know. Because people in the rural are not working and so probably maybe if did not go to school and be exposed, maybe I would be married to some teacher, maybe I don't know. Do you understand what I am saying, because the surrounding influences? I mean I have got a girl that I know is gay but she married to a man. They have got three kids.

Interviewer: this marriage is from where?

Participant 1: from my village.

Interviewer: Ohk. For how long did you know that she gay?

Participant 1: we grew up together. We played soccer together, we did everything together.

Interviewer: How do you know for sure that she is gay?

Participant 1: Like I do not know for sure whether she is gay or not. It is just me thinking, because of the type of a person that she was.

Interviewer: What type of a person was she?

Participant 1: That tomboyish very hardcore, the way I was. You know. Riding donkeys, you know the talk, the movement. Like everything, maybe I was wrong.

Interviewer: if maybe you saying you were wrong and maybe there is a window that we need to leave open for people to express whatever they want, even though they look as if they are something else?

Participant 1: For me that is very important. Like I do not know if that girl is gay, like for me you say see gore ke stabane, you never know, but where I grew up azanka ka bona a lesbian. It's been how many years now? 39, till today. When people are lost, they just say, ke timetse ke nyakana le ngwanyana wa stabane. They will take you to my house.

Interviewer: are we saying then that you can't be macho and all those features, and then be heterosexual?

Participant: No, you can. That why I am saying I am not sure what it was. But if I had look from the outside cause we have never had this conversation about my own sexuality growing up. So, we have never had this conversation before, gore mona Mosibudi ostabane or haostabane? But she was hardcore all the way.

Interviewer: OK. You also mentioned that, in your own words that I just leave like a normal girl who plays soccer. Normal girls plays soccer, what is normal?

Participant 1: That for me was normal.

Interviewer: What was normal?

Participant 1: Me going to play soccer.

Interviewer: Oh ohk.

Participant 1: Yah. Me acting like a boy, if they put it that way. In the rural areas. Doing the things boys do, feeling comfortable. Huh going and plough in the farm, me going there and riding donkeys.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Participant 1: That for me was normal. But I would run away from making food in the kitchen and go out in the scotching sun of Limpopo ke disa dikgomo that was fun.

Interviewer: So normal to you was not the normal other people would call normal.

Participant 1: I would rather ride the donkeys to get water, than to get a bucket and put it on top of my head to get water. I would rather take a wheelbarrow than a bucket. Not that I did not do it, I did it. But what was easy for me was to take donkeys to fill up water.

Interviewer: See no one should define normal for another person?

Participant 1: No. you need to define your won normality.

Interviewer: Any reason why you started dating in varsity? Cause you spoke about the attraction at 14. You did not date then.

Participant 1: that is simply because I was afraid. To be honest I was afraid that if you try and someone else say yho ngwana Mabuza. Do you understand what I am saying? What was gonna happen to my parents? Their parents were gonna come to my house, and then my mom. So, for me I was like, you can't even think about.... You will desire it and it ends there. And you will never act upon it because of your surrounding and how you are socialised.

Interviewer: How were you socialised?

Participants 1: Like I mean a girl must love a girl. A boy must love a boy.

Interviewer: you saying normal again but you not.

Participant 1: No kere how you were. How you were, how you were socialised as a person. And for my parents, normality is when a man says come Thuli lets date. But I can't got to a girl and say ntwana are dire 1 plus 1.

Interviewer: Why do you think your dad never had issues with the locals calling you daddy's little boy but had an issue with you wearing trousers.

Participants: I don't know, he was just full of shit. I have no idea. I honestly don't know because he would also, like I don't want to say he contributed, but who will make a girl dig a hole to make a sewerage?

Interviewer: did he make you dig a hole before he saw that you are being feed, like those type?

Participant 1: I don't know, I mean if you claiming that you see me as a girl, why would you give me a chisel and ask me to go and bang?

Interviewer: that is why I am asking, is it maybe his inclination was that he saw that your preference of chores was like manly. What came first?

Participant 1: no I think he picked it up that I do not want to identify as.

Interviewer: you had not started showing anything?

Participant 1: no I was still a "boy", I was just wearing my trousers, doing my thing and then being at home. Like being myself/ like doing what I was telling you I was doing. For him I was an issue of batho batlareng, I can't encourage such a behaviour in my house. But when he needed something to be done, that needed a manly whatever he would say, e'mon eshaka lawa.

Interviewer: Uhm you are learned. For record sake what are your qualifications?

Participant 1: it's an honours degree.

Interviewer: you are learned and not influenced by religion when it comes to homosexuality, but you said according to your dad it was religion that did not allow him to allow you to wear pants in the house. But your dad is also learned.

Participant 1: my dad is also learned.

Interviewer: Why do you think he was religiously influenced?

Interviewer: Even if he was learned. Remember old people have a way of doing things. It's mainly not about me do you understand. Everything else has to do with the society. What will people think if he allows this than. So, I think it's just a societal thing that a woman cannot be seen wearing trousers. Why osa kgale ngwana gao.

Interviewer: Uhm

Participant: do you understand? So you end up le wena forcing those views on your kids you know. But I do not think it has to do with education and Christianity and everything. Ke taba ya gore, hee ngwano ke yena ale tee in the whole village who wear trousers.

Interviewer: I was asking that because you mentioned before that it is because it was not religiously allowed.

Participants 1: Mhm, even in the church, in the Lutheran church, girls are not allowed to wear trousers when you go to church, do you understand. I think my dad took that and our surrounding and he ran with it, because my sisters were not allowed, like they could not wear trousers.

Interviewer: why do we still go through education system; you said your dad holds a master's degree right.

Participant 1: Oh yes.

Interviewer: But the grip of religion always finds a way to influence how we do things.

Participant: believe is a powerful thing. It is the most powerful thing that can break a society. That is why even with your kids if you do not teach them to be liberal, they will go outside and judge. Do you understand? Anything that is different from them is wrong.

Interviewer: uhm when you started being aware that there is something different about you...

Participant 1: Wake up... (laugh)

Interviewer: Leave her alone, she will wake up when it's her turn. When you started being aware that there is something about you sexually, yeah you said there is something special about Mary in your own words. Ehh or when you started to understand that you are gay as you put it, how was that experience for you?

Participant 1: Having sex?

Interviewer: I do not know if it was sexual... ehh for you. When you stated understanding that I'm...

Participant 1: I've known that I was different. Like very early, gore ke rata basadi. I had that attraction towards banyana, mara I did not act upon it. When I started acting upon it, I said "makunyewe makunyewe"

Interviewer: (laughter). When did you start acting up on it?

Participant 2: Giggles.

Participant 1: Ahh very late 2002.

Interviewer: Where were you?

Participant: I was doing my first honours; I was over 21.

Interviewer: Oh, you were already in varsity?

Participant: Ya I was in varsity because remember my first four years of my degree I was a Christian solid, if I remember very well. Solid, praise the lord. I prayed to God to hold this gaism but I still did not work.

Interviewer: so, the main reason was that you're in the Lord.

Participant 1: Yeah, I had to hide myself in the lord.

Interviewer: So, masturbation was there?

Participant 1: it was there cause I had to.

Interviewer: why did you have to because....

Participant 1: Cause haeje papa selo se. (laughter).

Interviewer: (laughter). Remember if you saying you are purifying yourself for the Lord masturbation is also not allowed.

Participant 1: Well at the time my knowledge was not that far. I knew that there is a time for us to go an do our thing. So, we do what we do in our bedroom and then we go and raise our hand to praise the lord and say father we love you.

Interviewer: Yes. So, it was not sinning for you?

Participant 1: for me it was not. I still don't feel like it is a sin, by the way.

Interviewer: The masturbation part?

Participant 1: The masturbation part. Till today.

Interviewer: Ohk.

Participant 1: Mhmm.

Participant 2: I did not see that verse.

Participant 1: Lenna I have never seen it.

Participant 2: Masturbation, I do not think it exists.

Interviewer: haven't you seen anything about a seed, or a man's seed? We will check it.

Participant 1: this bible is too big.

Interviewer: It says a man's seed is not suppose to fall anywhere else except when he is making a child.

Participant 1: so, then everybody is sinning when they are using a condom?

Participant 2: There is not seed for female.

Interviewer: Oh, so it is fine for females? (laughter)

Participant 2: that's why in other religions condoms are not allowed. There are religions where men aren't allowed to use condoms when having sex and women are not allowed to take birth control medication.

Interviewer: this thing is for procreation.

Participant 2: But not anymore. There is also enjoyment for us.

Interviewer: how do you know you are attracted to a lay person or a same sex or opposite. How do you know you are attracted to the same sex or opposite?

Participant 1: very simple. When you see the most beautiful girl and you look at her and you feel the most beautiful feel u in your stomach.

Interviewer: Ummm.

Participant: Then I feel nkamodira.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Participant: I don't understand it but there is that force that says pulls you that person and you just want to be around that person do you understand.

Interviewer: Yes

Participant 1: And you look at their lips and you start thinking about kissing em you know. Legeakanna skobo, mara to you she is beautiful do you understand.

Interviewer: Alright. You said your male friends, your boyfriends, two words, took you as one of them because you are hardcore, what is this hardcore?

Participant 1: Hardcore meaning that they probably did not see me as a girl you know. Everything that was done we did it together, there was no way we gonna say yho no she can't. When they say are namele setlhare I am there, let's go swim I am there you know. There was o one who was going to say yho o gobetje when you fall. I did everything that they did. It was not even a hustle for me.

Interviewer: Ya, alright. Your mom. Your dad is allowing you to be you in the house. You do things that males are doing. Your mom?

Participant 1: We struggled at first. We struggled because she wanted to train me to be a girl. Ngwana ngwanyana oetsa tea and all those things. And in my head, it did not make sense. But we struggled, especially when I was turning nine ten eleven twelve, it was a struggle because she did not understand =. But because you know when you are raised in a house that is very strict, you do not have a choice but you just need to abide by those rules. So, the only way to not do what she wanted was to give hr what she did not have, which is water and coal. So that substituted me not doing, but I had to learn how to do the chores. It's not that I did not do my chores, I still have to do ditupu, wash the dishes, but I always used to do the dishes kabo ma 3, cause that's when I will be back. I had to learn those mechanism of dealing with her to make sure she gets what she wants. I would wake up 5 o'clock in the morning to milk the cow cause she like amasi. So, I developed those things to learn to deal with my mom. So, I was a sweet child.

Interviewer: Botho why are you laughing.

Participant2: the parents are ones who suppose o give compliments about their children, not the children themselves.

Participant 1: Am I sweet boo?

Interviewer: Ohk one last thing uhm, I get you neh, but for the sake of evidence I just want to iron some things out.

Participant 1: No let's do it.

Interviewer: You had a crush on some teacher at one point.

Participant 1: Yes.

Interviewer: You mention that you would rub her feet and massage her feet. You know that it was satisfaction guaranteed, what satisfaction?

Participant 1: Remember you are young and you have not ...

Interviewer: Haai say it as it is

Participant 1: You can't really express the things you feel and you know you cannot satisfy this person the way they want to be satisfied.

Interviewer: Which is? (giggle)

Participant 1: Sex. So, you cannot satisfy this poor woman, and you cannot give her what she wants. You just need to be satisfied with what they give. Ge bare etla otlong massager, wa raba ntwana, wa raba. With this you can eve offer your service without being asked and say kopa go massager. That for you is for feeling you know, whether it was a sexual drive, I don't know.

Interviewer: No, I hear you. Your heart and your mind were satisfied.

Participant 1: Very satisfied.

Interviewer: Ohk B.

Participant 1. Bobo.

Interviewer: Ohk, growing up, tell me a little bit about growing up. Just you're growing up. She spoke lengthy about growing up

Participant 2: I grew up like a normal girl. Uhm normal straight girl. I actually discovered earlier though, that I was not straight. But nobody knew, nobody suspected it because I did everything that normal girls did. Normal in the sense that straight girls did. I played like them, I dressed like them. So, I looked like a normal girl. So, no one suspected a thing. So, there was no issue of me not being accepted because I looked like everybody.

Interviewer: So, you said you became aware a bit earlier.

Participant 2: I knew I was not straight when I was 12.

Interviewer: 12. What was happening for you to coin it as I am not straight?

Participant 2: At 12 years old I dated a girl (giggle).

Interviewer: From....

Participant 2: No no never. I had an aunt who stayed in Witbank so we would always be there on school holidays.

Interviewer: Ya.

Participant 2: So that's when I met this girl.

Interviewer: How old was she?

Participant 2: She was 5 years older. So, I knew then and understood that I am playing for the same team. We dated for a year then the mother found out and they decided to relocate. I think the mother was disappointed in everything and the father had found some work in the Western Cape. So, they relocated the whole family. So that's how we lost contact till today. Afterwards went to crusades, told them I have been dating a girl for a year. Had to undergo some deliverance

Interviewer: You did not question yourself?

