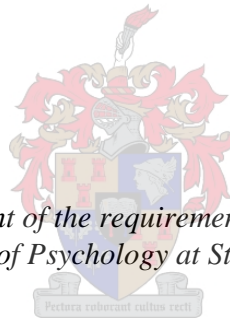


**A description of the lived experiences of young adults who
grew up in religiously heterogeneous households**

by
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ABSTRACT

In this study, religiously heterogeneous households refer to households where the parents practice entirely different religions. These households are becoming more common and whilst the literature focusses on what this means for the married couple in terms of marital satisfaction, marital conflict and religious participation it largely neglects the influence that growing up in such a household may have on the child. This poses a potential problem in the therapeutic setting because there is no existing knowledge to work with. This study sought to narrow the gap in the literature by describing the lived experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households. Through the use of snowball sampling, six young adults (aged 18-24) who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households agreed to be interviewed for this study. Of the participants four were male and the remaining two were female. The semi-structured interview yielded many reports of the participant's experiences growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. These experiences have been grouped into three types of themes. The themes include: (1) over-arching themes which deals with issues such as making sense of religion, making the decision as to which religion to affiliate with and idealizing the religiously homogeneous household whilst valuing the lessons gained from the religiously heterogeneous household; (2) an explicit theme which discusses how the experiences that the participants report about their households can be used to make tentative inferences about religiously heterogeneous marriages and divorce and; (3) peripheral themes include discussions about feeling judged and ostracised, negotiating a religiously heterogeneous background outside of the immediate family, tolerance and the value of a name. An Ecological Model is employed in the interpretation of these findings. Finally, the limitations and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Keywords: lived experiences, religiously heterogeneous, religiously homogeneous

Opsomming

In hierdie studie verwys godsdienstige heterogene huishoudings na huishoudings waar die ouers aan heeltemal verskillende godsdienste behoort. Hierdie tipe huishoudings word al hoe meer algemeen en alhoewel die literatuur fokus op wat dit beteken vir die getroude paartjie in terme van huweliks tevredenheid, huweliks konflik en godsdienstige deelname, versuim dit om te kyk na die invloed wat dit het op die kind wat groot word in sulke huishouding. Dit hou 'n potensiële probleem vir die terapeuties omgewing in, want daar is geen bestaande kennis om mee te werk nie. Hierdie studie poog om die gaping in die literatuur kleiner te maak, deur die beleefde ervaringe van jong volwassenes wat groot geword het in 'n godsdienstige heterogene huishouding te beskryf. Deur gebruik te maak van sneeubalsteekproefneming, het ses jong volwassenes (tussen die ouderdomme van 18-24), wat groot geword het in godsdienstige heterogene huishoudings, ingestem om deel te neem aan 'n onderhoud vir hierdie studie. Vier van die deelnemers was manlik en die oorblywende twee was vroulik. Die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude het verskeie verslae gelewer van die deelnemers se ondervindinge van hoe dit was om groot te word in 'n godsdienstige heterogene huishouding. Hierdie ondervindinge word in drie tipes temas gegroepeer. Die temas sluit in: (1) oorkoepelende temas wat te doen het met kwessies soos om sin te maak van godsdiens, die keuse te maak oor watter godsdiens om te volg en om die godsdienstige homogene huishouding te idealiseer, terwyl jy die lesse waardeer wat jy gekry het deur die ervaring van in 'n godsdienstige heterogene huishouding groot te word; (2) 'n uitdruklike tema wat kyk na hoe die ervaringe wat die deelnemers geraporteer het oor hulle huishoudings gebruik kan word om tentatiewe gevolgtrekkings te maak oor godsdienstige heterogene huwelike en egskeiding en; (3) perifere temas sluit in besprekings oor om geoordeel en uitgesluit te word, om 'n godsdienstige heterogene agtergrond buite die onmiddellike familie

te onderhandel, verdraagsaamheid en die waarde van 'n naam. 'n Ekologiese model word gebruik in die interpretasie van hierdie bevindinge. Ten slotte, is die beperkings en aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing bespreek.

Sleutelwoorde: beleefde ervaringe, godsdienstig heterogene, godsdienstig homogene

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem statement

Religion is argued to play a unique and important role in the life of the individual (Ellison, 1991). Religion is seen to be so important that historically it has been deemed a vital factor to consider in marital partner choice (Kalmijn, 1991). However, the literature broadly suggests that religious intermarriage and religiously heterogeneous families are becoming more common (McCutcheon, 1988; Williams & Lawler, 2001). Meanwhile, the greater proportion of the literature relating to the role of religion in the family assumes the family to have a common religion where in reality this is increasingly not the case.

As a result there is a gap in the literature to account for the possible effect that religious heterogeneity may have on the married couple and by extension the experiences the children have growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. A study that best approximates the aim of this study was conducted by Petts and Knoester (2007) which investigated how parents' religious heterogeneity influences children's well-being. The author's conceptualised well-being as self-esteem, life satisfaction, academic performance, marijuana use and underage drinking. These aspects of well-being were measured quantitatively. Marital conflict, religious participation and time spent with children (in non-religious activities) were seen as moderating variables. This study yielded useful results but it says very little about the phenomenon on an individual and interpersonal level or the experiences the child may have and how this may influence them.

It might therefore be useful to investigate the role of religion in families where there are two dominant religions so as to narrow this gap and offer insight into the potential challenges and benefits that may arise for the children who grow up in these families. I would

thus like to qualitatively explore the experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous families.

Essentially, the intention of this study is to explore what effect growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household has on the children growing up in such households. The research aim is thus to use qualitative methods to describe the lived experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households and to decipher the potential challenges and benefits the situation may hold.

1.2 Rationale of the study

This gap in the literature and potential value these findings might to the therapeutic environment add gave rise to this study. This study therefore aims to address the gap in the literature. My personal interest in religiously heterogeneous households was strongly influenced by the fact that I grew up in such a situation. I am aware that my personal experiences may bias my perspective but these experiences will benefit me in terms of building rapport with my participants and perhaps in understanding the feelings they are trying to describe.

The findings I produced in this study could hold many benefits for the therapeutic environment. It could shed much needed light on a phenomenon that is quickly becoming more relevant. The influence that growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household may have on the individual could require an understanding and approach that the literature currently does not afford mental health professionals.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The introductory chapter explains the issue that this study seeks to address, the motivation behind it, the potential benefits it may give rise to and the structure of the chapters to come. Chapter two discusses the existing literature surrounding the issue in order to sketch a basic picture of this aspect of psychology so as to prime an understanding of the research question and also to defend the need for this research. The extant literature is then drawn on in the results and discussion chapter (chapter four) in an attempt to locate and make sense of the findings. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1977) was employed as the theoretical framework of this study. It provides this study with a blueprint for understanding the experiences of the participants.

Chapter three, the methodology, puts forth the research aims of the study and discusses the various qualitative methods that were employed to meet these research aims. This chapter explains that a qualitative approach was employed in order to draw experiences and themes that were valid in terms of the research question. This is followed by an explanation of the processes and methods involved in collecting and analysing the data. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of the ethical issues involved in this process as well as a reflexive analysis.

Chapter four, the results and discussion section, puts forth the finding of this study. These findings are then linked to the extant literature and discussed in terms of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1977). This chapter essentially transforms a wide range of reported experiences into a palatable set of themes that are often inter-linked and overlap. Chapter five, concludes whether the findings met the research aims and evaluates the contributions of the study as a whole. This chapter ends with a discussion of the limitations and potential value of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review commences with a section that defines religion and spirituality. This is followed by a discussion of the international and South African religious landscape. A more detailed discussion of the religions of South Africa is then provided. The changing trends in marriage patterns over time and the influence of religion on marital partner choice are then discussed. This is followed by discussions of the role of religion in society, the life of the individual and the life of the religiously homogeneous family. Finally the discussion is steered towards the role of religion in the religiously heterogeneous family so as to ascertain the implications it may hold for children growing up in these families.

2.1 Defining religion and spirituality

“Any definition of religion is likely to be satisfactory only to its author” (Yinger, 1967, p.18)

In an attempt to define religion it becomes clear that no single definition will ever be inclusive and exclusive enough to satisfy everyone. Therefore, trying to define religion (however useful this may be for research and the development of theories) almost misses the point of religion itself. Religion is a subjective experience that needs to be treated as such if it is to be understood. A more valuable endeavour would be to look at how religion as a construct evolves depending on the perspective from which it is approached. To be able to appreciate the complexity of the construct of religion is to begin to understand its implications in reality.

The word “religion” stems from the Latin root word “religio” which makes reference to the bond that exists between humanity and a higher power (Hill, 2000). At this

fundamental level religion is seen to refer to the relationship between man and a higher power. More recently however, the literature suggests that attempts to define religion as a construct have yielded two broad trends (Pergament, 1997; Zinnbauer et. al., 1997; Zinnbauer & Pergament, 2005). The first trend is known as the substantive approach. This approach focuses on the sacred and its approach to defining religion is characterised by an emphasis on the relationship with a divine being and the beliefs, experiences and emotions attached to that relationship. Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi (1975, p. 1) put forth a definition of religion that epitomises the substantive approach; “a system of beliefs in a divine or super human power, and practices of worship or other rituals directed towards such a power”. The second trend is a functional approach in which the focus of defining religion is placed on the purpose (or function) it serves in the life of the individual. The relationship with a divine being (as in the substantive approach), as also the emotions, experiences and beliefs attached to it are still important considerations but those considerations are interpreted in lieu of how they function in helping people deal with life’s difficulties. Batson, Schoenrade and Ventis (1993) put forth a functional definition of religion; “whatever we as individuals do to come to grips personally with the questions that confront us because we are aware that we and others like us are alive and that we will die” (p. 8). Both these approaches to defining religion are broad enough to be inclusive of the spiritual (Hill, 2000). Furthermore, Allport (1966) distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic religion. For the intrinsic believer religion becomes a lived experience and faith is seen to be infinitely valuable in itself. For the extrinsic believer religion is a means to an end, the end being safety and status. In the case of the extrinsic believer religion is adopted for what it gives the adherent access to.

Historically (as can be seen in the previous section about religion), the terms “religiousness” and “spirituality” have been inextricably linked and have often been used interchangeably (Zinnbauer & Pergament, 2005). Religion has been viewed as the broad

umbrella term under which the term spirituality exists. Recently however, spirituality has emerged as a construct that exists separately from religion and distinct to itself (Hill et. al. 2000). Spirituality has recently been given credit as a construct in itself as a result of a decline in traditional religious institutions, an increase in more individualised forms of expressing faith, a change in focus from religious belief to a more direct experience of the sacred, the US culture of religious pluralism (Paloutzen & Park, 2005), the growth of secularism in the twentieth century and a broad acknowledgment that religious institutions often impede personal experiences of the sacred (Gollnick, 2005).

The term “spirituality” is derived from the Latin root word “spiritus” meaning life or breath (Hill et. al. 2000). Gollnick (2005) explains spirituality by illustrating that it differs from religion because it can occur outside of the institutionalised beliefs and traditions of a particular religion. Spirituality is thus argued to be a personal experience aimed at transcendence. Although “spirituality” is a relatively new term Spilka (1993) has found that perspectives on spirituality generally fall into three broad categories: God-oriented spirituality which refers to spirituality found in the thoughts and practice of theologies; World-oriented spirituality is derived from a relationship with the natural world; and People-oriented spirituality which focuses on human accomplishment and potential. Broadly however, Tart (1975, p. 4) defines spirituality as “the vast realm of human potential dealing with ultimate purposes, with higher entities, with God, with love, with compassion, with purpose”.

2.2 Religions of the World and South Africa

According to the New York Times (Upfront) published in 2012 the ten major world religions and percentage of global adherents are as follows; Christianity (33%), Islam (22.4%), Hinduism (13.6%), Non-Religious or Atheist (11.6%), Buddhism (6.7%), Chinese

Folk Religions (6.6%), Ethnoreligions (3.9%), Sikhism (0.3%), Judaism (0.2%) and Other (1.7%). Chinese Folk Religions refer to among others the ideologies of Universalism, Confucianism and Taoism. Ethnoreligions refer to religions where all the members belong to the same ethnic group and usually have tribal, animistic or shamanistic underpinnings (New York Times Upfront, 2012).

Based on the 2001 South African Census findings the major religious categories and percentage of national adherents are as follows Christianity (80%), Non-religious (15%), Islam (2%), Hinduism (1%), Other Faiths (1%) and both African Traditional beliefs and Judaism each account for less than 1%. More recent Census data would have been ideal but the question of religion was omitted from the latest (2012) Census questionnaire due to it being a low priority question.

2.3 The transmission of religious beliefs and values

The family has long been considered the primary source of religious instruction (Hayes & Pittelkow, 1993). A number of studies have found that children's religious beliefs are strongly predicted by their parent's religious beliefs. Although religion is an individual characteristic it is taught to children through socialisation which happens predominantly in the family environment (Bengtson, Copen, Putney & Silverstein, 2009; Desmond, Morgan & Kikuchi, 2010; Hayes & Pittelkow, 1993).

In an Australian study conducted by Hayes and Pittelkow (1993) they found that parental agreement on religious matters and limited conflict in the home environment are critical conditions for religion to be transferred successfully from one generation to the next. Furthermore, children conform more willingly to the parent's religious ideals when the parents are in agreement about what those ideals are. This argument is substantiated by Ozorak (1989) who found that children who grow up in families with mixed religions tend to

have weaker religious commitments than their peers who grew up in religiously heterogeneous families. Furthermore, it was found that although both parents play a role in the transmission of religion they function differently. Mothers are said to influence the broader religious orientation of the child (which more closely approximates the idea of spirituality) whereas fathers are more involved in influencing specific behaviours (associated with the concept of religiosity) and activities such as church attendance (Hayes & Pittelkow, 1993).

2.4 Theorising religious development: James Fowler

According to Fowler and Dell (2005), “faith seems to have a broadly recognizable pattern of development” (p. 36). According to Gollnick (2005) Fowler conceptualises his theory of Faith Development by incorporating Erickson’s psychosocial stages of development and Piaget’s stages of cognitive development to contribute to a more holistic understanding of how faith develops throughout the lifespan. He proceeds to present seven consecutive stages of faith development that constitutes this broadly recognizable pattern in people. In order to glean the optimal amount of insight from this theory faith development has to be approached more broadly than the characteristics of specific religions (e.g. Christianity or Judaism). His theory goes beyond the religious development patterns characteristic of one specific religion. Instead, he approaches faith development as the inclusive process that underpins the beliefs, values and meanings that lend lucidity and direction to the individual’s life, form significant ties and loyalties between the individual and others, puts individual and communal considerations into perspective by contributing a broader frame of reference and finally assists in dealing with life’s challenges. Faith is thus seen to be an experience not limited to a specific religious ideology (Fowler & Dell, 2005).

The seven stages of faith development are as follows: primal faith (infancy to 2 years); intuitive-projective faith (4 to 7 years); mythical-literal faith (7 to 11 years); synthetic-conventional faith (which begins in adolescence); individuative-reflective faith (occurs during young adulthood); conjunctive faith (paradoxical-consolidative faith) and finally universalising faith. When applying these stages of Faith Development cognisance of and sensitivity to the influence of a complex array of factors needs to be considered. These factors include: biological maturation; cognitive development; emotional development; psychosocial experiences and specific religious and cultural symbols, meanings and actions (Fowler & Dell, 2005).

The precursory stage, primal faith (from infancy to 2 years) is characterised by great strides in physical development. However, the most important development in this period is the attachment formed with the primary caregiver because it influences all the child's future relationships (Fowler & Dell, 2005). Furthermore, because religion is primarily transmitted by the family (primary caregiver/s) the attachment becomes increasingly significant because it primes the relationship that will either enable or hinder the transmission of religion later on.

The first stage, intuitive-projective faith (4 to 7 years) is characterised by the child's inability to distinguish between fact and fantasy. Symbols of faith are reduced to visible images of power and size. Simplified ideas of good and evil are favoured and these ideas can either be associated with feelings of guilt and fear or with feelings of love and companionship (Fowler & Dell, 2005). Therefore the religious teachings of significant other/s are important because they set the tone for the feelings associated with religious images.

The second stage, mythical-literal faith (7 to 11 years) is characterised by advancements in cognitive development. This period is strongly influenced by Piaget's concrete operational stage (Fowler & Dell, 2005). The concrete operational stage is

characterised by children having more control over their own minds. More stable and logical forms of thinking and interpretation occur at this stage. Understanding of cause and effect is developed. This new ability to think more logically translates into an understanding of God (i.e. related symbols and concepts) in literal and concrete terms. There is little reflection and personal emotion attributed to constructions of God. At this stage the environment of God is reduced to simple understandings of moral reciprocity, i.e. good behaviour is rewarded and bad behaviour is punished (Fowler & Dell, 2005). The end of this stage is marked by the child realising that justice is not absolute and that life is sometimes unfair, this induces the beginning of reflection on God and ideas of faith.

The third stage, synthetic-conventional faith (which begins in adolescence) is characterised by colossal cognitive developments, physical and sexual changes. Piaget's formal operational thought, characterised by abstract thinking and the ability to name and make sense and meaning of feelings, marks the cognitive developments of this period. This period is called synthetic-conventional faith because the identity and beliefs maintained during this period are strongly linked to the ideals of the significant others. An understanding of the God environment is developed during this time and, God is seen as accepting, loving and supportive during difficult times (Fowler & Dell, 2005).

The fourth stage, individuative-reflective faith (young adulthood) is reached when two important indicators become apparent (Fowler & Dell, 2005). Firstly, the young adult is able to reflect critically on the values, beliefs and ideals (conventions of significant others) maintained in the previous stage. This can be a difficult process. Secondly, the young adult struggles with developing an identity and sense of self-worth that can exist independently of the people, institutions and ideologies that contributed to the sense of self before then (Fowler & Dell, 2005). It is important to note that previously held values are not thrown out

completely, but if they are carried from the previous stage they usually do so in an attenuated form and with a renewed sense conviction and choice (Fowler & Dell, 2005).

The fifth stage, conjunctive faith (paradoxical-consolidative faith) occurs when the individual can begin to appreciate that truths can be seen from multiple perspectives and that faith is what balances these differing perspectives (Fowler & Dell, 2005). A heightened interest in different cultures and religions provides a deeper understanding of their own beliefs and traditions. This broadened perspective encourages new ways of relating to God (Fowler & Dell, 2005).

The final stage, universalising faith is characterised by the individual's desire and passion to live out their faith in everything they do. These individuals see beyond separating factors such as race and gender and are more concerned with God's goodness manifested in all creation (Fowler & Dell, 2005). Very few people reach this stage of faith development.

The seven stages of Faith Development thus provide an explanation for how faith develops from infancy to old age. The explanation transcends the norms, ideas, rites and rituals of any specific religion but rather gives an account of the way faith develops in a broader sense alongside the milestones of cognitive and psychosocial development. These stages provide an outline that the pattern of faith development may follow. Since this theory can be understood outside of one specific religion it may be useful in trying to understand the implications of growing up in a household with two different religions. Although the theory cannot account for the influence that the different religions may have, it is still broad enough to be helpful in understanding how faith develops outside of the boundaries of the two religions.

I have broadly defined religion and spirituality, provided an international and national landscape of religions, discussed the transmission of religion and looked at faith development

across the lifespan. The discussion is now steered towards understanding how religious heterogeneity affects such families and the children that grow up in them. This following section commences with a discussion of how marriage patterns are changing resulting in more families being religiously heterogeneous. This is done in an attempt to make an argument for the relevance of this study.

2.5 The changing trends in marriage patterns over time

Historically, it is seen that people tend to marry people that belong to their social group (i.e. people who share a common religion and culture). This process is called endogamy (Kalmijn, 1998). This can be seen in Herberg's (1960) classic study on the role of religion in American society where he contends that for third generation European Americans religion replaced national origin as a primary factor for consideration in spousal selection. Herberg (1960) argues that when opportunities to identify with people from their national origin group became limited people were forced to find new ways of identifying with others thus resulting in religion becoming a primary consideration in spousal selection.

More recently however, it has been found that people tend to marry people that have the same social status as their own (i.e. educational attainment and income range). This process is known as homogamy (Kalmijn, 1998). Kalmijn (1991) examined intermarriage between Catholics and Protestants and found that compared to the 1920's religious intermarriage had increased but intermarriage between different educational groups had decreased suggesting that education had become a more important consideration in spouse selection than religion.

Kalmijn (1991) put forth a variety of reasons for these changes in marriage patterns. Firstly, the rise of a more secular society has resulted in a reduction in cultural differences thus making religious differences less conspicuous and less relevant. Secondly, the social

norms that used to govern who marries whom (and prevent religiously heterogeneous marriages) have changed to the extent that religiously heterogeneous marriages are no longer stigmatised. Finally, social spaces (such as neighbourhoods) are no longer divided across religious lines which creates more opportunities for people to find partners with different religious affiliations to their own.

2.6 The roles of religion

2.6.1 The role of religion in society

Religion influences social life in many ways. Sherkat and Ellison (1999) specify domains in which religion influences social life; politics and social movements, family issues, health and well-being, by enhancing opportunities for social capital and finally acting as a deterrent of crime and deviance. Religion's influence on politics cannot be disputed when looking at the fairly recent separation of church (religion) and state in Europe and looking at the religious roots of some of the biggest political conflicts of our time as examples. The long lasting disputes in Palestine and Ireland, as well as the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition in earlier history, for example, have clear strong religious underpinnings. Furthermore, religion often also influences the growth and strength of social movements. Religious institutions and ideologies aid social movements by framing movement issues, enhancing and legitimising the movement's positions and strengthening the movement by providing the participants with a collective identity and a sense of group solidarity (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999). This can be seen in the far-reaching influence of the "Broederbond" in South African politics during the Apartheid regime that happened quite recently, historically speaking. Religion influences society through another domain, namely family issues. Religion often influences people's perspectives on broad social issues such as adolescent sexuality and contraception, marriage and fertility, child-rearing and gender roles. These are all issues

central to the way a society functions (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999). Religion also influences society in the domain of health and well-being. Religion enhances society's health and well-being by promoting healthy lifestyles and behaviours, encouraging social integration and support and providing people with psychological resources such as coping mechanisms and self-esteem (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999). Religion often provides people with prospects to gain social capital. Social capital is essential to the functioning of a society because it provides people with the prescriptive norms and values of the society and also allows for the circulation of information (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999). Finally, religion is often seen as having deterrent effects against crime and deviance (Amoateng & Bahr, 1986). Religion is often associated with the assimilation of religious norms, morals and standards of good behaviour, the fear of punishment by a divine omnipotent being, the threat of being ostracised socially and by religious reference groups and even simply by being involved in religious activities that reduce exposure to deviant deeds. These factors are said to reduce crime and deviance in society (Sherkat & Ellison, 1999).

The benefit of religion to society, as posited by Durkeim (1951), lies in its ability to maintain social order by providing a sense of identity, purpose and social integration. Religion therefore fosters a sense of belonging and community. Furthermore, most religious systems promote an orderly society by prescribing some form of moral standards which in turn (if internalised and adhered to) functions to maintain social order too (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984).

In an examination of the detrimental effects of religion it needs to be noted that there is a distinctive gap in the literature which could be argued to speak to the far reaching influence that religion as an institution holds. In other words, articles addressing the negative effects associated with religion may not be published because of uncertainty about how it will be received by the public. However, when the effects of religion are criticised it usually

refers to the behaviour associated with religious affiliation as opposed to religion as a concept (Kelly, 1995). Socially, religious affiliation is criticised for its encouragement of petty disputes between different religions and denominations, in this instance it is the dividing factor and the consequent separateness that fuels this kind of behaviour (Kelly, 1995). Religion is also argued to subject people to dehumanising rules and prohibitions (Kelly, 1995). Religious extremists also contribute to a negative view associated with religious affiliation as they attempt to impose their beliefs and values on others (Hunsberger, 2010). Finally, one need but to look at the war and oppression that has resulted in the name of a god to understand how religion has been misused to lend credibility to malevolent deeds in the past (Kelly, 1995).

2.6.2 The role of religion in the life of the individual

In a meta-analysis of the relationship between religion and mental health conducted by Koenig and Larson (2001) they found that 80 percent of the 850 articles yielded a positive association between religious beliefs and life satisfaction. According to Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997), members of religious congregations experience greater life satisfaction than non-members. In a study about religion and subjective well-being conducted by Ellison (1991) it was found that increased religiosity is positively associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and greater personal happiness while religion also acts as a moderating factor in handling traumatic life events.

Religious participation is argued to promote individual well-being in a number of ways (Ellison, 1991). Firstly, it enhances social integration and provides a support network by creating a platform for people with similar ideas and values to socialise (Ellison, 1991). Religious institutions are a dependable source of support for the individual in adverse times. Religious institutions also lend their participants norms relating to health behaviours and

family relationships that may positively influence well-being (Kraus & Wulff, 2005). Secondly, individual well-being is promoted through the development of a personal relationship with a divine being (Ellison, 1991). This relationship is argued by Ellison (1991), to enhance well-being by providing prescriptions on how to solve problems that may arise (i.e. religious texts can be used as guidelines to resolve problematic situations). The personal relationship with a divine being also enriches self-esteem and self-efficacy because the belief that you are intimately bound to a superior magnanimous being promotes feelings of self-worth. Finally by assigning religious meaning to difficult life events the individual is afforded a reliable coping strategy (Ellison, 1991). Thirdly, religion provides the individual with a consistent coherent system of meaning that can be used by the individual to interpret and make sense of life events. Religion is thus considered a moderating factor to people experiencing stressful life events (Ellison, 1991).

Additionally, religious adults have been argued to be physically healthier than their non-religious counterparts (Lee & Newberg, 2005). Religious involvement among adults has been associated with lower mortality rates, fewer occurrences of fatal illnesses, fewer psychological disturbances such as anxiety and depression and less unhealthy behaviours (Koenig, McCullough & Larson, 2001; Lee & Newberg, 2005; McCullough & Smith, 2003).