Participant 2: Uhm at that stage no. at age 12, no. I started questioning myself when I was 15.

Interviewer: Why?

Participant 2: uhm at age 12 I was prayed for a good 2 years I did not look at a girl in that way, or a boy. So, for a good two years I did not date. So, I was fine, up until I was 15 and I started to realise that actually now I am attracted to girls and that's when I started to question it. After that deliverance thing I gave life to the lord and I was born again. Me being attracted to girls was not a problem. I

started to question because here was a conflict with my belief. My feeling for girls ran against everything that I have been taught and everything that I believe in. so I had to ask do I need to now go under another deliverance. So, I had a serious inner conflict. But I then started again at 15 with girls from church. With a girl from church I think for a good 2 years.

Interviewer: when one says I am interest in this particular sex, being male or female. How do you tear it apart? How do we figure out what happens? How do you arrive at the notion that, I am definitely sure I'm attracted to same sex?

Participant 2: it's the feeling and Goosebumps you gonna get when you look at them. But when I look at a man nothing happens to me, I am irritated. So, for me it was clear very early that I had a type. And if I can find that type I will not be able to move my eyes from them. But that did not happen with men.

Interviewer: Alright, now it's clear. School, did you go to model C schools.

Participant 2: Hae, I did not go to that thing. I went to our public schools. Uhm until matric.

Interviewer: All the way to matric neh.

Participant 2: Ya.

Interviewer: Ok. I am taking you to the church now, church people demonising the sexual preference right, but you still continued to do it undercover, until you could reconcile the two right.

Participant 2: Ya

Interviewer: What does that say about you? Here you are in a dominant system that says this is the works of the devil and you still managed to continue living your life as yourself you know. I do not think a lot of people will be able to know... because the religious system is able to make it difficult to define it because it is deeply rooted in our family systems, but here you are, you are still young, you are that matured, at that time I do not think your theological foundation is that firm, but you managing to get around this system people still fear and still manage to live your life. Actually, express your sexuality the best way you know how to express it, what character did you give yourself for that?

Participant 2: if I had to cauterize my character, I am strong willed, but it was hard cause it took me forever. It took me years to come out, and when I decided that I was coming out, there was nothing and no one that was going to stop me. But for me to accept myself it took me, like I knew from 1996. But I came out 2012. During the 2012 I did try to date men, but it wasn't working out, so I had to accept myself. That is generally me, once my mind is made up of something you cannot change me.

But for me to come to that conclusion it's a process. But once say this is green, you can't come and say this is blue.

Interviewer: this process, why do you prefer to go through this process thoroughly as you do?

Participant 2: You see with other things you can afford to make mistakes, for me there was a lot at stake that's why I had to be sure this is who I am, and this is who I was. Because I knew I was going to jeopardise my relationship with my mother, I knew that I was going to be an outcast. So, I had to be sure and accept that even if this is the case, that I would rather be me than somebody else. That's why it took me that long to get to a point where I do not care what people say. So, it was quite a long process.

Interviewer: No, it's clear, it's clear. You spoke about a prophetess in your church you had to confess to. Ehh did you choose this woman to confess to or everybody had to confess to her.

Participant 2: Mhmm we had a relationship. She and I had a relationship. She had just relocated to Siyabuswa from KZN. So, we clicked me and her. So, at that time we had a sessional prayer, we were fasting.

Interviewer: Ohk.

Participant 2: And when the holy spirit in inverted commas. (laughter). Revealed that we had to confess. She was the one person I was able to do with, I felt she was the mother. Truth be told she protected my secret until I came out. I think I came out to her in the year 2000, and she only told my mother 12 years later when I came out to everybody, that actually Botho confessed to me 12 years ago. So, I felt comfortable with her.

Interviewer: Ya.

Participant 2: Aand that process really made me believe that the holy spirit is ready to deliver me again.

Interviewer: Who came up with this notion that you guys must confess?

Participant 2: Haai there were just many prophetess and prophets who were saying that, it was one of them. We were praying in the wilderness.

Interviewer: You guys were from on denomination?

Participant 2: We were but we will have weekends where we will just go pray and fast, we will leave our homes and go there spend the whole day there just praying.

Interviewer: Ohk. When you were bouncing back between men and female, you said you went o a fasting journey alone, and prayed, is that something you do when you are face with challenges, for a lack of a better word? O you like to retreat and say you know what let me ty to find strength within myself to fight this thing?

Participant 2: when I am faced with challenges, I do not have solutions for, I always enquire from God. That has been something I have been doing from an early age.

Interviewer: even today?

Participant 2: Ya, even today.

Interviewer: You said you fought to lead a clean life 96 and 97, help m understand what you mean by clean.

Participant 2: By clean I mean I tried not to date at all. For those years after I was delivered I did not date.

Interviewer: There is another place where you said you were clean and not sinning. I am trying to see where you coming from as to whether dating is a sin or dating females is a sin.

Participant 2: When I got born again, I got it from the teachings that we needed to stay away from sexual immoralities whether be it with male or female. So being clean meaning not engaging in any form of intercourse.

Interviewer: Ohki get it.

Participant 2: that is what we were being taught. We were even told that sex is the only one sin that you do to sin against your own body. Because if you steal to sin against somebody, but then if I have sex I sin against my own body. So, we were then taught that do everything but don't defile your own body because it is the temple of the lord. So, it was one sin we strived not to do because we told ourselves that we are not going to defy the temple of the Lord.

Interviewer: Ya. Sho, ohk.

Participant 2: Soo it was the most preached about sin of all of them. You can gossip its ohk, but o not engage in sexual intercourse.

Interviewer: Alright. Ehh when you were going undercover and defying the temple, you were still going to church right?

Participant 2: Ya.

Interviewer: How did you manage the guilt if you were feeling guilty, was there any even?

Participant 2: there was a lot of guilt. At time when I would share with a lot of people I would say uhhh when you have been taught when you have been indoctrinated about something you need to believe and you go against it, the only thing you need to deal with is your conscious, which becomes the holy spirit. I was happy to spend long weekends with my girlfriend at home because we could get away with it, they thought we are just friends. Everybody thought no this are two sisters in the lord visiting each other praying over the weekend, kante we were praying n each other. But we will feel guilty. We would go to the church on Sunday and confess to the Lord. It was a roller-coaster, but the guilt was there.

Interviewer: Sho ohk, and eventually you dealt with the guilt.

Participant 2: Uhm eventually I decided to try to be normal and I thought maybe the guilt was going to be better, but the guilt was actually worse. When I tried to date a man and sleep with a man, I felt the guilt was worse. You see now I have done the worst to the holy spirit and the Lord, so the guilt was worse. So basically, when it comes to the act of sexual intercourse there was nothing, I could do to make me feel less guilty.

Interviewer: Why do you think the guilt was more intense when you were dating a male person?

Participant 2: I think for me it was more intense because I was battling with myself. It was not something I dd cause I wanted to do. It was something I did because I wanted to be normal. So, with the girl I loved to do it, I enjoyed to do it. So, you know it was that thing of I feel guilty but it was nice.

Interviewer: (Laughter) Ya.

Participant 2: I wanted to do it so the guilt was less, neke nyaka would do it again. With a man it was that thing of I did not want to. So, it was a different type of guilt.

Interviewer: I get it. Alright let me take you to something you mentioned about the law passed in south Africa that we could not discriminate people based on their sexual orientation akere. You did mention that t was around the times of Thabo Mbeki. But same sex marriages were still not allowed. What do you think it's the reason it took time ehh?

Participant 2: I actually have my own unproven opinion.

Interviewer: Ya

Participant 2: Ehh... Mandela was an old man who grew up in the deep rural areas of Eastern Cape, who grew up in the areas where it was taboo for same sex people to date.

Interviewer: ya.

Participant 2: my feelings was that it delayed because he was the president. because even on the day of the signing the president was not part of the seating of the parliament. The deputy president at the time was presiding when the bill was signed. When was it actually signed?

Interviewer: I know that marriages were allowed since 2006.

Participant 2: So, it was not even Thabo Mbeki. I was the deputy Zuma. So, the president at the time was not in the country when the bill was passed. Think it was 1999. So, the deputy had o preside.

Interviewer: Who was the deputy:

Participant 2: Mlambo Ncuka

Interviewer: Mamlambo neh.

Participant 2: Because I think Thabo Mbeki was out of the country at the time. That was my own theory but I will not be part of it if there is any judgement in heaven. (laughter).

Interviewer: Thuli what's your take on that. We are talking about the constitution bill being passed on no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, but then same sex marriages were allowed later on, years later. What is your opinion around that? She was just giving me her opinion of the matter.

Participant 1: I think regardless of everything our social upbringing plays a crucial role in terms of how we see the world and how we define it. Being a president and guided by law, still there is that social influence. So probably the president was not ready in 2006.

Participant 2: No, it was in 2006.

Interviewer: Ooh 2006 it was when he marriage thing was allowed.

Participant 2: Ya. It was on the 30th of November.

Interviewer: Remember there was a clause that was put on race.

Participant 2: it was in the constitution. The constitution was done in 1994.

Participant 1: So, I think Mandela being a good boy of South Africa did not want to offend anybody.

Interviewer: lets say your opinions are correct and our leader do not want to come up or say I am the one who came up with this major change that goes against my social norms my whatever I believe in. if you are right then what are making of our constitution then. Are we just doing things for the sake of ticking boxed or?

Participant 1: I think at the end of the day you as a president are guided by your own ethics, even though you have the constitution to abide by, that will always be influences by how you socialised. So, whoever is not conflicted will always be pushed to do this thing.

Participant 2: its like you take the case f chief justice he is a pastor. He will say that according to the constitution I know that same sex is allowed but as a man of God its not. So, there is now those conflicts set out because he knows the law. He has been practising law all his life. So, you then have those who change their caps. When I am in court, I practice the law. When I am at church, I am practising the law of the bible. They need to then find the balance

Participant 1: For me I think the decision leads to conflict somehow.

Participant 2: it does, its life someone knowing okuthi as a nurse there is six abortions scheduled for tomorrow then I act sick so that I do not perform those abortions. It is not because I am sick, it is because I do not believe in committing those murder.

Participant 1: its like with this case of a lady that I work with. We invited them to the wedding. This are pastors who are deacons, some of them have their own churches. Like we invited them to the wedding. Three days passes, the fourth day one of them calls and says we love you as a person, like we won't come and support you as a pastor wo is pastoring a church, I have a responsibility to protect my flock we will not come.

Participant 2: You can see that there was a caucus about how do we separate ourselves from this person and what we believe in.

Participant 1: Do you understand. So that thing will always be a fight in us.

Participant 2: I think even with us as individuals it becomes a fight because I had to find a place and say our God is full of grace and Jesus have come to say I have come to fulfil the law and none of us as living human being can be able to fulfil the will of God. I had to tell myself that something that is fulfilled you cannot try to do it again.

Participant 1: Its done.

Participant 2: Once someone comes and says I have fulfilled now. You cannot come and abide by the law that Jesus says I have fulfilled.

Interviewer: Fulfilling meaning what?

Participant 2: Jesus understood that in our human nature we will not be able to do the law that are stated in the book of law. But in his human Godly nature he can be able to fulfil them. And he fulfilled them so that we do not have to leave under the law, but leave under grace. Because some of them it is just not possible to fulfil them in our human nature. So, I am very understanding with people who are having conflict because experience very serious life predicament that we all come across. Where what you believe in and what you want to do contradicts.

Interviewer: if you had to talk to people who are contradicted based on what we talking about religion and what they have been taught and their sexuality, especially same sex creating traction, what would you say? Cause I believe a lot are there who are conflicted.

Participant 2: No there are. What I would say is that your happiness is more important. You see when you are living a lie it eats you up, being you is easier. That will be the first, be you. But also, in that seek. You see with me I had to tell the lord that I need to accept myself and I need you to accept me. Because I am unable to accept who I am because I have been taught that I am an outcast. So, the battle that I am facing is that I feel that I cannot accept myself until you have accepted me. I told the lord that make me understand that to you I am accepted. That's why I need that quite time to meditate because sometimes when you are around people you are able to hear the inner voice to guide you. So, I would say I needed that assurance, before my sexual orientation I am your child. Because God does not see us as man and women, he sees us as his children. So, it needed to make sense to me. When he looks at me, He sees him child. If God sees me as Him child, He can't blame me for my sexual orientation.

Interviewer: So, if I sum it up you saying its an inside thing that one has to do? You need to tell yourself you are accepted by God, not hearing it from other people. I am with you.

Participant 1: For me its just an issue ya you find your truth as a person. Uhm because if you do not know yourself, you always going to have a problem with other. Know yourself. you being comfortable with your sexuality is a process.

Interviewer: Finding your truth, if I have to quote Jesus Christ saying I am the truth the way and the light. You are saying people must find the truth, is there one truth. I am asking you because someone

might I have my truth, but s the truth that I have about my sexuality the same truth that Jesus Christ spoke about.

Participant 1: You see I was not relating my truth to Christianity was relating my truth in terms of self-knowledge. If you are a Christian you have to talk about the truth of God. But if you do not believe I the bible you just a person who believes in the supernatural stuff, then you ned to find that authentic self. Whether we like it or not, we still need to be confirmed. Whether by yourself or by someone else. Until you find that self then you are unable to be confirmed.

Interviewer: is there a way to be believe in the supernatural powers you are talking about without having to religious or follow any religion.

Participant 2: That is possible.

Interviewer: Spirituality and religion, separate things?

Participant 2: Separate things. Because religion is about the law, it's about finish one authentic self. That's my understanding.

Interviewer: I want that one I want yours vele. I am with you. Is that how you came to your own.

Participant 2: Ntwana nna I am one person, ne kesa foke. What made it easy for me was that there was nothing else that I knew like this. Me identified myself as a Mgita and it was easy for me to be, do you understand. But when I got to university I got saved. I went through the same thing she went throw, bamorapella and all those things. I really did not fight it as such, I just let it be. So, I told myself that I need to offload morwalo.

Interviewer: Because sometimes people say you are only lying to yourself, there is no way you can be ok with the sexuality and your speaking about God. God has nothing to do with the sexuality that you are in.

Participant 1: they are not in the light.

Interviewer: Remember your sister, may her soul rest in peace, used to say Modimo gale tsebe. You know? And some people within the LGBT community are struggling with just that, gore my God does not recognise me or know me.

Participant: you see that for me comes with understanding and the maginitude of the love of God and understanding of who God is. God is not a God of punishment, as He was portrayed to us gore He like

a father who comes and discipline. He is not that. A lo of people speak fear, it's like when you speak things that keep kids in line, its like as parents who inflict fear to our kids for them to do what we want them to do. If you do not fit in the box, we will chop you and life can be easy as a a parent. But are we actually helping you as a child or you as a person to discover yourself, because we can be as old as we are but we don't actually know who we are?

Participant 2: Self-discovery is a continuous journey.

Interviewer: Aowa kuzwakele.

Participant 1: Jeso.

Interviewer: (Laughter). After you fell pregnant your mother suggested you raise your child for about 8 months, and after that you go back to school.

Participant 2: Mhmm

Interviewer: And you said you continued with your son' s father afterwards, because that was the most natural thing, I am quoting you. What do you mean it was the natural thing to do? I keep it the natural normal so that I put it the way you put it.

Participant 2: Uhmm natural and normal because of what we have been taught.

Interviewer: Oh, ohk aright.

Participant 2: it's in that context to say its natural, that how it was meant to be, that how we have taught. We have been taught that the virginal is meant for the penis and the penis is meant for the virginal. Not the other way around. And to say like items repel and unlike items attract. That is just the teachings we have been taught, and the normal natural thing will be this two unlike items to attract each other. Which will be a man and a woman. Once there is now positive and positive attracting, even in social that does not happen. S I think that is what happened.

Interviewer: So, there you are attracted and attracted, science says its impossible, ehh society says it's impossible.

Participant 2: Religion says its impossible (laughter).

Interviewer: How do you stay in something that is impossible and even commit to it by marrying. Why do all this people see that as impossible but the are other people are marrying. Can you really choose the impossible?

Participant 2: You see now, society community and the church have played a very big role with sexuality and discrimination. And you see the science part of it can be ignored because or parents did not even do science, because they don't understand this whole of negative and positive because parents did not get that far. Religion and society have taught all of us that it is taboo, it is demonic. Ehh women must seek to get married by a man. You raised to be the best wife.

Interviewer: Yaa, for his man.

Participant 2: For your husband. And how you behave as a woman becomes a reflection to your mother. That's what society and religion will say. That's why in the very early ages they teach you how to cook, how to dress and how to communicate with men. Very early in life we are taught that.

Interviewer: its funny when science says it's impossible for life and like to attract, when they say that what do they mean? Are they looking at the physical or the energy?

Participant 2: It's the energy.

Interviewer: But I thought they said energy that go together are likely to attract each other.

Participant 2: Positive and positive repel. Its positive and negative that attracts. That's my limited knowledge of science.

Interviewer: For sure you are right. Are they not looking at physique? I am saying when it comes to human being, when they say you are alike, are they not looking at the...

Participant 1: They are looking at the gender.

Interviewer: They are looking at the gender. The two-physical point of sexual contact that is the same. But energetically....

Participants: That is not considered. My sister always says mpampane le mpampane ba beya nama. May her soul rest in peace.

Interviewer: Being on the physical as well.

Participant 2: Even though people are repelling homosexually, they do not hate homosexuality because me and Botho are dating. The bigger challenge ya bona ke gore there must be the one who enters and the one who is being entered.

Participant 1: The idea is too big for them to comprehend.

Participant 2: I That is the reality of the society that we live in. and it's everywhere, you see it in the most educated people.

Interviewer: Yan eh. And when you marrying somebody because you are just thinking about the sexual part of the person.

Participant 2: You know the people...remember we have been taught to say when you get married one plus one is three, that two people when they get married barobala, batsoga bale three (laughter) and the fretfulness of marriage was children not happiness.

Interviewer: Sorry gonale lemon, sometimes this thing is too rich for me. I love them neh, tsona adirate. So sometimes I biteon a lemon or lime

Participant 1: Mazambane, ke eng onyaka go tlhatsa?

Interviewer: Eng. Thanks, that's much better. Something sour nyana. Yes, yes Botho.

Participant 2: So, it's then taken into that context. You see you need to hear when people read Genesis one, twenty-six, twenty-six to twenty-eight when they speak about fruitfulness. People are thinking about the fruit of the womb.

Interviewer: Mhmm the multiplication.

Participant 2: The Lord did not say give birth to children. He said be fruitful.

Interviewer: And multiply.

Participant 2: And why are people now thinking of sex and children?

Interviewer: Hmm because the man is the seed. The sperm from the man is the seed, the fruit is the child.

Participant 2: Yes, ke one plus on is three. It's the how part, its our interpretations, its how it has always been done.

Interviewer: I am with you. And then you went to varsity and you were undercover, you were still with the guy but still undercover with the girl at varsity because that was the comfort you got from the girl cause it was the most natural thing to do, the most acceptable thing to do.

Participant 2: Mmm lets go back there.

Interviewer: You said you continued to date the son's father ... but you went undercover still with the girl in varsity...uhhh, and you broke u with the guy eventually ankere, because you feel comfort with the girl because it was the most natural and acceptable thing.

Participant 2: No, the capturing.... Mmm you were here...

Participant 1: I think the acceptable thing for her, kesa mmolellela.

Participant 2: let me try to explain it. I continued dating him and went undercover. That for me was comfortable.

Interviewer: Ohk.

Participant: I dated my son's father in the eyes of everyone because it was viewed as natural and easily acceptable in the society, but what was working for me while I was dating a woman.

Interviewer: I thought so. I am with you; it was acceptable for you to date a male instead of a female... and then you said he was too much for you and you said "I am done with this man", you said "it was 6 years and I am done graduating, decided I cannot take this I am done. I have graduated, this man is too much for me", what was too much exactly?

Participant: Too much in terms of demands. Ummm. Ohk I am unable to meet the demands of a man. I am not straight; they are just too much.

Interviewer: Laughter. Which are?

Participant 2: time and sex. That for me are two things difficult for me to give. I continued for my own selfish reasons, f resources. So, it was a butter trade. I would trade my time for resources. I no longer needed the resources, why must I give him my time? Cause I got resources myself, I don't need sex from you I'm fine. I could not pretend to be in it anymore.

Interviewer: And with the female?

Participant 2: A relationship with a female is nice and easy but I still struggled I think, khuthi now there is an issue of coming out, think for me that was the struggle and you can't just come out because you have met something. So, I needed a sign that there will be stability. Like we are not allowed to go broke if we are broke the lord is punishing us, if you are drowning in debt like everybody else the Lord is dealing with you. The homosexual snakes are busy chewing your money. We are no allowed to go through what everybody goes through, because the Lord is dealing with us. Once you come out you

cease to be human because you cannot go through what other normal human beings go through because is seen as the lord punishing you.

Interviewer: And when you bounce back from those things?

Participant 1: they are shocked.

Participant 2: No, the snakes are doing it for you.

Participant 1: Ya. Its no longer God.

Interviewer: So, this snake has got some powers?

Participant 2: Yes, they have got powers. Laughter.

Interviewer: if in all this years God could not save me because there was nothing to save me from. What do you call it, I call I a turnaround for a lack of a better word, because you had a conversation, you went within and you started talking to yourself about this? You said I think at the beginning you.... I was entertaining this at the back of my mind to say if God did not save me then, He is not going to save me anymore. What do we call this event?

Participant 2: You can call it a turnaround; you can call it a discovery an awakening.

Participant 1: An Ahaa moment, an epiphany, salvation.

Interviewer: You are saved from what?

Participant 2: Its salvation from yourself, salvation from all the believes that you had, because you can be trapped I that for life.

Interviewer: Ya, many are. Some don't even escape it, they commit suicide.

Participant 2: Because you have been waiting for God to deliver you. But it is not an easy journey. I think we all need to acknowledge that our journey is not an easy one.

Interviewer: Ya, but doable.

Participant 2: And it worth it. There is a scripture in the bible that says the suffering we are experiencing now is nothing compared to the joy that we will feel when we see God. I want to make it practical now, the suffering of not accepting yourself cannot be compared to the joy that you feel when you accept yourself.

Participant 1: That is so true love.

Interviewer: Can this God be seen this very lifetime. Do we have to die in order to see God?

Participant 1: No, God is energy that is experienced every day.

Participant 2: With regards to the scripture, we need God here.

Interviewer: That is my point. This God, can He be found or She be found or it be found in me?

Participant 2: God stays with us. The truth is, that's why I am turning the scripture and making I practical to say when God created the earth, we were with Him, we were within Him, and when he created us, He is in us. Its just that relationship and acknowledgement we need to go through. And hence thina we don't focus in this thing, it's not our focus. Our focus is good things. On the other side we do not know and we not going to bother ourselves. We going to live life according to God ways now, live our life now. See what happens after w are dead.

Participant 2: If we come back as Tsotshwanas, its ohk, but we have lived life in abundance.

Interviewer: Talking about your church, how did you end there because I believe there aren't many that are accepting of same ex attracted couple and they accepted to marry you and they not a gay church?

Participant 2: Actually, we are the only gay couple.

Interviewer: How did it happen?

Participant 2: Uhm we got an invitation, but before the invitation we were searching for a church. It took us a full year where we just visiting different churches. We sat down I think it was after my pastor disowned me and Thuli did not really have a church per say here in Pretoria. So, we agreed that I am coming out of my church and you coming out as well, and we going to look for a church. We didn't want a church that is gong to be about homosexuality, we wanted a church tat is going to be about God. So, I think for about seven to eight months we were going to different churches I think almost every Sunday, hoping to find one that felt like home. I think that was with our believe that we spend a lot of time in church and becomes your spiritual home, can I feel the love, can I feel God at church. Until then we got an invitation from Thuli's friend to come to the church.

Interviewer: Got you, this was three months full today?

Participant 2: Uhmm yes.

Interviewer: Thank you so much

Interview 9

Interviewer: Ohk...(turning of pages). Ere ke simolle ka Botho today...uuuhhhh...Eyah...Ehhhh...There's somewhere where you said people like to ask who is the man in the relationship, right?...(laughs)...but there is somewhere where she said, when I asked her she said "I'll come back to you on that one". Where she said the kids refer to her as mother and father at the same time and it doesn't bother her, and then, but later on she said but I'm the head...I asked her how do you refer to yourself, how do you relate to yourself. She said but I'm the head of the house neh. So my question to you is, don't you think that could be the reason why people assume that it must be a man or it must a woman when she refers to herself as the head of the house? Isn't it a patriarchal thing from a heterosexual type of relationships? I don't know, what's your take?

Participant 2:uuuhhh, I think for me, it's not really, the whole playing, it's not really an issue for me.

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 2: There is always somebody that must take the lead.

Interviewer: Ok

Participant 2: And I don't really have an issue that and the truth is that I also see Thuli as the head of the house.

Interviewer: Good.

Participant 2: And for me that protocol works for us.

Interviewer: Yah.

Participant 2: So, I don't have an issue with it.

Interviewer: So when her as the head of the house, what does the head do?

Participant 2: The head gives direction, to say this is where we are going as a family.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 2: and obviously I'm there to advise and rebel if I feel like.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: (laughs)...the head is leading us astray.

Interviewer: Yah yah

Participant 2: But, there must be a vision barrel.