2.6.3 The role of religion in the family

Religion informs the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of many individuals. Most religious doctrines can be seen as a guide (which includes beliefs, customs, traditions and rites) of how to live correctly by the standards of a particular religion (Haught, 1990). As such religion has a broad influence on the way people choose to live and the decisions they make (Mahoney, 2005). Furthermore, religious doctrines inform attitudes towards family related issues (Pearce & Axinn, 1998). Therefore, considering that marriage intrinsically

involves the amalgamation of the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of two individuals the religion or religions that inform these factors becomes increasingly important. Briefly, religious affiliation is important to families because it informs marital behaviour (Mahoney, 2005). This begs the question, how is growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household experienced by the child?

2.6.3.1 The role of religion in the religiously homogeneous family

Religiously homogeneous families are families in which the members of the family subscribe to the same religion. By extension the members of these families share common values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, traditions and behaviours informed by their religion. The literature suggests that the shared experience of religion in a family strongly contributes to the well-being of both the couple and the children (Petts & Knoester, 2007). This is so because the shared experience of religion increases marital stability (Call & Heaton, 1997), can be utilised as a coping mechanism for marital and parent-child conflict (Mahoney, 2005) and is an important socialising agent for children (Pearce & Axinn, 1998).

The shared experience of religion is argued to increase marital stability (Call & Heaton, 1997) because common beliefs and values encourages cohesion and acts as an integrative force in the family. Thinking and feeling the same way about important life decisions and practices is very important to a couples' well-being because it encourages strong family ties and fosters a sense of teamwork and solidarity (Pearce & Axinn, 1998). Religion is also said to indirectly influence the couple's attitudes toward certain topics such as gender roles, extra marital affairs and homosexuality. Thus when a couple share the same religion and by extension belief system they are more likely to agree on these topics and this lends greater marital stability (Mahoney, 2005). Furthermore, as much as religion influences the decisions pertaining specifically to religious observance it also influences the families'

everyday decisions. These include decisions such as the families' place of residence, how the children are to be reared, financial matters and the social networks the family chooses to belong to (Lehrer, 1998; Sigalow, Shain & Bergey, 2012). Considering that these decisions are influenced by religion it stands to reason that a common religion will not only make these decisions easier to make but also that it will reduce the areas of potential conflict (Lehrer, 1998; Mahoney, 2005).

Religion can also be seen as a coping mechanism in conflict resolution (Mahoney, 2005). Conflict in families can occur for various reasons often relating to different views about what it takes to make a shared life work for everyone involved in it. Religion proves invaluable in this instance because it provides the family with a common set of values. Conflicts are therefore resolved by using the common standards and ideals shared by the family, such as the prescriptions of the relevant religion (Mahoney, 2005). Moreover, differences in religion can also give rise to or exacerbate conflict because there are more issues on which the family's opinions do not converge. I argue that in instances where the shared experience of religion would have been a protective factor before (where families are religiously homogeneous) it could become a risk factor in religiously heterogeneous families.

Religion provides children with a consistent framework of acceptable values and behaviours within which they can grow. In religiously homogenous families the messages sent to children by their parents are consistent and ties in with their broader religious beliefs. Children therefore have a clear understanding about what is expected of them from their parents because they get one clear and cohesive message from their parents (which is often informed by their religion) (Pearce & Axinn, 1998).

It becomes clear then that the family and religion as institutions are intrinsically linked. It can therefore be said that religious homogeneity is a desirable characteristic in a

marriage and family because the values and issues pertinent in both institutions overlap and coalesce in such a way that it promotes stability, cohesion and shared goals.

2.6.3.2 The role of religion in the religiously heterogeneous family

According to Petts and Knoester (2007) the religiously heterogeneous family can be understood in many different ways. Inter-religion heterogeneity refers to instances where spouses follow different denominations within the same religion. Across religion heterogeneity refers to instances where spouses follow entirely different religions. Religion-none heterogeneity refers to instances where one spouse does not subscribe to any religion. For the purposes of this study however, the concept of religious heterogeneity will be limited to refer only to families in which the parents subscribe to and practice entirely different religions, thus excluding inter-religion and religion-none heterogeneity.

Religiously heterogeneous marriages are on the rise (Kalmijn, 1991; Lehrer, 1998 Williams & Lawler, 2001). It should be noted however, that although the literature suggests that religious heterogeneity in families is on the rise very little research has been done on what this means for, and the experiences of, these families and the children who grow up in such situations. The literature does however allude to the possibility that religious heterogeneity is less desirable than religious homogeneity because of the negative consequences associated with it (Petts & Knoester, 2007; Regenerus & Burdette, 2006). These include; higher levels of marital conflict (Call & Heaton, 1997) and decreased levels of religious participation (Williams & Lawler, 2001). Religious participation is said to advantage the child because it involves them in activities outside of the family that holds them accountable for their actions and ratifies the values they are taught at home (Smith, 2003). It appears, therefore, as though it is not the exposure to two religions that

disadvantages these children but rather the decreased levels of religious participation (associated with children in religiously heterogeneous families) that restricts their opportunities for exposure to the supplementary advantages (social capital) it is associated with (Petts & Knoester, 2007).

In terms of marital conflict, religiously heterogeneous couples are more likely to differ on pertinent issues (such as values and beliefs related to child-rearing). For example, Bartkowski and Ellison (1995) contend that central to the Conservative Protestants approach child-rearing is the idea that children need to be taught acceptable social conduct and are expected to abide strictly by those norms. Comparatively, more liberal Christians tend to try to reduce the pressure of expecting their children to conform to society's expectations. Instead, they allow for more exploration and expression of their children's identities by practicing unconditional love and support while trusting that they are God's instruments in raising their children (Mahoney, 2005). These examples illustrate how the views associated with even different denominations within the same religion can differ and the far reaching implications it may hold for an issue as critical as child-rearing (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993). Furthermore, these different views result in more conflict that cannot be resolved with shared values grounded in a common religious doctrine. Additionally, having children may increase conflict because parents may have different views about how to raise children and which religion the children should be affiliated with (Mahoney, 2005). These increased levels of conflict in the household, especially when it directly involves the children, negatively influences the children's well-being (Fincham & Beach, 1999).

Religiously heterogeneous marriages have been linked to an increased vulnerability to marital dissolution (Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993). Religiously homogeneous couples are advantaged because couple participation in religious activities is associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction (Call & Heaton, 1997). Joint participation in religious activities is a

protective factor against potential conflict because the couple is more likely to agree on pertinent issues in the household (Ellison & Sherkat, 1993; Mahoney, 2005). Kalmijn (1998) proposes three reasons for higher levels of marital satisfaction; a shared religion will inform similar values and opinions, similar tastes will result in participating in similar activities and create more opportunities for mutual bonding and a similar way of thinking results in mutual understanding. Greater marital satisfaction in turn reduces the couple's vulnerability to marital dissolution (Call & Heaton, 1997). In religiously heterogeneous marriages there is less marital satisfaction because the protective factors associated with religious homogeneity are no longer there and the risk of potential conflict is increased (Shehan, Bock & Lee, 1990). Lehrer and Cheswick (1993) contend that less marital satisfaction makes the marriage more prone to dissolution.

Religious heterogeneity is argued to decrease parents' and children's religious participation (Iannaccone, 1990; Williams & Lawler, 2001). In a study conducted by King and Furrow (2004) religion was approached from a social capital perspective and was shown to be a valuable resource in positive youth development. Religious participation has been shown to positively influence adolescent development on multiple levels. Religious involvement is argued to serve a protective function against adolescent delinquency such as drug abuse (Lerner & Galambos, 1998). Religious participation has also been implicated in the development of social and academic competencies in adolescents (Regenerus, 2000; Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1999). Religiously active adolescents are also said to be advantaged with developmental resources that promote personal restraint, positive values and school involvement (Wagener, Furrow, King, Leffert & Benson, 2003). Finally religious participation has been found to be associated with more pro-social concerns and behaviour (Donahue & Benson, 1995; Furrow, King & White, 2004). Children from religiously heterogeneous families are therefore less likely to be exposed to these opportunities because

they are more likely to get mixed messages about the importance of religious participation (Williams & Lawler, 2001). Religious participation holds the added advantage of creating more opportunities for families to spend time together which builds stronger family bonds and so promotes children's well-being

It can therefore be seen that the literature has focussed primarily on the benefits of religion on the family and the children. The literature has looked predominantly at the ways in which religiosity and religious participation positively influences the family and children. We can therefore only tentatively conclude that children in heterogeneous families are disadvantaged only because their exposure to these positive outcomes is limited. This however, says very little about the experience of adolescents growing up in religiously heterogeneous households. The existing literature therefore lacks the in-depth knowledge and understanding that would be generated by studying the phenomenon qualitatively.

2.7 Theoretical framework

2.7.1 Introduction

In order to create an understanding of the way in which exposure to two different religions in one household influences the child and later on the young adult I first need to ascertain all the ways in which the child is directly and indirectly exposed to and influenced by religion. Systems Theory affords me a framework within which the influence of religion on the individual can be approached simultaneously in a broad and specific manner without losing the overarching interconnectedness and overlapping that the situation holds (Hawe, Shiell & Riley, 2009). For example; the child who grows up in a religiously heterogeneous household lives in a time and society where most families are still religiously homogeneous and this will influence their experience of growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household and vice versa. For the purposes of this study I will employ Bronfenbrenner's

ecological model (1977) as the theoretical framework. The ecological model will aid me in understanding the situation holistically and will force me to take cognisance of the network of influences that mould the lived experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households.

2.7.2 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

Bronfenbrenner (1977) defines the ecology of human development as “the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the lifespan, between a growing human organism and the changing immediate environment in which it lives” (p. 514)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1977) can be described as “a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next” (p. 514). Bronfenbrenner's (1977) Ecological Model consists of four systems: the microsystem; mesosystem; exosystem and macrosystem. The Ecological Model was later amended to include the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

The microsystem is related to the direct and immediate environment in which personal interactions occur. It essentially refers to the interpersonal relationships that the individual is part of on a day to day basis. The mesosystem consists of the links (commonalities) between all the different microsystem settings that the individual forms part of. The exosystem is made up of the interconnections between the microsystem and mesosystem. It consists of social structures that may influence the individual's experience of the microsystem and mesosystem in an indirect way. The macrosystem is defined as the broader system of ideology (class, ethnicity and culture) in which the individual is located. The chronosystem refers to the passage (chronological age) and period of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The chronosystem therefore approaches time from two perspectives. Firstly, time in terms of chronological age and all the developmental milestones that occur at

certain points in the life cycle (e.g. puberty). Secondly, time in terms of the period or era in which the developing child is born. The characteristics of the time (e.g. widespread secularisation) influences the environment in which the child grows up (e.g. societal norms and values). The chronosystem thus constitutes the over-arching internal changes and external environment that envelopes all the other systems and influences the individual's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

In the instance of a young adult who grows up in a religiously heterogeneous household, the systems they are nested in and environments they are exposed to are very similar to those of the individuals who grew up in religiously homogeneous households. The microsystems include; the immediate family (parents and siblings), the school environment and peers, religious groups (such as church or youth) and the extended family. The mesosystem comprises of the interconnections (links) between these microsystems. The exosystem, like the mesosystem, refers to the linkages that exist between two or more settings but the child is not directly involved in at least one of these settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). For the purposes of this study religion will be the most relevant exosystem institution to consider because the research question seeks to explore the influence that growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household will have on the experiences of the child growing up in such a household. The macrosystem will influence the individual in the sense that it confers the societal norms and culture in which the child will grow up. Finally, the most relevant chronosystem phenomenon (period specific characteristic) is that familial religious homogeneity is still the widely accepted norm.

2.7.3 Applying the Ecological Model to the experiences of the child who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household

2.7.3.1 The Microsystem

The microsystem refers to the immediate environment in which direct personal interactions occur. The microsystem is comprised of significant interpersonal relationships that are bi-directional in nature (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This means that all interpersonal relationships are reciprocal in that the individual influences and is influenced by the significant other in a continuous process of meaning making. The most important microsystem relationships for the purposes of this study are the relationships the individual is involved in with parents, school environment and peers, religious groups and extended family. These relationships can be influenced by religious heterogeneity in a variety of ways, often depending on very specific decisions made by the couple and also the approval or disapproval of the extended family and community.

The parents

The microsystem relationship that exists between the parent and the child is in all probability the most significant relationship in terms of shaping the lived experiences of the individual who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household. This is so because it is the parent's decision to get married but keep their own religion that creates the situation that the developing child grows up in. The decisions the parents make pertaining to the child's religious upbringing also has an indelible influence on the way the child comes to understand their situation and how the child will come to make sense of religion. Furthermore, considering that parents are the primary transmitters of religion it becomes clear that they are the most important contributors to the situation and also the experiences the individual will have growing up. It is essential to be aware of the fact that the way the parents choose to

negotiate their religious differences will lead to a distinctive set of experiences for the child growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household.

The school environment and peers

This microsystem relationship is important in that it is the system where the child is exposed to other children and learns about other families. It is in this setting that the child is most likely to realise that most families are religiously homogeneous and that their family situation is different. The way educators and peers respond to this difference will also influence the child's understanding of the situation. For example, if the child participates in both religions' religious holidays (and is excused from attending school) and the educator and peers do not understand the child's household situation they may feel unsupported by the educator and be ridiculed by their peers. The child could feel judged and ostracised in the school environment.