Interviewer: Is the head able to be flexible?

Participant 2: No, the head must be flexible.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 2: The head must also be lead.

Interviewer: hhhmmm...

Participant 2: Yah, so, you find your way to make sure that the head goes to your direction sometimes.

Interviewer: hmmm...hhmmmm...ok.

Participant 2: Yes...

Interviewer: And then, there were time where you said you don't fail to educate when people are asking from a point of wanting to know, from a point of curiosity, and not trying to be disrespectful...

Participant 2: hhhhmmmm...hhhmmmm

Interviewer: Right...uuuhhh...what...ok, and then Thuli would say that people need to be educated about the LGBTIQPA, about you know homosexuality, about same-sex preferring partners. What should this education entail? When you say you need to educate them or when you are saying they need to be educated, what is the content of this education, what does it entail?

Participant 2: Normally what I would try to make people understand is that you cannot box us.

Interviewer: Ok.

Participant 2: And uuhhhmmm...when...when...when one is new, when one is not really exposed to this lifestyle, our life, they want to box us and say this is how it is done or this is how it should be done. Given an opportunity than you must say, this is how we do it...

Interviewer: hhhmmm.

Participant 2: But it does not mean that this is how it is done. This is how I do it...

Interviewer: Yes

Participant 2: This is how me and my partner do it.

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 2: But there are other people who might be doing it this way.

Interviewer: hmmm...hhmmmm. You do not represent the whole...

Participant 2: No I...the whole community, no. I represent a small minority.

Interviewer: Yah, ok. Can sexuality be understood, can we, will we get there?

Participant 2: The thing is, uuuhh, when...when...when we speak of sexuality it's broader term...

Interviewer: Hmmmmm

Participant 2: I think it's, we learn every day, but because of how we were raised we all thought we understood heterosexuality because we grow up knowing a man is made for a woman or a woman is made for a man, so we then thought we understood sexuality from that context, but as we grow older we than realise that you, you just learn every day. So, it actually can't be, you...you discover new things about yourself...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 2: so you can't fully understand it, but you can have an idea of what it is all about.

Interviewer: Ok. Your take?

Participant 1: From my side, it's...it's...it's a, it's very subjective in a sense yagore...my take of...of...of sexuality or someone else's take on sexuality kano obolela kataba yahore we coming from a point of heterosexual whatever you are expected to be this way and I come from this side. And even within our community lerena, we define it differently. So, you can't really...I don't wanna say the

word understood. It's a very complex word to use because you really do not know what it is that you need to understand about sexuality. Wa understand what I'm saying?

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: So, ke taba yahore, it has to make sense to you. Yah, it has to make sense to you, not anybody else, you...wena

Interviewer: As an individual.

Participant 1: As an individual, because how I define homosexuality, we define it differently, you may define it differently, she might define it differently. So, is that thing you...you...as much as the people will say the LGBTI community...kana bare ke LGBTIP what?

Participant 2: hhhmmm...hhhmmm...di q what-what

Interviewer: LGBTIQAP Plus

Participant 1: Z (laughs). You know (laughs), bare sexuality is fluid.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: Do you understand? That's how they...they...they...because it's a movement, you know. So, you will find those people who will choose to today, you know...you...you really cannot. It is about identifying it with yourself.

Interviewer: Do they choose these people? Do...

Participant 1: No, choosing is another...that's what I'm saying, choosing is another way. The English yare limita in terms of words...

Interviewer: Hmmm...

Participant 1: Because choose is not the right word...

Interviewer: Yah...

Participant 1: But it's become, you know what I mean?

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You know...

Interviewer: yah

Participant 1: So, you...you...you...in that way

Interviewer: uuuhhhmmm...oh, ok, alright. While we are on choosing and stuff, what do you say, are you born with the sexuality you are in?

Participant 1: I want to believe that you are born with it and you discover it as you go.

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: You understand? Remember as a child, as a boy child, they teach you gore boys don't cry, boys wear underwears, girls pantie...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: ...And a boy....

Interviewer: You mean underpants?

Participant 1: Eya, you understand? And boys cannot wear...you understand? So o gola le dideng eo and dideng eo keyona e shapang your reality of a relationship as a person until you discover yourself and then it changes, gore I can be a boy with testicle and penises and prefer to wear a panty. You understand?

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: Or I can be a girl, when I reach the age of 35 and say entlek ke rata underpene...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: And I feel comfortable. Omogwe ebe a dicita gore ebile I don't want my breast, you understand, I need to chop them off...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: So, kentwe beke bolele gore ke...ke...ke...you...you...you can never put it in the box...

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 1: You must always have this open minded yagore we evolve as people and things are going to change about ourselves.

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 1: Mmmhhh

Interviewer: And you, sex wise, gender wise. Remember there is sex and there is gender, how do you identify?

Participant 1: What..what...what is...

Interviewer: What is your sex?

Participant 1: Hape o bolela sekgowa se se holo, sex le gender...o bua sekgowa se se holo tjrrrr

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Areng nare motho?

Interviewer: Sex, biology, gender, what you feel comfortable in defining yourself as.

Participant 1: Ngkaba letshe pedi, nkase minde, gao kgonahala.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: Byale gago kgonahale

Interviewer: (laughs)...ok...if ntse go kgonahala you would...

Participant 1: hao pala, haowa, il be very happy to have two...

Interviewer: Two...huh

Participant 1: Knebe kele transi

Interviewer: Meaning....

Participant 1: Kebe le...le...le polo le...le...le kuku...

Interviewer: Oh...(laughs)

Participant 1: Interms of sex, akere o bua ka sex.

Interviewer: So, you would prefer if you were...eh

Participant 1: I don't mind

Interviewer: Intersex type...

Participant 1: I really, honestly its really not a...

Interviewer: But what would you do with two private parts?

Participant 1: Ketladi berekisa kamo kana ha tshona.

Interviewer: If you could?

Participant 1: If I could.

Interviewer: ok (laughs)

Participant 1: Eh

Interviewer: That's interesting...

Participant 1: If I could...

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 1: But, in terms of identifying myself, I...I honestly identify myself as a boy for me.

Interviewer: Let's say for example you are admitted, God forbid, in a hospital and then they take you to a female ward...hhhhmmm...what do you say?

Participant 1: Nothing...

Interviewer: Hmmm

Participant 1: Nothing.

Interviewer: You are fine?

Participant 1: I am fine.

Interviewer: You can be there?

Participant 1: I can be there.

Interviewer: Because you sex is determined...your biological sex determines that you are female...

Participant 1: hhhmmm....hhhhmm

Interviewer: You don't dispute that?

Participant 1: No...

Interviewer: Ok...

Participant 1: Hence I...

Interviewer: Gender is then the roles you assume...

Participant 1: Yes, hence I call it...

Interviewer: That is usually constructed by...

Participant 1: Society and all those...

Interviewer: Society and yourself as well, if you agree or your disagree...

Participant 1: Hence I call myself best of both worlds.

Interviewer: (Laughs) ok

Participant 1: Ke Albany.

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 1: You can play this game, I can play this game, but i...

Interviewer: Meaning...

Participant 1: Meaning that ok I can relate with women, I can relate with guys, very simply so, like you know without any problems.

Interviewer: hmmm

Participant 1: You know...but I can relate with girls hebatlo bolela kadi msc pots and plates and whatever, that diayang bora, but I can relate with girls, I can sit and have a conversation le banyana....

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: Ratshega gwaba monate...

Interviewer: hhhhmmm

Participant 1: I will not feel gore hhheeeeyyy....

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: You know, no no no no...

Interviewer: The gender roles you assume, what do you say about them. Are they manly...manly or woman-like or both...

Participant 1: No, they're very manly.

Interviewer: hmmm

Participant 1: Yah, extremely manly.

Interviewer: Like?

Participant 1: In my house, I mean I'm the head of this house.

Interviewer: (laughs) ok. What sort of roles do you...

Participant 1: I wouldn't say its roles...

Interviewer: assume that you are the head...

Participant 1: You see...you see...you see...English yona yare limita man...

Interviewer: hhhmmmmm

Participant 1: I wouldn't say roles as such, it's who I am.

Interviewer: Who are you?

Participant 1: Someone who's not going to find fun to go and cook. Someone who is not going to find fun to...I enjoy sh...

Interviewer: Someone who's going to...

Participant 1: Enjoy cooking, bea kitima kitima kadi plate ledi what what what, what we know a woman is suppose to do...

Interviewer: Oh you don't find it...

Participant 1: I do it, not that I can't do it, I do it very well, but it's not something I can look forward to...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: Hore today kenyako ba hatella (claps hands)

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: No, I cook under duress.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: You understand. I cook because I don't have a choice I have to cook (claps hands).

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: Then I cook. Like when she's tired and I'm home and you know, or when katseba gore she's gonna come back home late and she's tired, than I have to cook as a helper. You know...

Interviewer: Yes

Participant 1: But I will not gonna go yepeyy, home, kebe ke plene menue.

Interviewer: (laughs) Yah.

Participant 1: You know, I'm not going to worry about having a white linen, not at all. Whether it's blue, green, yellow, ke mpete...

Interviewer: hhmm

Participant: Kea robala, eh...

Interviewer: hhhhmm

Participant 1: You understand, that's why ke bolela ka deotsha gore...it's...it's...eh...yah, I would rather do a garden, I'd rather...I'd clean my house and ebe neat, but I'm not gonna go and be excited about doing it...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: It must be done, you understand...

Interviewer: Yah.

Participant 1: hhhmm...and provide for my family, and for me that's what...you understand...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: hhhmmmm

Interviewer: What if you find yourself at some point in life where you could not be able to provide but your wife is much better able to provide?

Participant 1: No...I mean when you're in business it happens, like I am in...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You find you stay 3-4 years osena income.

Interviewer: hmmm, the head...

Participant 1: You see, the head has got nothing to do with it...

Interviewer: You won't be bruised...

Participant 1: No...no

Interviewer: You see, that's my question.

Participant 1: No. The...you know the head part has got nothing to do with what you bring in the house. Like she said...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: It's a vision...

Interviewer: yah

Participant 1: ...that you have that...that is leading the family to somewhere else....

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You understand...

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: And it's always better and greater when you bring an income at home...

Interviewer: hhhmm

Participant 1: hhhh...keng...that face ereng?

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Hape you're a psychologist and rena we analyse the behaviour, we analyse the face...

Participant 2: Contunie with the interview

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Keng, kemajolo...hmmm

Interviewer: (laughs) alright. No, its fine. You on the education part, you said that eh more education is needed as far as making people aware of...of...of this sexuality that is fluid of uhhhmmm...the diversity in it, I believe. Now, I say, Robert Mugabe was educated with what, seven degrees or so, but he still discriminated against...

Participant 2: Homosexuality...

Interviewer: Yah...the LGBT and...

Participant 2: He wanted more....

Participant 1: Because people who are writing books about us are not us.

Interviewer: Oh ok

Participant 1: You understand. That's why I'm saying your thesis is so profound that etlo thusa batho to see from a perspective yagago as a lesbian. You not writing it as a topic of interest, you understand. You are. Even the writing etlo tlhagella pila, etlo bonahala, you understand what I'm saying. It will be very clear in terms of what you want the world to see and this is not really...hae fetshe the homosexuality, it's just a piece...

Interviewer: Tip....hmmmm

Participant 1: Or a tip, yes, of what homosexuality is about. So, but when we speak from that point, it will make sense to people. Mugabe write books or, probably not even write a book, akitsi baby ke mang...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: It will probably not even, asanke aba le buka e one that speaks of homosexuality or an article.

Interviewer: Ah, mina, mina I'm taking your story out there, not mine.

Participant 1: No...no...no...no, what I'm saying is that it comes from you, you understand, I don't know if I make sense. If...if...if...if...if...if...baby wang kutlwa gore ke nyaka goring nna?

Participant 2: I hear what you're trying to say, but I also understand what Nono is saying, I mean she's...she's...

Participant 1: Yes, I'm...I'm...you're putting my story out there but again o stabane...

Interviewer: Mang?

Participant 1: Wena

Interviewer: Nna azanka kare ke stabane

Participant 1: Heheheheh

Interviewer: (laughs) Ka dlala my friend.

Participant 1: O dirang leba nyana?

Interviewer: Nna?

Participant 1: yah

Interviewer: Banyan ba feng?

Participant 1: Ashiba...

Interviewer: O ba bone kaye?

Participant 1: Ashiba...

...(everybody laughs)

Participant 1: Bao kitima lefatshe ka moka...

Interviewer: Eh...

Participant 1: So, it's one of those stuff tselehore it makes sense...

Interviewer: Eh

Participant 1: When it comes from you...it's like someone aho bolela ka teenage pregnancy asenke ae experience, it's not likem ekasebe ho tshwana le motho o a bileng pregnant at the age of 16...

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 1: ...who went through the process...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You understand....

Interviewer: Hhhhhm

Participant 1: Eyah...and those people can have their doctorates and everything or....

Interviewer: No story of us without us...

Participant 2: Hmmmhhhh

Participant 1: Thank you...

Interviewer: Alright...Let me take you back to a time when you said your wife's mother threatened you...(laughs)...to say what, I will even set you on fire with boiling water if I have to

Participant 1: mmmmhhhh

Interviewer: But you still were there, you were there, you never budged. There was a time there was a meeting when she came out to her family. Apparently, you were there...

Participant 1; I was there

Interviewer: ...in the house though not in the meeting room. What do I say about this, what character is this? If you could give it a name, what does it say about you?

Participant 1: Ya mang...?

Interviewer: You. In all...in the midst of the threats, in the midst of the discomfort you still stayed with your partner...

Participant 1: Resilience ntwana....

Interviewer: (laughs) Yah, resilient neh.

Participant 1: Hahona kamo kgomong, because that's what you belief, you understand...

Interviewer: hhhmmm...do you believe it or do you know it?

Participant 1: Yah, I know...ya eish English yare mora...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: That's what you know...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: Gore this is good for me...this is right for me.

Interviewer: So even in danger...

Participant 1: Even danger, ga etla e tlatla...mara o ke waka o...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: Unless yena ang potsha gore...khaba tshimbiri...you understand

Interviewer: (laughs) hhhmmmm

Participant 1: In that way I don't have....ake kgone ho lwa.

Interviewer: yah

Participant 1: You know, because motho kelwang le ena hayo, mara if o hona rayema.

Interviewer: You also said, much as I was willing to live without my partner's mother when she started doing the threats, I would rather live with her, why?

Participant 1: Le mang, le mamagage?

Interviewer: Ehhh

Participant 1: Cause simple ntwana, when you...when you marry your wife, this lie that we say and say I'm marrying you and only you is a moorse lie, you are marrying into their family and their shit and she's marrying into my family and my shit...

Interviewer: mmmhhh

Participant 1: E yahore kenna lewena baby re two ke maka, we are lying to each other because eventually those people are going to come. If they are not gonna come in a form of them being here, they will, my upbringing...you understand...

Interviewer: mmmhhh

Participant 1: Will always push us into that, wang kwishisha.

Interviewer: In what way?

Participant 1: In a simple sense ya gore dilo txe di nnyane, nna, I come from...you know...she's expected to come home once in 6 months, 3 months, whatever, you understand...

Interviewer: mmmhhh

Participant 1: Ene ha fitlha kwale o tshwantse a tjokume

Interviewer: Ehhhh

Participant 1: A fitshe kele tshatshi, a tshatse di sunscreen, wa understanda...

Interviewer: (laughs) Hhhmmm

Participant 1: Ene as much as nkadula le ene mo kae dia tleva and say no my wife won't do shit...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: But when she gets home it's going to happen...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: Eya, I'm gonna say baby ke tshwere ke tlala. My sister will say we can't cook for you while your wife is here.

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You understand...

Interviewer: Are you going to help her cook when you are at your house?

Participant 1: Of cause, even when we home, we were home this weekend. I wash the dishes, ka phumula mola, I clean the fridge, you know...

Interviewer: Won't your folks think otherwise?

Participant 1: No they won't.

Interviewer: Oh ok.

Participant 1: Baby I washed the fridge...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: (laughs)

Participant 1: Modimo a be le wena

Participant 2: otlatswitswe sekotlelo, sekghafthin sako fridgeng...

Participant 1: Se e bodile papao a tlogetse fridge e timilleng...

Participant 2: Papao...

Interviewer: (laughs).

Participant 2: Papaka o gwile

Interviewer: (laughs) eh

Participant 1: But for me, and I'm being very serious, ene re tlohele pretence...

Interviewer: eehhh

Participant 1: I will expect my wife to play a wife role. The role that she's playing in my house neh, I would expect her to do it when we get home...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1:period.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: Eh

Interviewer: With your help of cause?

Participant 1: Of cause...

Interviewer: Alright.

(Whispers from participant 1 and participant 2)

Interviewer: You also said that when...when...I guess is both your folks from your family's sides, when they were still dealing with the fact that you guys are dating and you guys are a union and you are serious about the relationship...you said hhhmmm...whilst they are dealing with whether they accept us or not lets protect each other, what does that say about you?

Participant 1: About who?

Interviewer: You, you saying we are not going to wait for them, let them do what they want to do about us....

Participant 1: I mean, like I'm saying, as...as...I don't like to use the word head of the house, because...

Interviewer: No..no...no...I'm asking about the character that you showed....

Participant 1: The character ya gore I love her and I need to protect her in front of my family, for me, from her family, you know, because we never know what their intentions are...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You know...uuuuhhhmmmm

Interviewer: Somebody looking outside seeing you do that, what would they say?

Participant 2: You protective...

Participant 1: I'm very protective of my wife.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: Extremely protective.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: I try...

(Laughter from everyone)

Interviewer: Good, good...hmmmm...let me introduce the topic of tomorrow, remember that tomorrow I'm going to come and we having our final interview neh.

Participant 1&2: hhhmmmm

Interviewer: Wording preparations, the good thing about this research is that it is very active, it is happening while your wedding is happening.

Participant 2: Yoh...yoh...(laughs).

Participant 1: You know that we reflected about one year...

Participant 2: Longitudinal (laughs).

Interviewer: hhhmm...hmmmm

Participant 1: It's hectic...

Interviewer: What's hectic about the preparations?

Participant 1: It was going very well, I'm gonna be very honest with you. It was going very well until we went home.

Interviewer: Home where?

Participant 1: Limpopo, last week.

Interviewer: Oh ok

Participant 2: (laughs)...Sunday.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Yah, Sunday...

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: You understand...When never had like...People started asking are you fighting, kere no we not...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: ...until Sunday when I was like fuck hare tlohele masepa a.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Leave this shit.

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: ...We not doing this kak.

Interviewer: (laughs) What happened?

Participant 1: Because my family...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: ...are bullies.

Participant 1: Extremely...

Participant 2: That's what they are.

Participant 1: My family are very bullies...and...and....and this is what happened...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: We'll just brief it up a bit. I did not know how the cultural procedure are. Nna I took my wife, we went home. When we went home, hare fitlha daar, we set than they started making food for everybody and when we started the meeting, I'm like baby come, lets go sit down and engage and discuss the procedurals, and they were like never. This one, in our meeting, no...

Participant 2: (laughs)

Participant 1: ...she's not allowed. You understand?

Interviewer: hhmmm

Participant 1: You get what I'm saying. And...and...and, I'm trying to tell my sister but she knows, I mean this is her, she must be part of this. Are no...no...not here, onyakang mo, haa tshwanelo...she was not even supposed to come.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: You understand? That's why kere bo bully ba kaba Mashaba bagore we are gonna do things our way. And I'm like, in my head, why didn't they tell me cause they knew that I was coming with her...

Interviewer: Ehhhhh

Participant 1:...They were suppose to say Thuli mothoo are mo nyake oo gebolelwa dilo tsahaba Mashaba.

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: As much as lena le dlalane for 6years legally, she's not yet accepted in the clan, do you understand? So, hakere, ha kehe re ngala re ngala. Was is Monday morning baby?

Participant 2: hhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: Kenore you know what fuck it this shit, entleke you know what, hare tlogele masepa a manyalo a re cancelle dilotje diatena. But all along everything was going very well.

Interviewer: hhhhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: Until we come back...we went to Limpopo. Eya, ene ma Pedi baja masepa...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Mo Tebele, mo Tebele leyena a tebelela...

Interviewer: Your...your...your...your...your side of the family, as far as preparations...were you....have you been to there side?

Participant 1: I've never been to their engagement because she went there, I don't know where I was. I think when she went there, I was not there. But she came back...ene but in my head, honestly, I did not see anything wrong her being part of us because we are discussing about her wedding...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm...hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: Wa understand...what needs to be done...

Interviewer: Yes...

Participant 1: The day they arrive and all those things.

Interviewer: It's a traditional wedding?

Participant 1: It's a moorse tranditional wedding.

Interviewer: Hhhhmmhhh

Participant 1: Ka Saturday, like, we gonna do le byalwa...

Interviewer: Sunday...Sunday...Sunday at your place.

Participant 1: Ro dia byalwa ba...

Interviewer: It's still traditional.

Participant 1: Ke tranditional, haona...

Interviewer: Even on Saturday?

Participant 1: Hae Tshwane le matrimonial, manyalo ama ma gwowa, huh

Interviewer: oohhhhhhhoo ok

Participant 1: Eh, so Saturday ke...Sunday ke...

Interviewer: Friday at her place...

Participant 1: Ke traditional, ba tlisa di kgomo, membezo, and all those things.

Interviewer: Yeah...

Participant 1: Wa understand?

Interviewer: hhhmmhhh

Participant 1: So, Sunday ke...ka hae ba diya sePedi s'Pedi s'Pedi, sela sase Pedi, hotlobe hwa bewa le flaha...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: Ene those things I did not know.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: Go tlhabiwa le, tshwantje gwaba le pudi yeallwang kgomo e tlang , and nna I did not know this things, like wa understand...kedi lotse kisadi tshebeng nna gore dia...mara how they did it..

Participant 2: Anker eke setebele, you wouldn't have known that, I did not know that either.

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: You understand? So, kedilo tshagore how they said it, ene le ngwana modimo bathing, ketluhile Pitori kaka...

Participant 2:ke tlo apeya...

Participant 1: ...ke tlo apeya botsebotse mo, ke tletje pitsa fela, wa understand? And I'm not even considered to be part of yours mara letlo ja dijo tsaka.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: You understand? Ene lenna hebasang toucha ebe kere you know what...fuck...but, yeah, that's how the turning happened.

Interviewer: Your dad is...is there with the discussions?

Participant 1: Papaka, you see, my father is....my father is not the same guy...

Interviewer: But was he there when they said.....

Participant 1: No, my sister came, and I thank God...I thank God....

Interviewer: Your elder sister?

Participant 1: It happened in the kitchen....

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1:...not amongst everybody.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: Do you understand? Because I mean, it could have...it could have happened rele mo...kele coloured motho oo...nna tlo ntsha di color tse resa tswanang godi bona...

Interviewer: Eeeeng

Participant 1:..ko bathing...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: ...tse tshwantse debone kenna kele one, watseba honale le di colors tse dingweng tshwantse di bone ke wena ole one.

Interviewer: Your brother was there?

Participant 1: My brother was not there. Nele Simkghachelwa, my other cousin, and my uncle Stimela and my dad le mmago.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: But can you imagine wena you come ebe o dua fatshe ebe batho bare eh onyaka eng oo...you are not suppose to be here.

Participant 2: (laughs)

Participant 1: So, tshwantse o kuke maoto nyana ahao oboele moraho back to the house.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: Do you understand how that was going to be very bad?

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: And at the end of the day we are there seeking for their blessing, seeking for their guidance, even though abanche le masepa a cente, mara....

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1:...we must still re ncenge, wa understand?

Interviewer: Yah yah

Participant 1: Wa understand...

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 2: We were going to be told they were going to go after Sunday...

Interviewer: They were going to?

Participant 2: We going to Maputo....

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Wa understand dilo tjediso...

Participant 2: You can't be controlling everything, le controlla ke eng...

Interviewer: Ehhh

Participant 2: ...because o controlla because o ntjitje something...

Interviewer: Eh

Participant 2: And...and the truth is the reason why Thuli was not part of ko gae its because, noile kae? Noile ko something ya Mabuza...

Interviewer: hhhhmmm

Participant 2: ...and nekile Siyabuswa and on my, when I was home mama said lets go bo ramo....

Participant 1: But even ka nako yabo ramogolo...no..no baby, even leka nako yabo ramogolo, the first time lebo rangwane...ke ramogolo wagago or ke mang, ola wabo rakgolo wago dula ko kaikai? I said let me drop you and...

Participant 2: Daar nere discussa mahadi, you cannot discuss with me how much they going to charge you.

Participant 1: No baby, it was not that time, it's after renchiche mahadi rile ko ntate...

Participant 2: No, herilo ho mona a lwala, wena you did not want to be part of the meeting o nyaka go nwa.

Participant 1: But still, what I'm saying is that....

Participant 2: Its...it's not like we said don't be part of the meeting. Nerelo mocheka, he was sick, we ended up rebolela di taba tsha...tsha...tsha nteo, you did not want to be part of it, neo nyaka ho nwa byala...

Participant 1: Mara tsa bona ketsha setebele...

Participant 2: ...it's not like we chased you, we did not say don't be part of it, you just said wena nna akesaya ko Momentos...

Participant 1: But ke tsa setebele, tse Sepedi mosadi ha nyakehe... You understand....