Religious groups

Religious groups refer to the relationships the child forms part of in religious settings. These include Sunday school, confirmation class and madrassa. In this instance, regardless of the religion of instruction of any of these groups the child is still exposed to another religion in the household. As a result the teachings of these groups may not be as easily received by the child. The teachings of these groups may bring about internal conflicts that the child could struggle to resolve at the childhood stages of faith development as proposed by Fowler (1981).

The extended family

The extended family's religions are bound to be different. The child is also once more exposed to religiously homogeneous families. The extended family's acceptance or

disapproval of the religious setup in the child's household may influence the relationship the child has with the rest of the family. The extended family also has the potential to cause conflict in the religiously heterogeneous household if they openly disapprove of the living situation and they have a say in what happens in the family. Increased conflict in the household about religious differences may affect the child negatively.

2.7.3.2 The Mesosystem

The mesosystem refers to the range of links that exists between all the microsystems that the developing child forms part of. The child's development is enhanced when the microsystem relationships the child is involved in emphasise similar values and ideals. The consistency of the messages the child is exposed to will influence how easily the teachings of significant others are assimilated by the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

In the instance of the child who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household it becomes clear that regardless of how poorly or how well religious difference is mediated in the household it remains a poignant difference that could result in a fundamental dissimilarity in the messages relayed to the child in the various microsystems they form part of.

Although an argument can be made that there is an increase in the number of religiously heterogeneous families (Williams & Lawler, 2001) religious homogeneity is still the norm. It becomes clear then that the research question proposed will involve predominantly the microsystem and mesosystem because it is on these levels that the religiously heterogeneous family differs most significantly from the religiously homogeneous family. Bronfenbrenner (1986) proposes that individual development is enhanced when the different microsystems that comprise the mesosystem have robust commonalities and expose the growing child to a congruent message. This is so because the environments created by the microsystems and the messages communicated to the child by the interpersonal relationships

within those microsystems will invariably influence the way the child thinks and behaves in the other microsystems the child is part of (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). In the religiously heterogeneous household there exists an increased likelihood that the religious messages and teachings conveyed to the child (both directly and indirectly) may diverge more readily than in the religiously homogeneous household. Also, because religious homogeneity is the norm it is entrenched in the broader ideology (macrosystem) in such a way that the potentially unique experiences associated with growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household may not be understood and/or accommodated for. The religious messages to which the developing child is exposed to may therefore not be unified and congruent. This study aims to understand and describe how individual development is affected by the life experiences of children who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous family microsystem.

2.7.3.3 The Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem

These systems essentially represent the broader environment in which the child from the religiously heterogeneous household grows up. These systems can be argued to function as reminders that the religiously heterogeneous household is not the norm or even that it is not a desirable situation to grow up in. For example, the religious institutions in the exosystem (which the child may not be in direct contact with) may frown upon the different religions in one household and put pressure on the parents and children to choose one. The culture and ideology that constitutes part of the macrosystem may also support the idea that familial religious heterogeneity is not ideal. Furthermore, as much as religious heterogeneity is becoming more common it is still very far from being a characteristic of our time and as a result children who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households are in uncharted territory and their experiences may be influenced by it.

It is within the systems discussed above that the experiences reported by the participants will be located and made sense of. These systems provide a widely accepted way of making sense of the experiences of the participants. The theoretical framework is compatible with the aims of this study and it will organise the findings in a way that complements the requirements of the research question.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research aims and design

This study aims to describe the lived experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households. A review of the literature found that most of the research conducted relating to religious heterogeneity sought to ascertain if and why more people are marrying outside of their religious or denominational group (Kalmijn, 1991, Kalmijn, 1998; McCutcheon, 1988). More relevant however, was an article by Petts and Knoester (2007) that investigated how parents' religious heterogeneity influences children's well-being (conceptualised as self-esteem, life satisfaction, academic performance, marijuana use and underage drinking) with marital conflict, religious participation and time spent with children (in non-religious activities) as moderating variables. Neither of these approaches to religious heterogeneity in families attempt to qualitatively explore how the situation influences the experiences the child has growing up in such a household.

Research Aims

- The primary aim of this study is to explore the experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households.
- To produce rich, thick descriptions of the experiences of individuals who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households.
- To ascertain if there are similar or overlapping experiences that will enable the development of a pattern of experiences common and specific to the individual who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household.
- To make a knowledge contribution to the gap in the literature.

A qualitative phenomenological approach will be employed to answer the research question. Data will be collected via individual interviews and will be analysed thematically. According to Elliot, Fischer and Rennie (1999, p.216), “the aim of qualitative research is to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage and live through situations”. A qualitative approach suited the research question because the central aim of this research is describe the experiences young adults had growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. Describing the experiences of my participants required the method to allow for a degree of depth and detail in the data that only the tools of qualitative research practices could facilitate.

As the research question suggests, the primary aim of this study was to provide an in-depth account of the experiences of young adults who grew up in households where their married parents subscribed to and practiced different religions. Therefore, in an attempt to describe the lived experiences of participants a phenomenological approach was be used. The phenomenological study of a phenomenon involves describing the lived experiences of a phenomenon by interviewing people who have experienced the phenomenon (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). The methods of analysis involved in phenomenology (such as identifying experiences, clustering similar experiences together and looking at the experiences holistically) seems the most compatible since it allows for rich, thick descriptions of the lived experiences gleaned from the data (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Furthermore, a phenomenological approach is best suited to the research goal to “describe the meaning of the lived experience of a phenomenon” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, pp.1373), which was the intrinsic purpose of this research study.

3.2 Procedure

Before any data collection could occur I submitted a proposal to the DESC (Departmental Ethics Screening Committee of Stellenbosch University's Psychology Department) for review to ensure it met departmental ethical standards. On approval by the DESC it was sent to the Faculty REC (Research Ethics Committee) for scrutiny and approval to commence with data collection. Once ethical clearance (protocol number: HS883/2012) was granted I started collecting my data (whilst simultaneously transcribing and re-evaluating my interview schedule and interviewing techniques). I was also reviewing the literature and writing up my theoretical framework and methodology. Once data collection was complete I started analysing the data in order to write up the results, discussion and conclusion chapters of this thesis.

3.3 Sampling strategy and data collection

The sample consisted of as many participants as was required to reach the data saturation point (Marshall, 1996). The data saturation point refers to the point at which more interviews are not expected to reveal any new information (Brod, Tesler & Christensen, 2009). Participants were included on the basis that they were young adults from the ages of 18 to 25 who grew up in households where their married parents practiced different religions. This excluded participants whose parents were atheist or agnostic. Young adults (from the ages of 18 to 25) were chosen because they will be able to provide accounts of a full range of situations and obstacles given rise to, and world views formed, as a result of growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. Therefore, because the sample I required needed to have a specific set of experiences (critical case sample) I used a snowball sampling strategy so I could be referred by participants who already knew what my inclusion criteria entailed

(Marshall, 1996). I used the connections I had to find people who met the criteria explained above and was referred to more people as my net widened.

Finding my participants proved to be more difficult than I had anticipated. While writing my proposal and developing my research question I asked around and it seemed as though there were enough people that I could ask to participate. However, when it was time for me to schedule and do the interviews I realised that I had asked the wrong questions. I asked people if they knew of people who grew up in households where their parents were from different religions not specifying that the person would not qualify if one parent converted and stuck to the new religion. This posed a problem because I wanted my participants to be exposed to two different religions in the most central and influential microsystem setting, the family. From this point onwards it became more and more difficult to find people who qualified and were willing to participate. There were at least three people who qualified and when I asked them if I may interview them for my thesis they were willing to but when I broached the subject of my topic they almost immediately declined. I understood this because I was reluctant to be interviewed by my supervisor with my own interview schedule (in preparation for my interviews). This made getting participants particularly difficult but I managed in the end.

The interview schedule (see Addendum) was semi-structured. It consisted of a few broad questions that acted as the skeleton that the participants would flesh out for me with their own experiences, opinions and anecdotes. The questions ranged from those designed to elicit background information about how it is that their parents were married but each kept their own religion to questions about how growing up in such a household influenced their tolerance towards people of different religions. The questions aimed to simply get the participants talking about their unique experiences as they interpreted and understood them.

3.4 Participant summary

Six participants were included in the study. They all participated in a one-on-one in depth interview. Their ages ranged from 18 to 24. Four of the participants were male and the remaining two were female. They were included in the study because they met the main inclusion criteria of growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. The participants were all of age to participate and they completed informed consent forms.

Five of the participants' religious heterogeneity stemmed from being exposed to Christianity and Islam and the remaining participant was exposed to Christianity and Judaism. This was expected considering South Africa's religious demographics reported in the literature review. Finding participants who met the selection criteria and who were willing to participate turned out to be more difficult than I had anticipated. Some prospective participants refused to participate because they were not comfortable sharing their experiences with me, which spoke to the sensitivity of the topic; whilst others, who were willing to participate did not meet the inclusion criteria exactly and could therefore not be considered.

3.5 Instrument

I employed semi-structured interviews. Using a structured interview schedule would not have complimented the aims of this study because structured interviews are designed to answer a specific set of questions (mostly used to collect quantitative data) whereas this study seeks to explore and describe the lived experiences of the participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Unstructured interviews would also not suffice because they are essentially broadly guided conversations that are usually used in conjunction with other data obtained from participant observation participants (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), and the research question necessitates a more directed approach than that in order to obtain thick

descriptions of the phenomenon I am describing. Semi-structured interviews thus provided me with a method that is best suited to my research aims because it allows me to ask a pre-determined set of open ended questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006), which allows enough structure but also enough freedom for the participant to say what they feel is important and relevant.

3.6 Data analysis

I employed in-depth interviews to collect my data. The interview schedule was semi-structured thereby answering broad questions whilst allowing for the discussion of unique experiences. The data was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis refers to a method of identifying, analysing and making sense of the patterns that emerge in qualitative data (Braun & Clark, 2006). Thematic analysis may involve processes such as transcription, bracketing and phenomenological reduction, listening and re-listening to the interview recordings to get a sense of the whole, delineating units of meaning from the verbal and non-verbal cues and finally understanding the patterns of meaning that have emerged in relation to the research question (Hycner, 1985).

The data analysis process started with transcription. This process involves writing up the dialogue from the interview so it could be analysed more easily later on. Tedious as this seemed it was invaluable because it forced me to familiarise myself with the text and also made navigating the text later much easier. After a few interviews I started looking at some of the trends and themes that emerged. This was done in an attempt to find ways to improve my interview schedule. Reflecting on what my participants freely spoke about gave me a good indication of what my interview schedule was missing. They spoke about whom they chose to date and who they might prefer to marry as this too was influenced by their

religiously heterogeneous backgrounds. I then included questions on dating, marriage and how they would prefer to raise their children (See Appendix B).

3.7 Reliability and validity

The accuracy of using the terms reliability and validity in qualitative research is a widely contested issue (Elliot, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Golafshani, 2003). However, it remains an important issue to address because they are essentially quality control measures required for both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to ensure good research and sound research practices. It is argued that in qualitative research reliability and validity are not seen as separate entities but rather are encapsulated in concepts such as credibility, transferability, neutrality, confirmability, consistency, dependability, applicability and trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003). Measuring the quality of a research study in the qualitative paradigm is therefore synonymous with measuring how well the study generates understanding (Golafshani, 2003). I generated understanding through the use of one on one interviews and thematic analysis. Data was collected using individual interviews and the data was analysed thematically in an attempt to develop a good understanding of the lives and common experiences of young adults who were exposed to two different religions growing up.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The participants were required to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix A) which explained the research question and also informed them that they are not forced to participate in the study. If they wanted to withdraw from the study at any point they could do so without any questions being asked. They were also informed that the data generated from their interview would be used in my Master's thesis and possibly a journal article. Also, the findings of my research would be made available to them upon request. Confidentiality was ensured by arranging a private space in which the interviews occurred, the audio recordings

and transcripts were kept in a locked cupboard that only I had access to and pseudonyms were used when writing up the study.

3.9 Reflexivity issues

Background

I grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household. My mother is Christian and my father Muslim. My household could be described as conflict –ridden and tense because of my parent’s religious heterogeneity and the intensity with which they believed in and abided by their respective religious doctrines. This had an indelible influence on who I became later on in my life. This set of circumstances served as my life’s most difficult challenge because it forced me to deal with existential issues very early on.

I was aware that I had to be careful of bias and participant leading because I grew up in such a household and I have very strong ideas and opinions about the way it affects a child. I remained cognisant of the fact that my own experiences of growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household could influence my research both negatively and positively. On the one hand, because of my experiences the knowledge I will have accrued on the subject up until now will be very emotionally charged and this may influence my interpretations of what I hear in the interview process. I might therefore not be as objective as I would like and need to be to produce a good account of my participants lived experiences. On the other hand, my experiences may also allow me to connect and build rapport with my participants so as to draw rich, thick descriptions of their experiences from them. Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999) argue that participants are more willing to disclose about themselves when they feel that the interviewer is similar to them. My having grown up in a similar situation to my participants may thus have added value to this study by way of enhancing rapport.

My experiences may then have benefitted me by enhancing the quality and depth of my research. I have been particularly tentative in my approach as it might not influence the participants' experiences at all or that it influences them in very different ways to what I expect. I remained mindful of the fact that although I chose this research question because I wanted to understand how other young adults have resolved this situation for themselves; I am still studying a phenomenon scientifically and I need to be aware of the impact my subjectivity may have on my appraisals and interpretations.

The research process

In reading for this degree, much of what I suspected I might find was evidenced by the literature and this often triggered my own memories and experiences. However, I was always aware and almost frustrated at the lack of depth and detail present in most of the literature (which were invariably quantitative studies). These studies lacked the depth and detail that I knew had the potential to be a very important aspect of the phenomenon I was studying. This served as motivation for this research.

In the process of preparing for my data collection I did mock interviews and was interviewed with my own interview schedule. This experience brought me a new appreciation of the complexity and sensitivity of the questions I was expecting my participants to answer because I personally found it very difficult and emotionally taxing to answer my own questions. I realised that I dealt with a lot of my feelings around the difficult experiences with humour and by being flippant about it, in the process I did not grant myself the opportunity to truly appreciate all the ways it influenced and shaped me into who I am today. I now see this as something that I am actively working on because I think it unfair of me to expect my participants to share their intimate experiences with me when I was reluctant to do the same.

My own religiously heterogeneous background influenced my interview schedule in two ways. Firstly, the questions I chose to include stemmed largely from my own appraisal of what might trigger the sorts of experiences I wanted to interpret. Secondly, my experiences made me very sensitive to the participants experiences but also kept me vigilant about being open to experiences that contradict my expectations. It therefore made my line of questioning very tentative and open to different opinions.

In reflecting on the interview process it becomes clear that I avoided any comments that alluded to physical abuse associated with the conflict in the household. I did this intentionally because physical abuse is an extremely emotionally charged area for me and I feared that once I delved into that too deeply I would not be able to remain composed in order to complete the interview. I was essentially projecting my own experiences and fears onto my participants and limiting the experiences discussed in the process.

Interpreting the data however, was the real challenge for me. I found myself wanting to report the findings that substantiated my suspicions more readily than the findings that were different or contradictory. This however contributed to my constant awareness to put forth an accurate and holistic account for the experiences of the entire group of participants.

As difficult as growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household was for me amidst it all I am genuinely grateful for the positive outcomes it has brought me. Firstly, I value that my situation forced me to question everything and made me inherently curious. This led to the good relationship I have with God, my understanding of spirituality and the fact that I could create my own religious identity without limiting myself to a specific set of ideas and beliefs. Secondly, growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household has taught me to be very tolerant and sensitive to other people's beliefs and values especially when I do

not understand them. My situation has taught me to appreciate the value of being open minded and it has served me well.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The data collected for this study comprised of six in-depth interviews conducted with young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households in an attempt to explore their experiences of this phenomenon. This section begins with brief participant profiles so as to enhance the reader's understanding of the themes that emerge in this section. This is followed by a discussion of the over-arching themes (themes present in most of the participants experiences), the explicit theme (where inferences are made based on the practical background information of the participants) and finally the peripheral themes (interesting ideas and conceptualisations that emerged in some of the participants accounts of their experiences).

4.2 Participant profiles

The following section aims to briefly describe the participants' backgrounds so that their contributions can be understood individually and holistically. This section also serves the purpose of explaining how the participant met the criteria of growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household (as this varies and may have implications later on) in order to enhance the readers understanding of the themes (extracts) discussed later. The names used in this section are pseudonyms and were employed in keeping with the participant's right to confidentiality.

4.2.1 Ryan

Ryan is a 24 year old Coloured male. His father was born Muslim and his mother Christian. Ryan reports that his father also grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household

because his biological grandfather was Muslim and his grandmother Christian. His father's biological father died when he was very young and his mother re-married a Christian man. He therefore grew up as a Muslim boy in a predominantly Christian household. When Ryan's parents got married his father converted to Christianity and the children were born and raised Christian and the family was religiously homogeneous for a short while, with the exception of being exposed to Islam in the extended family.

The religious heterogeneity stems from the fact that when his parents got divorced his father re-married a Muslim woman and converted back to Islam. The kids born from Ryan's father's second marriage are Muslim too. He grew up in this household as much as he did his former household and he therefore qualifies as a participant. His parents are still on good terms and Ryan (although he identifies as Christian) still goes to mosque and church. He feels that he is yet to make the decision between the two religions.

4.2.2 Shuaib

Shuaib is a 21 year old Coloured male. His parents were married for approximately fifteen years until they got divorced in 2004. His father was Christian and his mother Muslim. Neither of his parents ever converted. Shuaib converted to Islam when he was 11. His household comprised of his parents, himself, his younger brother and his maternal grandmother. His maternal grandmother was a staunch Muslim and she disapproved of her daughter's relationship with a Christian man from the beginning. This was exacerbated by the fact that his father did not convert to Islam once they were married. His father's family did not approve of him being Muslim. He also believes that his converting to Islam strongly influenced his parents' decision to get divorced.

Shuaib experienced a great deal of pressure from both sides to choose their particular religion (his maternal grandmother wanted him to be Muslim and his father wanted him to be

Christian). During his transition from being involved in and practising both religions his friends nicknamed him “Tupac” (after the reportedly religiously confused rap icon) and he has retained the nickname to this day. He describes the household environment as difficult, tense and frustrating and is conflicted because he feels that although it was not always an ideal situation he gained a great deal from the experience and argues that it made him who he is.

4.2.3 Reeza

Reeza is a 19 year old Indian male. His mother was born Christian and his father Muslim. When his parents got married his mother converted to Islam. His parents got divorced when he was young and they agreed that their children would follow the religion of whichever parent they lived with. His older brother lived with his mother and converted to Christianity and he lived with his father and remained Muslim. He grew up in a religiously heterogeneous situation because although his parents were divorced he was exposed to both religions in his immediate family unit as well as his extended family.

He identifies as Muslim but reportedly practices a combination of the two religions and does not adhere strictly to the rules and requirements of either. His older brother recently married a Muslim woman who converted to Christianity once they were married. He considers himself to have grown up in a religiously heterogeneous household because his immediate and extended families are mixed in terms of religion. Reeza’s contribution is unique in that he does not conceptualise his family’s religious setup as different and this may have influenced his experience and the feelings associated with that.

4.2.4 Faizel

Faizel is a 23 year old Coloured male. His mother is Christian and his father Muslim. They are still married and neither of his parents ever converted to the other's religion. His parents were married in court. His parent's agreed that when they had children they would expose them to both religions and allow them to decide for themselves what they wanted to be. Both Faizel and his younger sister chose Islam and are now Muslim.

His extended family, with the exception of his paternal grandmother, were supportive of the household situation but had their doubts about the way the children were to be raised. His paternal grandmother disapproved of the situation because his mother did not convert and also because she was opposed to the agreement to expose the children to both religions. He speaks greatly to the idea that the household he grew up in is not the norm but he values what it taught him.

4.2.5 Mischka

Mischka is an 18 year old Coloured female. Her parents were married for more than twenty years but are now divorced. Her mother is Christian and her father Muslim. Her mother converted to Islam shortly after her parents were married but converted back to Christianity later on in the marriage. She currently lives with her mother but her father is still very involved in her day to day life. Her mother's converting back to Christianity reportedly caused a great deal of conflict in the household and ultimately led to her parents' divorce.

She experiences a lot of pressure from both her parents to choose their respective religion. She identifies and is identified as Muslim but she insists that she is still undecided and that she will make the decision for herself when her parents are no longer so involved in her personal life.

4.2.6 Amy

Amy is an 18 year old White female. Her father is Jewish and her mother Christian. Neither of her parents ever converted. Her parents are still married. She was exposed to both religions equally and was allowed to come to a decision by herself. She is not pressured to be either Jewish or Christian and she enjoys learning about and experiencing different religions. She currently identifies more with the Jewish faith. She has an older sister who identifies more with the Christian faith.

4.3 Research Findings: Results

4.3.1 Over-arching themes (group themes)

4.3.1.1 Making sense of religion

The religiously heterogeneous situation the participants grew up in gave rise to a myriad of ideas and feelings relating to religion. These include a latent acknowledgement that their household is not the norm and the difficulty associated with negotiating that. There is also a great deal of questioning and grappling with differences between the two religions and feelings of frustration, confusion, resentment, and being caught in the middle associated with that.

How I grew up wasn't a normal situation

"...Look Roxie... how I grew up wasn't a normal situation..." Faizel

"... It was just like different ja..." Ryan

The extracts provided above speak to an acknowledgement that their situation is different and that negotiating that difference can be difficult. The norm referred to here is that most households are religiously homogeneous despite the fact that religiously

heterogeneous marriages are becoming more common (Williams & Lawler, 2001). The household's divergence from the norm could give rise to a set of difficulties. These difficulties include choosing a religion, the conflict that may occur in the household as a result of religious differences and negotiating the household's religious heterogeneity in the other environments they are exposed to. The literature broadly validates this by arguing that the religiously heterogeneous household is less desirable than the religiously homogeneous household because of the negative consequences associated with it (Petts & Knoester, 2007; Regenerus & Burdette, 2006).

While the individual who grows up in a religiously heterogeneous household has a set of unique difficulties to deal with they are also disadvantaged because their household situation is not the norm and this could impede the resolution of the difficulties associated with it. The households perceived divergence from the norm (in terms of religion) could potentially give rise to a limited existing knowledge base or idea as to how such situations could be made to work. Therefore, because the situation is rare the participants may not have examples of how the situation can be negotiated in such a way that the difficulties associated with it are reduced. It could also be made more difficult by people who do not understand the situation and unintentionally make the experience more difficult for the participant.

Conversely, in one specific interview where Reeza grew up in a family with many mixed marriages on both sides of the family the dynamic changed. Reeza was very comfortable with the idea of being in a mixed marriage himself and reported that it was likely that he would end up in a religiously mixed marriage.

"...Because my whole family... they all had mixed marriages..." Reeza

"...Well for me it's normal because I've grown up with it like that..." Reeza

“...I’m kind of in the middle... I just have my own beliefs that I believe in God and stuff...”

Reeza

This could be as a result of the fact that he was exposed to many mixed marriages and it wasn’t an exceptional or overly stigmatised situation in his experience. His exposure to other mixed marriages may have normalised the situation to him but it may also have had the added benefit of providing him with examples of how a mixed marriage could work in reality. It could also speak to his reported conceptualisation of religion as being “*man-made*” and a distinct focus on the similarities of the religions (God and the idea of living a morally sound life which is present in both religions) as opposed to the differing symbols and forms of practice.

Which one is right because both of them are

“... You know those times where you question what is what...which one is right because both of them are...” Ryan

“... There was a stage in my life; I wasn’t really sure what I was... It was a lot on me between the ages of 14 and 16...that’s where I lost myself... my compass didn’t even work at that stage.” Shuaib

“... I don’t really like comparing religions...” Shuaib

*“...I don’t really take religion serious... I kind of practice both religions... I am kind of in the middle...”*Reeza

“... You learn about this and that and then you compare the two. See which one suits you best...” Faizel

“... I still sort of follow what I draw from both...” Mischka

All of the participants refer definitively to a time in their lives where they questioned religion and more specifically which religion they should choose to be faithful to. This period is characterised by feelings of being lost, confused, feeling ambiguous views about comparing religions and attempts at reconciling the differences between the religions by focussing on what they have in common. The period described here closely approximates Fowler and Dell's fourth stage of faith development, the individuative-reflective faith (Fowler & Dell, 2005). This stage occurs during young adulthood, the age of the participants. This stage is characterised by an ability to reflect on the values and beliefs of significant others that were accepted in the previous stage and the development of an identity that is not attached to the ideas and teachings from former stages. The feelings they describe as characterising this stage (being lost, confused and trying to make sense of the two religions) corresponds with the struggles associated with the process of establishing an identity as described by Fowler and Dell (2005).

The resolution of this period has many different outcomes. Two of the participants (Ryan and Mischka) are reportedly undecided and are currently participating in both religions (whilst negotiating an interim middle ground for themselves) but are adamant that they will make a decision and they idealise the idea of being committed to one religion. Two of them have committed themselves to one religion (Shuaib and Faizel). One of the remaining two participants (Reeza) identifies as Muslim and is not open to converting but reports that he adheres to aspects of both religions but follows neither strictly. The remaining participant (Amy) also adheres to aspects of both religions but doesn't identify strongly with either of the religions. Williams and Lawler (2001) argue that household religious heterogeneity is associated with decreased levels of religious participation. My findings suggest that it may not be that simple. For the undecided participants there is a desire to decide and they still participate in both religions. The participants who have committed to a religion participate in

that religion. The participants who have merged the ideas of both religions also participate in both religions. As a result, although there may not always be commitment to one specific religion the participants do participate (often in both) religions they are exposed to.

Throughout the interviews I got the distinct sense that the participants idealise the idea of not having to choose a religion. This makes sense considering the apparent difficulty that comes with making this decision. It must seem like a far less complicated way of finding yourself religiously, although in reality this may not always be the case.

Feelings associated with having two religions to choose from

The feelings associated with growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household are predominantly negative. They include frustration, confusion, resentment and being stuck in the middle.