Participant 2: But why say don't be a part of it...there is no reason you shouldn't be part of knowing what's going to happen on your own wedding. The only part rena kama tebele that you must not be part of is when we are discussing to say lebatlo charger motho bokae, that you can't be part of...

Participant 1: Mara ke tsha setebele...you see.

Participant 2:...because you'll find out after the negotiations, how much they want...

Participant 1: That's where the cultural difference is...that's where the cultural difference is...

Participant 2: No baby, your people are evil, that's what they are...

(background laughs)

Interviewer: That leads me to say....

Participant 1: Wa understada? Kege kents...rebe rebotsana gore waitsi keng, fock off maan, tlogela...are tlogele lenyalo la masepa le...lena le masepa...

Interviewer: Between the two of you?

Participant 1: rele two rebolela re tlhapa re re waitsi keng fuck this shit, are tlogele masepa a maan, cancela dilo tjarena the...are tlo dula mo re lwana lwana kadi lo tje, tlogella masepa a lena a...ake sa nyako nyalana lewena ko bathing, hare kgaohane, re nyalane mose, re nyalane. That's how...that's how the conflict happened...and again it goes to co...different cultural whatever things...Sepedi hao nyakehe...

Participant 2: But, you see...you see....

Participant 1:...and if I knew....

Participant 2:...what my point was is that you know how evil your family is nne; I know my family and I have got the responsibility to say to Thuli eh batho bako hae ba snaks, shala, or if ake sure, I have got the responsibility to inquire to say kenya tla le Thuli, is it ok...not for me to drag Thuli all the way from Gauteng only to be told...because I was very angry...saying why am I here, I'm not your cook, we are paying manne mo to cook and clean, so I can't come and do the same thing and you

cannot treat me like that's all I'm good for. I am paying for everything, so le sa tlo ngafela, cause basically ndiyang tlhanyela...

(Participant 1 and Interviewer laugh)

Interviewer:...Bayak'tlhanyale

Participant 1:...I feel like I would fall, I'm like you know what, fuck this wedding...

Interviewer: Did you approach your team and say but what is this?

Participant 1: No, we went...I went down and spoke to them and said she can..and...and I spoke with my brother to say Botho can....kare why didn't you tell me...

Participant 2: Because everybody....

Participant 1: ...why did you tell me...

Participant 2:...I had an exam on Saturday...

Participant 1:...hence i...

Participant 2: ...they waited for me to finish ka 5...

Participant 1:...I mean I waited...because nna ke potsha gore I can't discuss lenyalo...

Participant 2:...they could've left...

Participant 1:...la motho a seyo, wa undertsanda? I didn't know.

Participant 2: ...at that time they should've said haowa motho o a tswantse gore a tsamaye lerena, that's why I'm saying they are all evil.

(background laugh)

Participant 2:...because everybody knew, because they were saying ro apeyela ke mang ha dutje Pitori...

Participant 1:...o kemo said waka...

Participant 2: No, ke nonsons...

Participant 1: Di byalo...

Participant 2:...batlo bona masepa...

Participant 2:...ya staka nyana..

Interviewer: Ye wena wetshu, oya kae, buwa mo, the tape is rolling...

Participant 1: ...I need to smoke

Interviewer: (laughs) Thuli ke sduma...Right, I guess that was the main hiccup than.

Participant 1:...and a horrible on man, yah...

Interviewer: Apart from that what...what has been eh...exciting about your preparations? What are you enjoying about the whole process?

Participant 2: We not enjoying, we not enjoying anything.

Interviewer: Sepe?

Participant 2: I'm happy to see me being able to shade my spreadsheet green, but im not enjoying it (laughs)...

Interviewer: (laughs) Green meaning?

Participant 2: Green meaning I've paid for it.

Interviewer: Oh I see...ok that means good...

Participant 2: Yeah, but there's no enjoyment (laughs). I am just happy to see gore things are coming right...there's a bit of excitement looking forward to the day...

Interviewer: But guys come on...

Participant 2: I'm more anxious than excited I think.

Interviewer: hhhmm...but come on...

Participant 2: and I can't wait to...

Participant 1: haaaae, nna I'm excited ntwana, nna akitsi ka wena...

Participant 2: ah wena hao stress, ha wa tshwara ke frustration...

Participant 1: mina I'm excited, nna kemo jubilenteng...

Interviewer: Ha wa tshwara spreadsheet...(laughs).

Participant 1: No, I look at the spreadsheet and I say ok fine e rakolota mos, tshwantse re patele bo mang mang, re patele bo mang mang...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Wa understand? The...the thing is....

Interviewer: Eh

Participant 2: I'm...I'm...I'm anxious because there are still things not done, mina when something is not done I can't relax. So...

Interviewer: But I thought you guys...I thought you guys were looking forward to the families saying it's great, we approve of this marriage.

Participant 1: No, that one we...we...we...we...we are excited.

Participant 2: I'm happy for that, but that's what makes the pressure even worse, because, the thing is, you see with...with...with...our wedding is different...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 2: uuuuhhhmmm...people are not...not everyone is coming to say we are going to celebrate. Some people are saying re nyako bona...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 2: That's what makes the pressure even worse, because it's...we are alone, nobody says gore ale batle two ranta. Eh... but the pressure you can hear how they speak, heh we can't wait, you can hear gore this we can't wait is not ya...eh eh rekeya gore hehe re nyako ba bona bare ba nyaka go shata. It's...it's...that's why I'm saying gore I'm more anxious at this moment. I'm excited but there's...there's a lot of anxiety yagore I just wanna get there and enjoy the day.

Interviewer: hhhhmm

Participant 2: But right now there's that thing ya gore things must just be perfect, you can't go to somebody and say oh my God hakena this, oh God aka dira that, oh God aka dira that, you are on your own.

Participant 1: Yeah, nna I live in the moment. Ke jabulile, kemo jabulmenteng. Nna I'm on the moment.

Participant 2: No, mina ke jabula hake bona dilo di dira, and that's how I am.

Interviewer: I got you, I'm gonna leave it here for tonight. We will delve into it again more tomorrow. Ngiyabonga, ngiyabonga kakhulu.

Participant 1: Can I smoke?

Interview 9a

Interviewer: Alright...Let me take you back to a time when you said your wife's mother threatened you...(laughs)...to say what, I will even set you on fire with boiling water if I have to

Participant 1: mmmh

Interviewer: But you still were there, you were there, you never budged. There was a time there was a meeting when she came out to her family. Apparently, you were there...

Participant 1; I was there

Interviewer: ...in the house though not in the meeting room. What do I say about this, what character is this? If you could give it a name, what does it say about you?

Participant 1: Ya mang...?

Interviewer: You. In all...in the midst of the threats, in the midst of the discomfort you still stayed with your partner...

Participant 1: Resilience ntwana....

Interviewer: (laughs) Yah, resilient neh.

Participant 1: Hahona kamo kgomong, because that's what you belief, you understand...

Interviewer: hhhmmm...do you believe it or do you know it?

Participant 1: Yah, I know...ya eish English yare mora...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: That's what you know...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: Gore this is good for me...this is right for me.

Interviewer: So even in danger...

Participant 1: Even danger, ga etla e tlatla...mara o ke waka o...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: Unless yena ang potsha gore...khaba tshimbiri...you understand

Interviewer: (laughs) hhhmmm

Participant 1: In that way I don't have....ake kgone ho lwa.

Interviewer: yah

Participant 1: You know, because motho kelwang le ena hayo, mara if o hona rayema.

Interviewer: You also said, much as I was willing to live without my partner's mother when she started doing the threats, I would rather live with her, why?

Participant 1: Le mang, le mamagage?

Interviewer: Ehhh

Participant 1: Cause simple ntwana, when you...when you marry your wife, this lie that we say and say I'm marrying you and only you is a moorse lie, you are marrying into their family and their shit and she's marrying into my family and my shit...

Interviewer: mmmhhh

Participant 1: E yahore kenna lewena baby re two ke maka, we are lying to each other because eventually those people are going to come. If they are not gonna come in a form of them being here, they will, my upbringing...you understand...

Interviewer: mmmhhh

Participant 1: Will always push us into that, wang kwishisha.

Interviewer: In what way?

Participant 1: In a simple sense ya gore dilo txe di nnyane, nna, I come from...you know...she's expected to come home once in 6 months, 3 months, whatever, you understand...

Interviewer: mmmhhh

Participant 1: Ene ha fitlha kwale o tshwantse a tjokume

Interviewer: Ehhhh

Participant 1: A fitshe kele tshatshi, a tshatse di sunscreen, wa understanda...

Interviewer: (laughs) Hhhmmm

Participant 1: Ene as much as nkadula le ene mo kae dia tleva and say no my wife won't do shit...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: But when she gets home it's going to happen...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: Eya, I'm gonna say baby ke tshwere ke tlala. My sister will say we can't cook for you while your wife is here.

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You understand...

Interviewer: Are you going to help her cook when you are at your house?

Participant 1: Of cause, even when we home, we were home this weekend. I wash the dishes, ka phumula mola, I clean the fridge, you know...

Interviewer: Won't your folks think otherwise?

Participant 1: No they won't.

Interviewer: Oh ok.

Participant 1: Baby I washed the fridge...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2: (laughs)

Participant 1: Modimo a be le wena

Participant 2: otlatswitswe sekotlelo, sekghafthin sako fridgeng...

Participant 1: Se e bodile papao a tlogetse fridge e timilleng...

Participant 2: Papao...

Interviewer: (laughs).

Participant 2: Papaka o gwile

Interviewer: (laughs) eh

Participant 1: But for me, and I'm being very serious, ene re tlohele pretence...

Interviewer: ehhh

Participant 1: I will expect my wife to play a wife role. The role that she's playing in my house neh, I would expect her to do it when we get home...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1:period.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: Eh

Interviewer: With your help of cause?

Participant 1: Of cause...

Interviewer: Alright.

(Whispers from participant 1 and participant 2)

Interviewer: You also said that when...when...I guess is both your folks from your family's sides, when they were still dealing with the fact that you guys are dating and you guys are a union and you are serious about the relationship...you said hhhmmm...whilst they are dealing with whether they accept us or not lets protect each other, what does that say about you?

Participant 1: About who?

Interviewer: You, you saying we are not going to wait for them, let them do what they want to do about us....

Participant 1: I mean, like I'm saying, as...as...I don't like to use the word head of the house, because...

Interviewer: No..no...no...I'm asking about the character that you showed....

Participant 1: The character ya gore I love her and I need to protect her in front of my family, for me, from her family, you know, because we never know what their intentions are...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: You know...uuuuhhhmmmm

Interviewer: Somebody looking outside seeing you do that, what would they say?

Participant 2: You protective...

Participant 1: I'm very protective of my wife.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: Extremely protective.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: I try...

(Laughter from everyone)

Interviewer: Good, good...hnhmmmm...let me introduce the topic of tomorrow, remember that tomorrow I'm going to come and we having our final interview neh.

Participant 1&2: hnhmmmm

Interviewer: Wording preparations, the good thing about this research is that it is very active, it is happening while your wedding is happening.

Participant 2: Yoh...yoh...(laughs).

Participant 1: You know that we reflected about one year...

Participant 2: Longitudinal (laughs).

Interviewer: hnhmm...hnhmmmm

Participant 1: It's hectic...

Interviewer: What's hectic about the preparations?

Participant 1: It was going very well, I'm gonna be very honest with you. It was going very well until we went home.

Interviewer: Home where?

Participant 1: Limpopo, last week.

Interviewer: Oh ok

Participant 2: (laughs)...Sunday.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Yah, Sunday...

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: You understand...When never had like...People started asking are you fighting, kere no we not...

Interviewer: hnhmmmm

Participant 1:...until Sunday when I was like fuck hare tlohele masepa a.

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Leave this shit.

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: ...We not doing this kak.

Interviewer: (laughs) What happened?

Participant 1: Because my family...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 2:...are bullies.

Participant 1: Extremely...

Participant 2: That's what they are.

Participant 1: My family are very bullies...and...and....and this is what happened...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: We'll just brief it up a bit. I did not know how the cultural procedure are. Nna I took my wife, we went home. When we went home, hare fitlha daar, we set than they started making food for everybody and when we started the meeting, I'm like baby come, lets go sit down and engage and discuss the procedurals, and they were like never. This one, in our meeting, no...

Participant 2: (laughs)

Participant 1:...she's not allowed. You understand?

Interviewer: hhmmm

Participant 1: You get what I'm saying. And...and...and, I'm trying to tell my sister but she knows, I mean this is her, she must be part of this. Are no...no...not here, onyakang mo, haa tshwanelo...she was not even supposed to come.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: You understand? That's why kere bo bully ba kaba Mashaba bagore we are gonna do things our way. And I'm like, in my head, why didn't they tell me cause they knew that I was coming with her...

Interviewer: Ehhhhh

Participant 1:...They were suppose to say Thuli mothoo are mo nyake oo geobolelwa dilo tsahaba Mashaba.

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: As much as lena le dlalane for 6yeasr legally, she's not yet accepted in the clan, do you understand? So, hakere, ha kehe re ngala re ngala. Was is Monday morning baby?

Participant 2: hhhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: Kenore you know what fuck it this shit, entleke you know what, hare tlogele masepa a a manyalo a re cancelle dilotje diatena. But all along everything was going very well.

Interviewer: hhhhhhmmmmmm

Participant 1: Until we come back...we went to Limpopo. Eya, ene ma Pedi baja masepa...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Mo Tebele, mo Tebele leyena a tebelela...

Interviewer: Your...your...your...your....your side of the family, as far as preparations...were you....have you been to there side?

Participant 1: I've never been to their engagement because she went there, I don't know where I was. I think when she went there, I was not there. But she came back...ene but in my head, honestly, I did not see anything wrong her being part of us because we are discussing about her wedding...

Interviewer: hhhmmmm...hhhhhmmmm

Participant 1: Wa understand...what needs to be done...

Interviewer: Yes...

Participant 1: The day they arrive and all those things.

Interviewer: It's a traditional wedding?

Participant 1: It's a moorse tranditional wedding.

Interviewer: Hhhhmmhhh

Participant 1: Ka Saturday, like, we gonna do le byalwa...

Interviewer: Sunday...Sunday...Sunday at your place.

Participant 1: Ro dia byalwa ba...

Interviewer: It's still traditional.

Participant 1: Ke tranditional, haona...

Interviewer: Even on Saturday?

Participant 1: Hae Tshwane le matrimonial, manyalo ama ma gwowa, huh

Interviewer: oohhhhhhhoo ok

Participant 1: Eh, so Saturday ke...Sunday ke...

Interviewer: Friday at her place...

Participant 1: Ke traditional, ba tlisa di kgomo, membezo, and all those things.

Interviewer: Yeah...

Participant 1: Wa understand?

Interviewer: hhhmmhhh

Participant 1: So, Sunday ke...ka hae ba diya sePedi s'Pedi s'Pedi, sela sase Pedi, hotlobe hwa bewa le flaha...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 1: Ene those things I did not know.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: Go tlhabiwa le, tshwantje gwaba le pudi yeallwang kgomo e tlang , and nna I did not know this things, like wa understand....kedi lotse kisadi tshebeng nna gore dia...mara how they did it..

Participant 2: Anker eke setebele, you wouldn't have known that, I did not know that either.

Interviewer: hhhmmmm

Participant 1: You understand? So, kedilo tshagore how they said it, ene le ngwana modimo bathing, ketluhile Pitori kaka...

Participant 2:ke tlo apeya...

Participant 1: ...ke tlo apeya botsebotse mo, ke tletje pitsa fela, wa understand? And I'm not even considered to be part of yours mara letlo ja dijo tsaka.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: You understand? Ene lenna hebasang toucha ebe kere you know what...fuck...but, yeah, that's how the turning happened.

Interviewer: Your dad is...is there with the discussions?

Participant 1: Papaka, you see, my father is....my father is not the same guy...

Interviewer: But was he there when they said.....

Participant 1: No, my sister came, and I thank God...I thank God....

Interviewer: Your elder sister?

Participant 1: It happened in the kitchen....

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1:...not amongst everybody.

Interviewer: ok

Participant 1: Do you understand? Because I mean, it could have...it could have happened rele mo...kele coloured motho oo...nna tlo ntsha di color tse resa tswanang godi bona...

Interviewer: Eeeeng

Participant 1:..ko bathing...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: ...tse tshwantse debone kenna kele one, watseba honale le di colors tse dingweng tshwantse di bone ke wena ole one.

Interviewer: Your brother was there?

Participant 1: My brother was not there. Nele Simkghachelwa, my other cousin, and my uncle Stimela and my dad le mmago.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmmm

Participant 1: But can you imagine wena you come ebe o dua fatshe ebe batho bare eh onyaka eng oo...you are not suppose to be here.

Participant 2: (laughs)

Participant 1: So, tshwantse o kuke maoto nyana ahao oboele moraho back to the house.

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: Do you understand how that was going to be very bad?

Interviewer: hhhhmmmm

Participant 1: And at the end of the day we are there seeking for their blessing, seeking for their guidance, even though abanche le masepa a cente, mara....

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1:...we must still re ncenge, wa understand?

Interviewer: Yah yah

Participant 1: Wa understand...

Interviewer: Yah

Participant 2: We were going to be told they were going to go after Sunday...

Interviewer: They were going to?

Participant 2: We going to Maputo....

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Wa understand dilo tjediso...

Participant 2: You can't be controlling everything, le controlla ke eng...

Interviewer: Ehhh

Participant 2: ...because o controlla because o ntjitje something...

Interviewer: Eh

Participant 2: And...and the truth is the reason why Thuli was not part of ko gae its because, noile kae? Noile ko something ya Mabuza...

Interviewer: hhhhmmm

Participant 2: ...and nekile Siyabuswa and on my, when I was home mama said lets go bo ramo....

Participant 1: But even ka nako yabo ramogolo...no..no baby, even leka nako yabo ramogolo, the first time lebo rangwane...ke ramogolo wagago or ke mang, ola wabo rakgolo wago dula ko kaikai? I said let me drop you and...

Participant 2: Daar nere discussa mahadi, you cannot discuss with me how much they going to charge you.

Participant 1: No baby, it was not that time, it's after renchiche mahadi rile ko ntate...

Participant 2: No, herilo ho mona a lwala, wena you did not want to be part of the meeting o nyaka go nwa.

Participant 1: But still, what I'm saying is that....

Participant 2: Its...it's not like we said don't be part of the meeting. Nerelo mocheka, he was sick, we ended up rebolela di taba tsha...tsha...tsha nteo, you did not want to be part of it, neo nyaka ho nwa byala...

Participant 1: Mara tsa bona ketsha setebele...

Participant 2: ...it's not like we chased you, we did not say don't be part of it, you just said wena nna akesaya ko Momentos...

Participant 1: But ke tsa setebele, tse Sepedi mosadi ha nyakehe... You understand....

Participant 2: But why say don't be a part of it...there is no reason you shouldn't be part of knowing what's going to happen on your own wedding. The only part rena kama tebele that you must not be part of is when we are discussing to say lebatlo charger motho bokae, that you can't be part of...

Participant 1: Mara ke tsha setebele...you see.

Participant 2:...because you'll find out after the negotiations, how much they want...

Participant 1: That's where the cultural difference is...that's where the cultural difference is...

Participant 2: No baby, your people are evil, that's what they are...

(background laughs)

Interviewer: That leads me to say....

Participant 1: Wa understada? Kege kents...rebe rebotsana gore waitisi keng, fock off maan, tlogela...are tlogele lenyalo la masepa le...lena le masepa...

Interviewer: Between the two of you?

Participant 1: rele two rebolela re tlhapa re re waitisi keng fuck this shit, are tlogele masepa a maan, cancela dilo tjarena the...are tlo dula mo re lwana lwana kadi lo tje, tlogella masepa a lena a...ake sa nyako nyalana lewena ko bathing, hare kgaohane, re nyalane mose, re nyalane. That's how...that's how the conflict happened...and again it goes to co...different cultural whatever things...Sepedi hao nyakehe...

Participant 2: But, you see...you see....

Participant 1:...and if I knew....

Participant 2:...what my point was is that you know how evil your family is nne; I know my family and I have got the responsibility to say to Thuli eh batho bako hae ba snaks, shala, or if ake sure, I have got the responsibility to inquire to say kenyaiko tla le Thuli, is it ok...not for me to drag Thuli all the way from Gauteng only to be told...because I was very angry...saying why am I here, I'm not your cook, we are paying manne mo to cook and clean, so I can't come and do the same thing and you

cannot treat me like that's all I'm good for. I am paying for everything, so le sa tlo ngafela, cause basically ndiyang tlhanyela...

(Participant 1 and Interviewer laugh)

Interviewer:...Bayak'tlhanyale

Participant 1:...I feel like I would fall, I'm like you know what, fuck this wedding...

Interviewer: Did you approach your team and say but what is this?

Participant 1: No, we went...I went down and spoke to them and said she can..and...and I spoke with my brother to say Botho can....kare why didn't you tell me...

Participant 2: Because everybody....

Participant 1: ...why did you tell me...

Participant 2:...I had an exam on Saturday...

Participant 1:...hence i...

Participant 2: ...they waited for me to finish ka 5...

Participant 1:...I mean I waited...because nna ke potsha gore I can't discuss lenyalo...

Participant 2:...they could've left...

Participant 1:...la motho a seyo, wa undertsanda? I didn't know.

Participant 2: ...at that time they should've said haowa motho o a tswantse gore a tsamaye lerena, that's why I'm saying they are all evil.

(background laugh)

Participant 2:...because everybody knew, because they were saying ro apeyela ke mang ha dutje Pitori...

Participant 1:...o kemo said waka...

Participant 2: No, ke nonsons...

Participant 1: Di byalo...

Participant 2:...batlo bona masepa...

Participant 2:...ya staka nyana..

Interviewer: Ye wena wetshu, oya kae, buwa mo, the tape is rolling...

Participant 1: ...I need to smoke

Interviewer: (laughs) Thuli ke sduma...Right, I guess that was the main hiccup than.

Participant 1:...and a horrible on man, yah...

Interviewer: Apart from that what...what has been eh...exciting about your preparations? What are you enjoying about the whole process?

Participant 2: We not enjoying, we not enjoying anything.

Interviewer: Sepe?

Participant 2: I'm happy to see me being able to shade my spreadsheet green, but im not enjoying it (laughs)...

Interviewer: (laughs) Green meaning?

Participant 2: Green meaning I've paid for it.

Interviewer: Oh I see...ok that means good...

Participant 2: Yeah, but there's no enjoyment (laughs). I am just happy to see gore things are coming right...there's a bit of excitement looking forward to the day...

Interviewer: But guys come on...

Participant 2: I'm more anxious than excited I think.

Interviewer: hhhhmm...but come on...

Participant 2: and I can't wait to...

Participant 1: haaaae, nna I'm excited ntwana, nna akitsi ka wena...

Participant 2: ah wena hao stress, ha wa tshwara ke frustration...

Participant 1: mina I'm excited, nna kemo jubilenteng...

Interviewer: Ha wa tshwara spreadsheet...(laughs).

Participant 1: No, I look at the spreadsheet and I say ok fine e rakolota mos, tshwantse re patele bo mang mang, re patele bo mang mang...

Interviewer: (laughs)

Participant 1: Wa understand? The...the thing is....

Interviewer: Eh

Participant 2: I'm...I'm...I'm anxious because there are still things not done, mina when something is not done I can't relax. So...

Interviewer: But I thought you guys...I thought you guys were looking forward to the families saying it's great, we approve of this marriage.

Participant 1: No, that one we...we...we...we...we are excited.

Participant 2: I'm happy for that, but that's what makes the pressure even worse, because, the thing is, you see with...with...with...our wedding is different...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 2: uuuuhhhmmm...people are not...not everyone is coming to say we are going to celebrate. Some people are saying re nyako bona...

Interviewer: hhhmmm

Participant 2: That's what makes the pressure even worse, because it's...we are alone, nobody says gore ale batle two ranta. Eh... but the pressure you can hear how they speak, heh we can't wait, you can hear gore this we can't wait is not ya...eh eh rekeya gore hehe re nyako ba bona bare ba nyaka go shata. It's...it's...that's why I'm saying gore I'm more anxious at this moment. I'm excited but there's...there's a lot of anxiety yagore I just wanna get there and enjoy the day.

Interviewer: hhhhmm

Participant 2: But right now there's that thing ya gore things must just be perfect, you can't go to somebody and say oh my God hakena this, oh God aka dira that, oh God aka dira that, you are on your own.

Participant 1: Yeah, nna I live in the moment. Ke jabulile, kemo jabulmenteng. Nna I'm on the moment.

Participant 2: No, mina ke jabula hake bona dilo di dira, and that's how I am.

Interviewer: I got you, I'm gonna leave it here for tonight. We will delve into it again more tomorrow. Ngiyabonga, ngiyabonga kakhulu.

Participant 1: Can I smoke?

Interview 10

Interviewer: Re a felletsa akere. We are touching up. Has there been enough activism in the country? After that activism people have been doing their own thing, what did you mean you mean by that wena Thuli?