I felt frustrated

“... I felt frustrated... because I feel like I have to pay for something I have no control over... I think it could have been avoided...” Mischka

“... I need more direction...” Ryan

Feelings of frustration relating to the situation were common. This was often related to pressure exerted by parents and extended families to make the decision they preferred. The participants also experienced frustration because they feel that it is an issue that their parents should have accounted for and handled. They also feel frustrated with the situation and the difficulty they experience in trying to make a decision between the two religions.

Now I feel like I am floating

“... It's not just like one option you have to follow you can think about it...” Ryan

“... I kind of practice both religions...” Reeza

“... Cause now I feel like I am floating...” Mischka

Being exposed to two different religions and having the option to choose arguably confuses the participants. They are not only confused as to which religion to choose but the decision is complicated when their parents and extended families have a stake in the decision. Which religion do you choose and on what grounds do you base such a decision?

It wasn't always happy moments in my life

“... It's difficult at a young age...” Ryan

“... It's very difficult man... It wasn't always happy moments in life...” Shuaib

“...If they'd handled it better... if they'd handled it better then I think that my mother and my father could have maybe, could have decided on maybe guidelines...” Mischka

“...And a bit of resentment towards my father...” Mischka

In speaking about their experiences it becomes clear that the participants experienced some difficulty in negotiating their situations. Moreover, there are often feelings of resentment (towards parents or members of their extended families) given rise to by the religious differences and potential conflict the situation holds. Participants feel resentment towards parents for having put them in this situation or for not supporting them when they made a decision. They also feel resentment towards extended families for making the experience more difficult and towards friends who are not supportive because they do not understand the situation.

It's no use being stuck in the middle

"...Cause it's no use being stuck in the middle. You do believe but you don't know which way to go to..." Ryan

"...I was just in the middle of the two..." Shuaib

"... I am kind of in the middle..." Reeza

Feelings of being stuck in the middle may stem from two things. Either the participant feels as though they are stuck in terms of choosing a religion or in more figurative terms their religion exists in between the two religions of their parents. The former speaks to the participants struggling to make a decision and are left feeling stuck between the two religions. The latter speaks to the way some of the participants make sense of religion and negotiate the choice between the two religions they are exposed to.

4.3.1.2 Making the decision

Making the decision was an integral theme for all the participants. Two participants have already decided between the two religions and have committed themselves to one. The remaining participants are either still deciding or have merged ideas from both religions in a way that suits them. It becomes apparent that making the decision is a process that may go on for years and is very intricate to negotiate because there are a number of factors to consider. The following section discusses some of the more prominent aspects of the participant's experience of making the decision. This includes the desire to decide, feelings associated with being undecided, reasons for making the decision once it's made, aspects of the process and the tendency to equate choosing a religion to choosing a parent.

Which way are you gonna go with a religion

“...Ja you need reason to believe that joh which way are you gonna go with a religion...”

Ryan

“...I need more direction...” Ryan

“...Somebody that is following a religion they are more set on a path than a person that doesn't have a religion...” Faizel

“...Now I just feel like I'm floating, like I'm in just being carried, I am being carried because of the past happenings...” Mischka

The idea of having one definitive religion appeals to the participants. It reportedly gives one a reason to believe, direction and a set path. All of which speaks to the ideas of certainty, structure and control. Given that the situation often gives rise to feelings of frustration, confusion and being lost it stands to reason that they seek certainty, structure and more control.

Needing a reason, direction and a set path speaks to the participants' desire for a more certainty and stability in terms of religion. They romanticize the notion of having one religion because of the negative aspects associated with their own situations (confusion, frustration and being lost).

It's probably wrong of me because sometimes I will go to church, you know and sometimes I'll go to mosque

“... It's probably wrong of me because sometimes I will go to church, you know and sometimes I'll go to mosque... There's probably a lot of judgement you know from outside...”

There's a lot of things that they will ask me about and I will just answer that I'll decide when I am ready then you will know..." Ryan

There exists a latent belief that being undecided is "probably wrong". This may be due to the fact that outside of the immediate household environment the participants are largely exposed to people who grew up in religiously homogeneous households. This could make the situation appear more different than it already is. This influences how they assume that others perceive them and their situation which in turn may make them feel as though they are not abiding by the expectations of the society in which they live. This could lead to them experiencing pressure to conform to the standard of being committed to one religion.

I'm still not one hundred percent sure where I am

"... I'm still not one hundred percent sure where I am..." Ryan

"... Have that feeling of being lost..." Shuaib

"... They don't know where their life is headed..." Faizel

"...I don't feel comfortable in a mosque. I feel out of my wits a bit. And uhm... in church, if I do go to church. I kind of, it goes over my head too..." Mischka

Being undecided is strongly associated with feeling lost. The participants speak about not being sure where they are and where their lives are headed and this may speak to not knowing where they fit in or where they belong religiously. This may give rise to feelings of uncertainty and feeling uncomfortable in religious settings because they do not feel as though they truly belong there.

It was just choosing the lesser evil

“... I am not saying Christianity is wrong. Definitely. I just feel that I have my... I see myself as a Muslim... And I told myself I am going to do Islam... Doesn't matter what my mother thinks or my father...” Shuaib

“...I won't change my religion. That I believe you just don't change. The way you were born.

...” Reeza

“...And then it just came to where you learn about this and that and then you compare the two. See which one suits you best...” Faizel

“...It was just choosing the lesser evil...” Mischka

The extracts above illustrate that there are many ways to come to a decision. It may happen that the participant simply feels more connected to one religion than the other, as in Shuaib's case. It may also have come from careful thought and consideration about what suited them best, as with Faizel. In Reeza's case although he was a great deal more liberal in terms of marriage and child-rearing in mixed marriages, he insisted that he was born Muslim and would not change. This could speak to his ideas about religion, one gets the sense that the religion he identifies with is arbitrary because he has found ways to reconcile the differences between the two religions for himself already. It may quite simply seem unnecessary to him to change religions. The “choosing the lesser evil” comment can be misleading when read out of context. The participant describes her currently identifying as Muslim as doing so simply because it was the easier option. She explains that both her parents try to draw her towards their religions but that the consequences associated with choosing her mother's religion as opposed to her father's religion were too big. She reports that he would disown her. She continues to explain that although her mother was disappointed she was more reasonable and

understanding. Her decision was therefore based on her parents and how they would handle it.

I must now choose between my father and my mother

“...It seems like I must now choose between my father and my mother. Which side am I gonna go and if I go to this side is the other one gonna feel bad and if I go to that side what is this one gonna do? ...” Ryan

“...You wanna make right by one of them ...” Ryan

“...Ever since I converted to Muslim you could see it. He don't like the fact that I chose my mother's religion...” Shuaib

“...Because you don't want to disappoint the one, you don't want to disappoint the other ...”
Faizel

“...And I am a child I want to please both my parents... I need to be in a surrounding or environment where they don't play a role. So that I can see what I like...” Mischka

“...But God understands what situation I am in and as long as I know that He is there, I think it's okay, like it can't be that bad... And He [God] is just exempting me for a while” Mischka

When the participants speak about choosing a religion it becomes apparent that there is a great deal more to it than just choosing one of the two religions. For these participants choosing a religion can be equated to choosing a parent. Choosing a religion apparently does not happen without aligning yourself with a parent in some or other way regardless of the reasons for the decision or whether it was intentional or not. This feeling that it is a choice between the parents often stems from pressure from the parents themselves or from the child's appraisal of the way their parents will feel and respond to their decision. Mahoney

(2005) contends that this conflict may occur because parents may have different views about how to raise children and which religion the children should be affiliated with.

In Shuaib's case it can be seen that there is pressure, often not overtly expressed to choose a particular religion. This can be seen in the fact that once he made the decision he explains that he could see his father did not approve of the decision he had made. This pressure transforms choosing a religion into choosing a parent and this makes deciding more complicated because it may have a negative effect on the relationship with the other parent.

In the instance of Ryan it becomes clear that his appraisal of potentially disappointing one parent is hindering his desire and ability to make the decision. The idea that choosing a religion can be reduced to choosing a parent is thus seen to once more complicate the child's negotiation of an already difficult situation. Similarly, Mischka is also undecided because she feels that she is unable to make a decision true to what she wants whilst she is still living with and being influenced by her parents. In this instance the pressure to please both parents is keeping her from being fulfilled religiously. Therefore, obstacles created by pressure from parents may hinder the child's ability to make the decision in far-reaching, indelible ways. Furthermore, for Mischka there are feelings of guilt associated with not being committed to a specific religion. The guilt she experiences stems from the fact that she feels that God has been good to her and that she hasn't been able to repay Him for it. She reconciles this conflict by explaining that God has temporarily exempted her because He understands her situation and that she will make it up to Him one day.

4.3.1.3 Idealising religiously homogeneous households and valuing the lessons gained from living in a religiously heterogeneous household

Throughout the interview process it becomes clear that participants are conflicted between the difficulties that the religiously heterogeneous situation held and the valuable

lessons they gained from it. It could be seen that every time they found themselves speaking about a difficult experience they followed it up by describing a positive aspect about the situation. This may be due to the fact that a lot of the issues experienced by growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household were resolved by the participants or it could speak to feelings of guilt associated with speaking negatively about their parents or the household. In order to account for that I asked participants if they would ever marry a person of a different religion to theirs and the majority of the participants said that they would avoid that as far as they could because they wouldn't want their kids to grow up the way they did. At this point I got the impression that the participants felt like they did the best they could with their situation but that it wasn't ideal and they would not want their own children experiencing what they did.

I just have friends with parents who have both religions the same

"... Probably like you know going forward if I want to like decide on the choice to get married then what will I get married as? Christian or Muslim? What will my children grow up as? I can't let them go through two different paths ... Maybe they will also be confused like me" Ryan

"...It's very difficult man. To grow up in two households. You know. Very difficult what I say I can't perfectly describe what I've gone through but I got. But ja. The person. The stuff that I've gone through made me a stronger person. Ja..." Shuaib

"...If I look at friends. There's no, how can I put it now, there's no stress on which religion to follow. You brought up in that way and that's it. They following one religion. Whereas in a different situation, you have to learn both and you have to decide..." Faizel

“... If you look at my friendships. Now that I think about it I just have friends with parents who have both religions the same. I don't know why I chose them. But maybe I like it because like when I am in their house it's a different vibe there because they go to church together, they pray together...” Mischka

“... But then, my one friend where they are church going people. Every Sunday. They follow the religion and she enjoys praising. Then I have another friend, her family follow the same religion yet she abhors going to church but she is forced to go every week. It also made me think like it's not always good when your parents are the same religion. That's not guaranteed. Maybe she needs to find herself too...” Mischka

The participants are inclined to think that growing up in a religiously homogeneous household is easier than the way they grew up, regardless of how they navigated and resolved the situation. There is a sense that they would have preferred growing up in a religiously homogeneous household. As an extension of this some of the participants idealise the religiously homogeneous household and they tend to assume that being exposed to one religion in the household guarantees that they are committed to that religion. This argument is substantiated by Petts and Knoester's (2007) proposition that familial religious homogeneity contributes to the well-being of the married couple and the children. However, this may not be true for everyone.

Mischka speaks explicitly to idealising the religiously homogenous household. Firstly she mentions the way things are done in the religiously homogeneous family of her one friend. She speaks with fondness and veneration of the situation. Then she proceeds to describe that another one of her friends whose family is also religiously homogeneous but she is not happy religiously and dislikes going to church. She then concludes that perhaps

religious homogeneity does not always ensure religious fulfilment and that her friend perhaps has to find herself just as much as she does.

It is however understandable that the participants conceptualise the religiously homogeneous household as more desirable because of their personal experiences, but also because that may be how they have experienced religiously homogeneous families they have been exposed to.

Both helped me get where I am now

“...There’s like from the Christian side that I experience and things from the Muslim side that I experienced that like both helped me get where I am now...” Ryan

“...If I didn’t go through that stuff I wouldn’t be the way. I wouldn’t be the person I am today. You know. Ja...” Shuaib

“...So basically it just taught, it. If I can make a comparison people that grew up in one house following one religion are not as, how do you say, as understanding or as into learning about another person’s religion? Their way is the only way...” Faizel

Often times the participants follow up a negative comment they have made about their household situation with examples of how they benefitted from the situation. This may be because speaking negatively about their household or parents may give rise to feelings of guilt and disloyalty and saying something positive afterward appeases those feelings. It may also be because they genuinely appreciate their experiences because they value the lessons it taught them and the views they developed because of it.

Although the participants have made sense of and resolved their experiences in difficult ways they all have one thing in common. A profound appreciation that the way they

grew up made them who they are and they are proud of that. They speak with pride of the fact that they are very sensitive to and tolerant of other people's religions.