Participant 1: Ya. Its like HIV, there is so much activism but there is still a stigma. That is why I am saying we are just stuck in our own way of thinking. There is something that is so difficult to change, it's the believe and how you were socialised. As a person it will take everything in you to make a 360-degree change. As much as people will be comfortable with us lesbian, you will find that they will have a problem with gay people. Like I know my brother is comfortable with me but every time he sees bashimane, he is like ohk. Bo Steve are doing so much with chapter 23 but its still not enough. I mean we do pride. Its gonna take a while until people come around. I mean by boys are gay phobia if there is such a word. I man they are comfortable with lesbians but have a problem with gays. They are uncomfortable around male homosexuals. I mean we have tried to tell them that this is normal. I mean the late Lebo will and engage.

Interviewer: I remember talking to them saying that if I would have a child who is a boy, I wouldn't want them to be gay, if it's a girl child then its fine.

Participant 1: Yes, and that will not be socialisation from home.

Participant 2: I thnk it has to do with outside influence because its basically straight men do not want to be around gay men because there is that assumption that otloreferea.

Interviewer: And you also mentioned something about marrying the law with what, people are not marrying the law with what?

Participant 1: Oh yes, it's a law. It seems that gay marriage is legal, but we still fight trying to negotiate our way through. Because our wedding kana ba e bitsang, ke civil?

Participant 2: Ya.

Participant 1: Gaetshwane.

Interviewer: Its simple union, I think.

Participant 2: The other one is in the marriage Act, I think. But we actually have a lot of acts that regulate marriages. In fact, we have got many amendments, because we have the initial one that spoke to one ma one woman.

Interviewer: Correct.

Participant 2: And later on, it was discovered that customary marriage was not recognised, and they said let us amend the law. now there is this amendment on same sex marriages. There is another amendment that was mentioned on radio that needs to also come.

Interviewer: What needs to come?

Participant 2: There is another amendment, I'll remember it, but there is another proposed amendment.

Interviewer: is that not progress.

Participant 1: It is progress, but still. You see change in the mind of a person to see things, to normalise us. Gore whether lesbian, gay, transgender, its gonna take a while. It's the same with racial discrimination, there is a push.

Interviewer: While we are on marriages, I can't remember between the two of you who said... huh, or maybe the who of you both said it, that it is difficult to leave a marriage that for people who are cohabiting. Why do you think so?

Participant 2: That was me, that is probably sound like me. That is my opinion. When you not committed to something you can just up and leave, but when you are committed to marriage you do not just up and leave, divorce is a process, especially when you marrying COB, it takes a long time, you don't just decide that I am getting a divorce.

Interviewer: So, I could take it that it is one of your values, remember I old you something about values? Your marriage values, your relationship values?

Participant 2: Ya.

Interviewer: Could you say that marriage wise you don't entertain very easily the thought of just up and going.

Participant 2: It's actually one of my values because I always told myself that when I get married, I want to do it once. So, I had to think it through and be sure.

Interviewer: Challenges and excitement of parenting.

Participant 2: we have got a blended family. Truth of the matter is as much as you want to treat children like their yours but there is always that thing of you are not my biological mother.

Interviewer: Yes.

Participant 2: Especially with children you found in their teens, those are not children, they not their parents, they know who they come from. So, it's difficult, especially when it comes to discipline. Thina we believe that you spare the root you spoil the child, so we spank our children. With your own child you can just do it and not be apologetic about and no think twice, but with somebody else's child you take longer to do it because you do not want to be seen as punishing them because they are not yours. So that has been one of the bigger challenges. There is that inner conflict. Because our children do visit our families are, they talk about us, so they always solicit them to agree with them, so there is always those challenges when it comes to blended families. But I have leaned to talk firm, be strict and use discipline than your corporal punishment.

Interviewer: The highs of it.

Participant 2: its beautiful because the truth of it is you are never ready for to raise children. But have always wanted to give one child a good life. In fact, when i was young I always wanted three children and to adopt one. So, I always had that space in my heart. When I see them achieving there is no greater reward because I know I have done something positive to someone's life.

Interviewer: Ya.

Participant 1: For me I was raised in a blended family anyway. So, this for me was never a transition as such. I do not remember in my life being raised as just me and by brothers. There is always a cousin, an aunt a sister. So, for me there has never been an issue. The challenge for me was that I find it difficult to accommodate everybody. That for me was not easy. But looking at the circumstances we facing, we were the better option for the kids, I mean we tried to leave one in Limpopo, but we could see the behaviour change there this one if we leave him in this place for the next four years, we will not say anything to him. So, it was all those things, I was for me to accept those things. Discipline wise mina I moor, I do not have a problem with that. The exciting part is that kids are kids, they come here and talk about these witty things, like small things. You come back home they have cooked. Of course at

time they will mess you up. But it doesn't get better you coming home and getting a hug. Those re the highs. When they discover themselves, they are more chilled, and we like oh how nice.

Interviewer: Still on the kids. Botho you said people at work talk especially when I asked you about having kids where you have to carry via IVF, but people at work say IVF kids are hand manufactured. (laughter). What do you think will happen to that child when they hear that they have been conceived that way and they hear that, how are you going to manoeuvre around that?

Participant 2: the truth of the matter is with me I have to accept that first. You see when you have accepted something you don't care what others say. Then you need to seat down with your kids from a very early age before they hear it from others. In our black communities IVF, surrogacy are not common things and the married couples that do it, they hide it, because they are children that are born out of IVF, surrogacy is unheard of. So, there is still going to be a lot of education you will need to do to your own child. But you accept that I want to have children this way, then you will be able to handle anything coming your way. I think for me the biggest problem for me even now is accepting that stigma. It's like accepting the stigma of homosexuality, you know when say this is who I am I don't care what you think of me. Even with you IVF or surrogacy, we have been talking about it for years, we just need to accept it.

Participant 1: Just to add on what you are saying, I think its an issue of the mind you know. The kids that are conceived naturally, they go to the same process as others, its just that there is a penis involve, but there is manufacturing either way. If you look at the term manufacturing.

Participant 2: But the term manufacturing is more, manufacturing is an act you do in order to produce something.

Participant 1: Thank you.

Participant 2: But when you look at many African people having children, they many have not planned it.

Participant 1: Fair enough.

Participant 2: if after two of marriage and you find yourself pregnant, there are very few people who will say I have planned my children. Most of them woke up one day and they were pregnant.

Participant 1: But then does that mean that is not manufacturing?

Participant 2: No, you were having sex and you conceived, you did not go out and say this is what I am doing. Because with IVF you even determine the gender of the child.

Participant: That to me is options but still manufacturing. Because the child is the child, how they were brought in to the world has got nothing to do with anything.

Interviewer: I believe that is also what you teach your child?

Participant 1: Yes, I will tell them dude I had to go through stuff for you to be here.

Participant1: The trick is you have to tell your child before they hear it from somebody else.

Participant 2: Even if they do hear it from somebody else.

Interviewer: No but I also understand what Botho is saying, when they hear it from somebody else, that person will be careless when on the delivery of the message. Because the context for our black brothers and sisters out there is that this is not the way to go about it. So, when they deliver the message it might not land sensitively in the ear of the child and they might just put it that there is absolutely everything wrong with it.

Participant 2: And you know how reckless we can be with other parents. You find that we discussing with other people how this child was a product of handwork and the child is seating hear while having this conversation and the other day the other one will say ahh your handwork. And the child start thinking hand work? how am I handwork. But when you make sure that they are the right age to understand what you tell them, let them hear it from you.

Interviewer: I am with you. Did you get that Thuli.

Participant 1: No, I did, I understand her side kuthi there is that sensitivity.

Interviewer: I also understand your part that you need to tell your child that there is nothing wrong with it, gore ses golo ke bophelo. That we gave you a fair chance of life and we gave ourselves a fair chance of having you.

Participant 1: And we wanted you that much. Others for them it was a matter of it happened. For you we had to plan, that's how much we wanted you here.

Interviewer: You are not an accident of we are married.

Participant 1: No, it was a planned thing. It's like an adopted child, it's a conscious decision that I want you, how privileged is that.

Interviewer: No, I like that but I understand both side and are very valid and also its an attitude thing causes for you two to entertain the thought of having a child via IFV, adoption, however way you want, says that you are ready. You are a fertile soil for such an upbringing of life and you can handle it with care. Because like you said it Botho you first much be able to handle as a parent and be Ok with it.

Participant: 2: Ya.

Interviewer: Ok I am going to the lobola part. It's the same sex marriage, what was the importance of the lobola for you guys of cause and then for the people? How did it go, how did they feel? For example, you said paying lobola is easy, what do you mean?

Participant 1: For an issue of recognition more than anything else. For people to acknowledge that this is my wife. That we are married, when I come home, I don't have to say sis Botho when they introduce her. She s my wife. So, for me we were doing it or that. That was the issue. I am not saying gore if we did not pay the lobola people would not acknowledge the marriage but us that is what it meant. Am I right Botho?

Participant 2: It made sense to do the right thing, I mean we are African. For two families to come together one must pay lobola and one must receive lobola. That's how we have been raised. Its been done that way, so it can be understood that the Mabuzas as Koning are one.

Interviewer: It had nothing to do with heterosexuals and homosexuals. Clear. You also mentioned to help reconcile yourself with your sexuality you read a lot. What were you reading, how did you read I and how did it impact you? What message did you get that sat well with you?

Participant 2: Some awareness you know, because a lot of times we not only struggling with sexuality but w struggling with self. You understand. You have not really found the ideal self of Thuli. Once Thuli finds herself then it becomes easy for Thuli to leave whether it be homosexual; or whatever, but to be herself, and the books that I read, Napolian Healer is another one that I enjoyed. These books helped me channel myself to say Thuli. And another book that people find very controversial is the bible you know. When you discover the love of God, when you discover who you are in this massive universe, you really got to realise that this issue is real. But your real purpose is to hear.

Interviewer: Depriving LGBT people of their human rights, can it be justified on the basis of religion, culture or tradition?

Participant 1: No, it can't.

Interviewer: Why not?

Participant 1: I want to start with the religion part, going back to the bible. A lot of people will say it is controversial book, but God gave us free will to be you understand and the image of God is diverse its not men nor woman. So, for me to say I want to deprive you of who you are is literally me poisoning everything which leads to depressed and after that suicide. What kinds of cuts are we perpetuating as people? what, to deprive someone to become who you are? Because it's a journey, remo tseleng of self-discovery all of us, straight or not straight. Allow people to be comfortable with who they are and also the opportunity to access their freewill.

Interviewer: I was asking Botho gore Depriving LGBT people of their human rights, can it be justified on the basis of religion, culture or tradition?

Participant 2: How do we get deprived our rights?

Interviewer: How does people justify the fact that LGBTI people are not human enough you know. Is it ok to even do that? Or culture.

Participant 2: the thing is... ehh Ill just marry this two things culture and religion, ehh our culture as people limited to what we are expose to. A lot of times when we not exposed as people, we then say its not part of our culture because its things we are not exposed to, because exposure in life depends on where you are in life as well.

Interviewer: For sure.

Participant 2: That's why in fact people in the rural take long with acceptance and tolerate because they have been exposed to a small number of people who have been living according to the law of the area, as opposed to people living in the cities are actually living a free life. Religion as well also depends on exposure and level of life. When you were young. When I was young, I did not understand that the scriptures in the bible have basis. Uhm scriptures were not just written, there was a message that was being told to a particular group at a time. A lot of times we just read the verse, we do not get the history, who was it told to. So yes, that has been used vele to suppress the LGBTI community. Cause region says its wrong, society says its wrong and religion says its wrong. Mainly because of exposure and level of life.

Interviewer: Mmm, last question, are there any behavioural consequences of political tolerance because you mentioned that sometimes its just being tolerated. Tolerating the LGBTI, does it come with consequences that are rude or negative or bad or not?

Participant 2: South Africa as a country, because we have tolerated a lot of things, we have to leave with the consequences of our tolerance. Because you look at, let us not even speak of homosexuals, let us speak of racism, because we have tolerated a lot of things, we are forced to leave with the consequences of what we tolerated.

Interviewer: What are those consequences?

Participant 2: Correctional rape and all those. But it's because we tolerate all this thing. We speak about it because something has happened, but there is no law that speak to, if you assault a person because of their sexuality there is going to this punishment. There is just the law that speaks to rape in general. But corrective rape is not just rape. Corrective rape is me having to rape you because I want you to feel this thing that you say you do not want. So that you come right in your head to say this thing of homosexuality does not exists, this thing that iv been running away from all this time s actually nice. Nothing is bring said about that. When we are amending laws, nothing is being said that speaks directly to things that are being done to homosexuals, its just general laws and regulations. You see during apartheid the law were clear about what will happen bantu if they did one two three, they were not apologetic about it. Right now, there is hate speech, there is no law that' says what happens if a white person calls me Kaffir. So hence I am saying that as a country we tolerate a lot of things and we are force to live with them every day.

Participant 1: Ke laka leo.

Interviewer: (Laughter). Are ke laka leo. Ba gaetsho I can't thank you enough. Re kwele, re tletse tsebe.