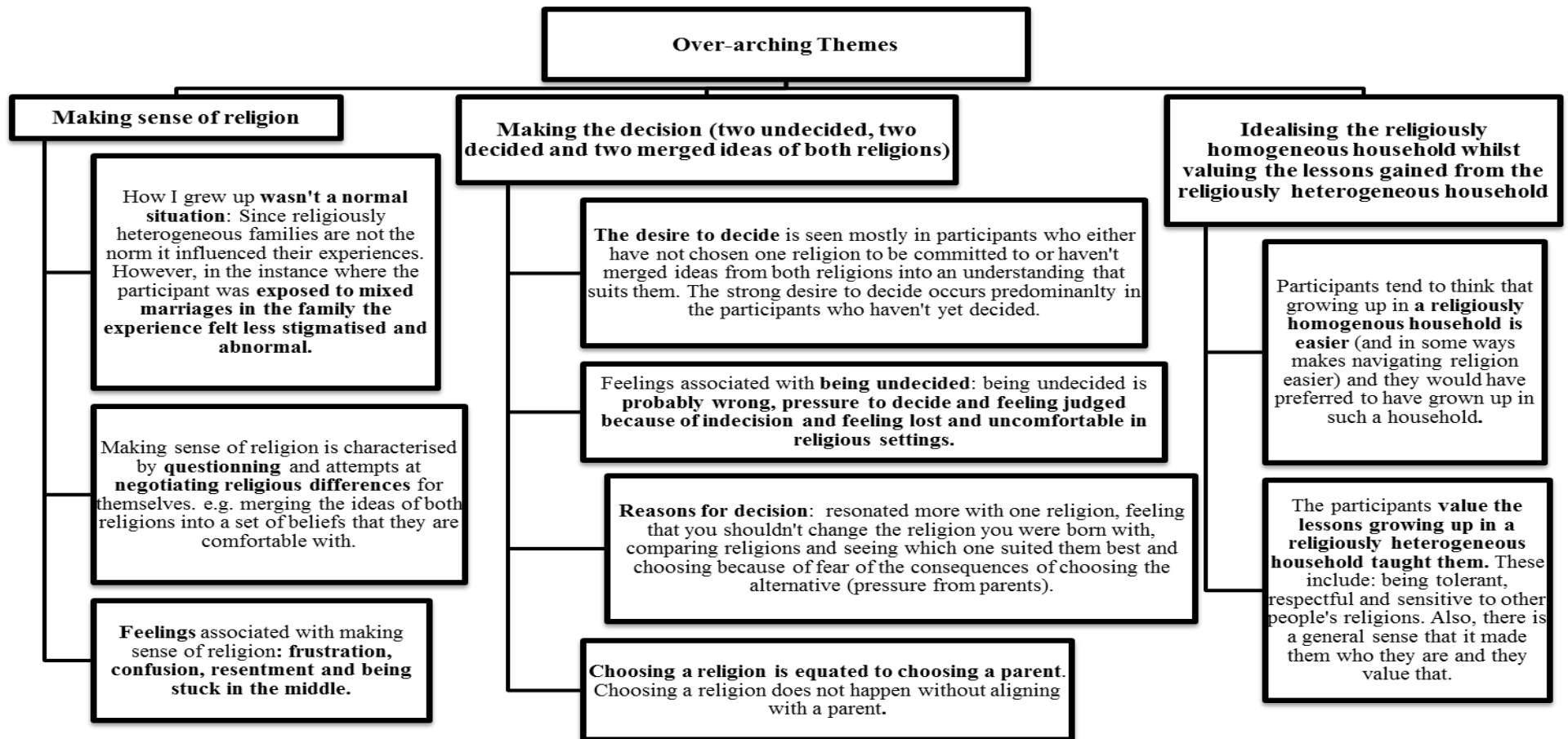


Figure 4.1 Over-arching themes

4.3.2 Explicit theme

4.3.2.1 Divorce

Of the six participants, both Faizel and Amy's parents are still married and the remaining four participants' (Ryan, Shuaib, Reeza and Mischka) parents are divorced. The participant's whose parents are still married were both exposed to both religions and were allowed to decide for themselves when they were ready which religion they wanted to affiliate with. These participants were more likely to describe their parents as "not practising" their religion. They describe their parents as supportive of each other's religions and they report to have experienced no pressure from their parents about making the decision or to choose a particular religion. The extended families in these instances were also supportive and accommodating to the participant's household situation. These participants do not speak to conflict in the household being brought about by religious differences and describe the experience of a religiously heterogeneous household as mostly pleasant.

The participants whose parents are divorced were more likely to describe their parents as unsupportive of each other's religions. They speak about arguments and conflict in the household often stemming from religious differences. These participants were also exposed to both religions but their parents were more likely to pressure or try to sway them towards a particular religion. Extended families often played a bigger role in the lives of the household in the instance of these participants. They were often not supportive and in some instances meddled and aggravated an already difficult situation. These participants spoke more to experiencing difficulty, frustration and confusion and although they feel that their experiences made them who they are the experiences they reported were not pleasant for the most part.

Parents still married

“...Ja look my mother wasn't keen on giving up her religion. My father also ja. So they just came to a common agreement. But when myself and my sister were involved it was basically raise the children, teach them both religions and let them decide what they want...” Faizel

“...at school there was mos Bible Study and stuff like that. We did that at school and normal after school madrassa. And then it just came to where you learn about this and that and then you compare the two. See which one suits you best...” Faizel

“...The house I grew up in we have a very open relationship. Look I chose the Muslim religion but when we have talks and stuff we still speak in general...” Faizel

“...We were brought up with both religions. We practiced both, I went to church, I went to synagogue. We were open to experience both sides of it. My parents encouraged us to experience all that we wanted to. They didn't encourage us to go either way. They said we could go for something totally different that we were comfortable with. And we were shown the different sides of each religion. The good and the bad. Neither of my parents actually practised so they allowed us to experience everything...” Amy

*“.... Neither of my parents actually practised so they allowed us to experience everything...”
Amy*

“...Well my own personality is to naturally rebel and I know that about myself. So I would have rebelled against that religion. I probably would have gone and found some completely random religion. I probably would have turned atheist or something. And now that I have been exposed to both and I experienced new things I got to make up my own mind about what feels right and whatever...” Amy

“...I have a friend who also grew up in a half Christian half Jewish family. The Jewish side doesn't accept the Christian side and the Christian side doesn't accept the Jewish side. It's horrible for him. Eventually his dad converted to Christianity. I don't agree with that, I don't think you should have to lose your faith because you love someone...” Amy

Where participants report their parents are still married a distinct set of similarities arise. Parents' religious participation is limited in some ways. There seemed to have been an agreement about neither of the parents converting and that the children would be exposed to both religions and allowed to decide for themselves when they were ready. This agreement then materialised and was implemented in such a way that the children could actually explore their options in a safe environment without pressure and once they decided their decision was respected. The parents were involved in each other's religious holidays and they were supportive of each other's religions.

The way the parents managed their religious differences can thus be argued to have had an influence on the experiences the child had, growing up in that household. In these instances the children tend to have a more pleasant experience exploring and finding their own way religiously. They speak greatly to enjoying learning about other religions and report that they are more sensitive and tolerant to other people's religions.

The way the parents resolved and negotiated these differences could speak to the fact that they do not practice their religions strictly and are more liberal. This proposition is substantiated by Williams and Lawler (2001), who argue that religious heterogeneity may lead to decreased levels of religious participation. It may be that the less vehement the parents are in their beliefs, the easier it is for them to compromise on their differences. This may create the space that gives rise to some of the pleasant or positive experiences associated with growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household.

Parents divorced

“...Mostly there was a lot of tension. A lot of arguments that came up about the same topic, that my mother got married to a Christian guy who didn’t convert to Islam...” Shuaib

“..That’s the issue cause he wanted me to stay Christian...” Shuaib

“...: I don’t like arguing over that. This cause it leads to... I couldn’t handle seeing my parents fight you know...” Shuaib

“... I felt like my father forced my mother...” Mischka

“... my mother and my father are very passionate about their religions...” Mischka

“... If they’d handled it better then I think that my mother and my father could have maybe, could have decided on maybe guidelines. So that there wasn’t this blurry lines causing conflict...” Mischka

“...From what I understand my mother she liked dressing up and my father never had any problems with her revealing clothes before they were married. Then after they got married and she converted to Islam that became a problem...” Mischka

“...Cause there was always a lot of conflict between my mother and father... It was always damage control as a child...” Mischka

From the extracts above it can be seen that the participants whose parents are divorced dealt with things very differently to those that are still married. Parents could be seen to have been more vehement in their different beliefs. There is a clear sense that there was more tension in the household. The parents or families were pulling the children in different directions religiously because attached to their religions are diverging ideas on how the children should be raised. The parents argue about religious issues and the uncertainty with

which the children are raised aggravates this (Mahoney, 2005). It also comes through strongly that the arguments and conflict present in these households stemmed from a lack of discussion and agreement of how religious differences would be mediated in the household by the parents (Shehan, Bock & Lee, 1990).

There seemed to be increased levels of conflict about diverging religious views in these households and an argument can be made for this resulting in divorce (Lehrer and Cheswick, 1993). Therefore it appears as though the parents' negotiation of religious differences may have influenced the amount of conflict in the household and this in turn influences the likelihood of divorce. Religious difference itself therefore does not cause divorce but rather, the increased conflict and reduced levels of marital satisfaction associated with these religious differences. This is substantiated by the fact that in Faizel and Amy's cases, where parents were described as being supportive of each other's religions and having had a clear plan of how the children would be raised there were notably fewer reports of conflict and no divorce. The parents' management of religious differences can therefore be seen as a risk or protective factor in terms of divorce.

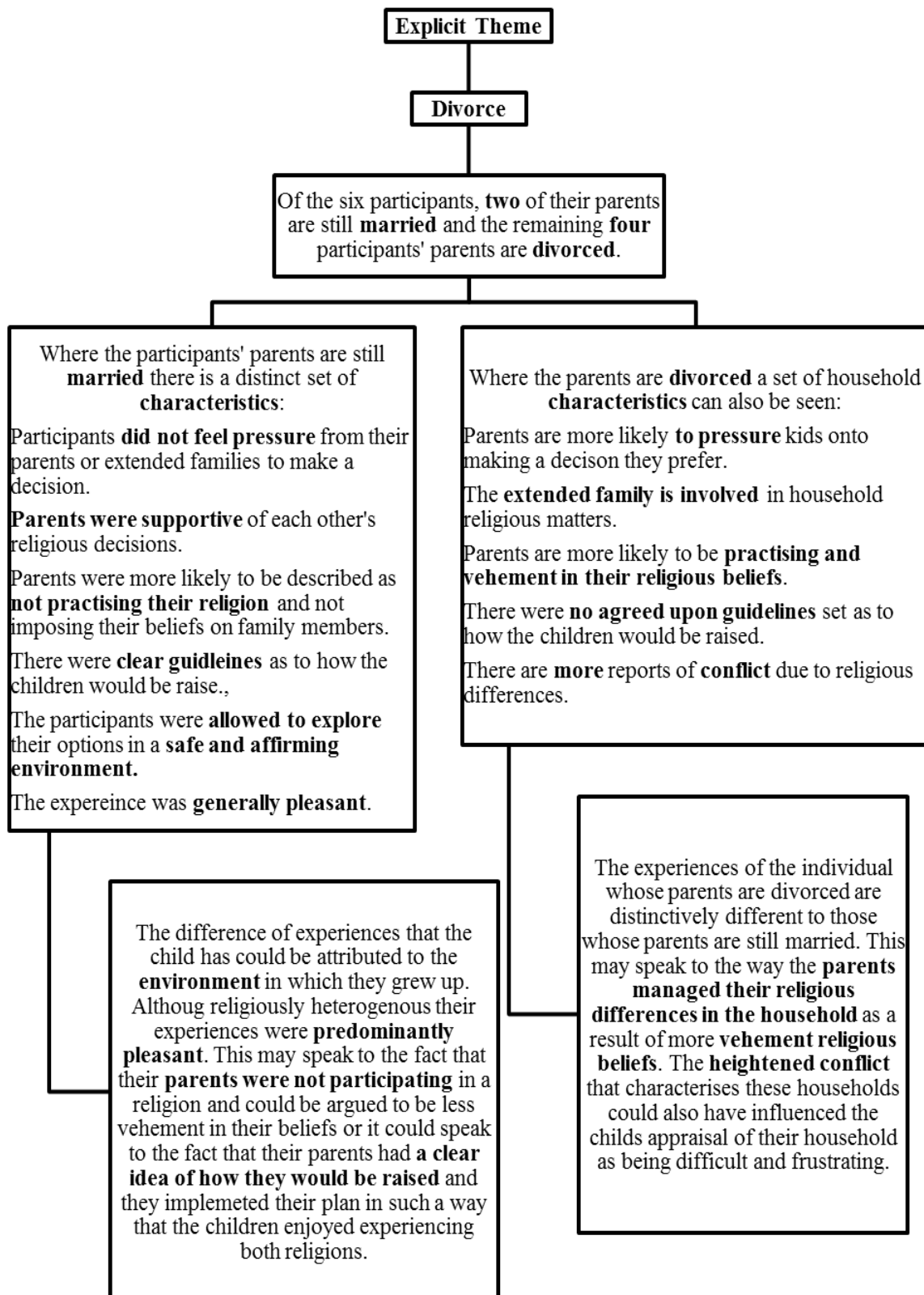


Figure 4.2 Explicit theme

4.3.3 Peripheral themes (interesting issues)

4.3.3.1 They should accept me for who I am

“...There’s probably a lot of judgement you know from outside...” Ryan

“...Like say for example when me and my dad go to mosque and I am fully dressed and everything and you know you just get those looks from people and they don’t say it but its there...” Ryan

“... Maybe you coming out of mosque and you get an Uncle or something like that that says; “you need to come sit down so we can change you now” and things like that...” Ryan

“...: I did get judged in school because I had a Christian name but I kept Muslim beliefs...”
Ryan

“...The people that didn’t know like which religion I follow. Those people, there’s a lot of things that they will ask me about and I will just answer that I’ll decide when I am ready then you will know...” Ryan

“...Me being a Muslim to them is like I am being a hypocrite because I was born Christian and now I converted so to them it’s like spitting sand in their mouths...” Shuaib

“...I feel sometimes you know that they shouldn’t because they should accept me for who I am...” Shuaib

“...You know like I am now downgrading your religion. You know how people are...” Shuaib

“...Like Ramadaan I would wear a kofia to school you know. Then they would now ask me why you doing this and things, is it a joke...” Shuaib

“...I get lots of flak from other Muslim girls cause, cause uhm... because my mother is Christian and my father is Muslim like I obviously have a bit of both. But the Muslims, someone not as staunch as they are, they say I am Muslim but I then wear nail polish and such things...” Mischka

“...And then you get Christian girls that like aren't religious or anything but they call you a “water slams”... Ja like oros. Ja like other Muslims would be like the bottle of concentrate, where I'd be the less concentrated more water to oros ratio...” Mischka

Feeling judged and misunderstood by the outside world seemed to be a trend among the participants. The participants reported feeling as though the people outside of their families did not understand their situation and they often felt as though they had to explain themselves to other people. There was also an element of pressure from outside to choose one religion. The participants also reported feelings of not being accepted and not belonging especially in religious settings and the peer group environment.

Shuaib who converted from Christianity to Islam at the age of 11 reported that his friends may have felt betrayed and that he felt as though his converting would be received as an insult to them as Christians. Negotiating this with them was very difficult because they considered him a hypocrite and he did not feel that they accepted him for who he wanted to be. His friends nicknamed him “Tupac”, after religiously confused rap icon. He speaks fondly of this name and harbours no resentment about it but it also says a lot about the way his friends saw him.

Mischka explains what it is to feel judged within the peer group from both Muslim and Christian girls. She gets judged from both sides for not being completely committed to either religion. She reports being called a “water slams” and equates herself (religiously) to diluted “Oros” concentrate. Essentially the Muslim girls did not respect her as a Muslim because she did not follow the rules they did as strictly as they did (e.g. she wore nail polish). And the Christian girls did the same regardless of whether they followed the rules of their own religion strictly and this irritated her. She felt overwhelmed by the judgement because she hated having to explain her household situation to people because it’s “exhausting” and they don’t understand anyway.

4.3.3.2 Religious heterogeneity outside the household

The extended families

Both families were very open

“... There wasn’t really a problem because of his background mos now ... They were fine with it...” Ryan

“...There was no funny business ...” Faizel

“...Before they got married they went the normal way of now asking parents and my mother’s parents were cool about it. They just wanted to know if there is children how are they gonna make then? It’s gonna be difficult circumstances for the kids growing up. And then both my mother and my father sat down and they explained the agreement they came to. Teach them both religions and let the children decide. On my father’s side I must say my grandmother; she wasn’t too keen on it... She didn’t like the idea of it but she respected their wishes...”

Faizel

“... Both families were very open, they got on very well, very accepting... My Grandfather, on my dad’s side, he used to practice mainly. Uhm... he did think that my sister and I should be brought up Jewish because of the fact so the faith could go on and we were actually Jewish, my dad being Jewish. He did think that we were more Jewish than what we presented... He would have liked it...” Amy

The participants who reported having supportive family members describe their extended families as being accepting and open to the different religions. There were instances where the family raised concerns about the way the kids would be raised but they respected the parents’ decision. In other instances the family would have preferred for one of the parents to convert or for the kids to be exposed to one religion but it was not forced upon the religiously heterogeneous family.

The participants who describe the extended families as being supportive and accommodating are the same ones who report less household conflict, freedom to make their own decision without pressure and parents who are still married. This may be because the extended family acts as a protective factor to the household and creates an environment in which the children feel comfortable.

All of them weren’t very welcoming

“...I could see that my mother’s family are Muslim and my father was Christian so they didn’t like really speak with each other. We didn’t have much family gatherings. If there were then people from my mother’s side they wouldn’t pitch up because you know gharaam and halaal. And my Christian family didn’t actually like that...” Shuaib

“...My grandmother didn’t at all, at all like my father...” Shuaib

“... Sometimes it will be awkward like when I’m with my father’s family, they’ll speak about my mother and that then I’ll be like “oh, okay”. The same with my mother’s family, if I am with them and they speak about this family and it’s a bit weird... I just leave it. I just let it go...” Reeza

“... My father’s side is Muslim, staunchly so... They were the ones that were pressuring my father... All of them weren’t very welcoming of my mother into the family at the onset ...”

Mischka

“...On my mother’s side the whole family is Christian and er they, I don’t think they liked the idea of my mother converting either because both her sisters were still Christian. And at family functions and stuff like that it is a bit of an inconvenience having to make the food halaal when all of them are Christian, only like for two of us that are Muslim. Maybe they also didn’t like the dynamics of the relationship between my parents, I’d say. Because they know my mother’s personality. She’s very strong, independent but not like if it comes to my father, then she succumbs to my father maybe that made them worry a bit....” Mischka

The participants who describe their extended families as disapproving of their parents’ marriage and household situation speak more negatively of their extended families. There seems to be some conflict between the families and pressure from both sides on the parents to do things differently. In the instances of Muslim and Christian extended families the issue of gharaam and halaal (the Islamic idea of what is permissible and prohibited, in this case food) comes up as a practical issue of contention between the families.

When the families do not get along it creates a difficult situation for the child because they are members of both sides of the family. Often times however, this is what happens. The child may therefore feel uncomfortable and confused as to what to say if they speak

negatively about each other. The extended family therefore can be said to influence the child's experience of their household situation.

It's definitely not a thing you want to explain every day

"... School was, especially now with the two religions school was quite intense... it's because people didn't know what I was you see. Then they tell me this... my Christian name is Shaun... It worked very hard on me because some people wouldn't accept me for who I want to be you know..." Shuaib

"...So that was hard at school. It even came to a stage in life where I failed school and I went... I failed grade 9 ja. That's the stage between 14 and 16. That's where I lost myself..."
Shuaib

"...I'll like go to RI [Religious Instruction] and I'll sit there and think about other things because I don't, like because of everything that happened in our household, I feel like religion is forced down my throat and then I just turn away. It's a, it's actually like a physical, like a uncomfortable like... ja. It's like when someone touches you and you don't want to be touched and you just shrug it off. That's how I feel about religion at school ..."
Mischka

"...I get super defensive. I feel uncomfortable, maybe feel a bit, not really taken aback, but I feel a bit like who are you to ask me. Like I understand that you don't understand but like it's not a thing that you want to explain every day. It's definitely not a thing you want to explain every day..." Mischka

Being from a religiously heterogeneous household may influence the child's experiences outside the home and family environment. The school environment emerged as an environment that could potentially have a detrimental influence on children from

religiously heterogeneous homes. In reports on their experiences at school it becomes clear that the participants felt like misunderstood because they were judged by the standards of one religion but in reality they subscribed to both. Attached to this was frustration about having to explain themselves and their beliefs to people who questioned them. They also reported feeling as though they were not accepted completely by their peers who subscribed to either of the religions they were exposed to. This may make the participants feel as though they do not belong.

The school environment was complicated because people did not understand the household situations the participants were growing up in and were curious about it. The participants were questioned about which religion they identified with and were judged when they weren't as pious as they were expected to be. This was not well received by the participants because they were forced to explain to other's what they themselves perhaps did not quite understand yet. This may have resulted in the participants feeling judged and uncomfortable at school.

They feel that I betrayed them

"... I have Christian friends so now they feel that me being Muslim and my father, say now my father has a Christian name they don't actually know I am close to my mother but they know my father so me being a Muslim to them is like I am being a hypocrite because I was born Christian and now I converted so to them it's like spitting sand in their mouths... They feel that I betrayed them..." Shuaib

"... . There was this one time they asked me to go with them to Mafikeng. So now I never knew it was like a youth thing. I never knew it was a youth thing so I think ever since I done such things with them you know they think I am all I don't know where I want to be..." Shuaib

Negotiating being exposed to two religions or converting from one religion to the other seems to be influenced by the peer group environment. In Shuaib's case his converting from Christianity to Islam was not well received by his friends. He feels as though they feel that his decision offended them and that they felt betrayed. In this instance his choosing a religion influenced the dynamic of his friendship circle.

I wouldn't date somebody who is extremely religious in something

"... My father told me one day, "don't you ever bring a Christian girl home and tell me you are going to marry her". And I looked at him and I was like he has no say in who I date and whatever ..." Reeza

"... The big thing is when it came to getting married. That is where the problem is gonna come... I wouldn't like to be in a situation like that. Look when I get married I want to get married to a Muslim woman..." Faizel

"... Listen, I don't like Muslim boys... Like any Muslim boys, it doesn't like matter who you are. I am not attracted to any Muslim boys and I think it's because even though I am Muslim, my mother's history with my father showed me how Muslim men they tend to change. But I don't regard myself as Muslim enough because I feel more comfortable in a Christian boy's house than in a Muslim boy's house. Because obviously I am not expected to know everything about the religion, if I don't know it then it's fine. But I am expected to know in a Muslim household, and then it's like what's wrong with me" Mischka

"...I wouldn't date somebody who is extremely religious in something I don't or that I can't believe. Only because that would conflict terribly and I don't think it would be a good person to get on with..." Amy

The participants report that religious heterogeneity often influences who they date. In the instance of Reza his father told him that he may not marry a Christian woman. This kind of overt pressure from the parents may stem from the fact that their religiously mixed marriages did not work and they do not want that for their child. It would appear therefore that growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household has far-reaching implications for the participants.

It may also influence the participant's preferences on who to date. Faizel for example, would prefer marrying a Muslim woman because he does not want his children to grow up in a similar situation to him. He feels that it puts strain on the child and he would prefer to avoid that. This may speak to him feeling as though growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household, although valuable in its own ways, was less than ideal. Mischka, although identifying as Muslim herself, is adamant that she does not like and date Muslim boys because she thinks they change and are prone to succumbing to pressure from their families. She also says that she does not feel Muslim enough amongst other Muslim people and this makes her uncomfortable in their homes. She reports that she feels more comfortable in a Christian household because she is not expected to know everything as she would be in a Muslim household. This may speak to feeling inadequate because she does not feel fully Muslim because she embraces both Islam and Christianity in her own way. Amy however does not prefer or avoid any particular religion when it comes to her dating preferences. She is opposed to dating someone who believes blindly and imposes their religion and beliefs on others. She describes herself as being open to other religions and enjoys learning and experiencing different religions but she feels that she would not be able to do this with a partner that is not as open to it as she is. Her preferences thus speak to the intensity of her partner's belief as opposed to what they believe in.

4.3.3.3 What it did teach me is to be very understanding

“... Ja I am basically open to any religion...” Ryan

“... There’s a lot of other people, we different. We all have our own view and our own opinions. So I can’t actually get angry at what you feel... I do have utmost you know respect for other religions...” Shuaib

“... I will respect other people’s decisions and I wouldn’t judge them or anything...” Reeza

“... What it did teach me is to be very understanding. You don’t mess with somebody’s religion because you wouldn’t want it done to you...” Faizel

“...I think it does make you more tolerant. Because like I told you I was exposed to two religions and uhm... I myself, I don’t have it figured out so I wouldn’t judge anybody else based on religion....” Mischka

“... I honestly believe that I am more open-minded, more tolerant and more accepting because I have been exposed to two and I have been allowed to make up my own mind. And I could see why people believe in their religions and I can see that no one religion is right...”

Amy

All of the participants report feeling more tolerant to other people’s religions. They account for this by saying that because they grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household they realise that religion is a sensitive issue and that valuing and respecting other people’s religions is important. They often feel that they are in no position to judge someone else’s beliefs when they are still confused and conflicted in some ways. They are aware that religion can be a difficult issue to navigate and they respect other people’s beliefs and decisions because they understand that it is a personal matter. They value the tolerance and respect of

other people's religious decisions that growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household taught them.

4.3.3.4 That's my name apparently

"... With my sister it was the same. Like I was born Ryan, she was born Stacey. And then like on my father's other side my step brother and sister they fully Muslim on that side..."

Ryan

"... My Christian name is Shaun. That's my name apparently. That's the name when I was born, I was named Shaun. So when I converted I told my mother I didn't want the name Shaun... I didn't want to be known as Shaun because it confused me sometimes..." Shuaib

Two of the participants, Ryan and Shuaib spoke to the idea that the name they were given at birth (whether it is a Muslim or Christian name) influenced their experiences growing up. In explaining that he was not fully Muslim, Ryan says that he was born "Ryan" perhaps implying that he was born Christian. Shuaib was named Shaun at birth and when he converted to Islam he insisted on being named Shuaib because he felt that it confused him. The name Shaun however stayed with him and confused his peers when he said he was Muslim. Negotiating their religion was therefore influenced by the name they were given at birth. This may be because the name you have is an outwardly expression of who you are, it is linked to your identity. This name influences the perceptions other people have of the participants and it can either influence the ideas of how the participants think of themselves (as in Ryan's case) or it can function as a hindrance because the name does not match who they think they are (as in Shuaib's case).

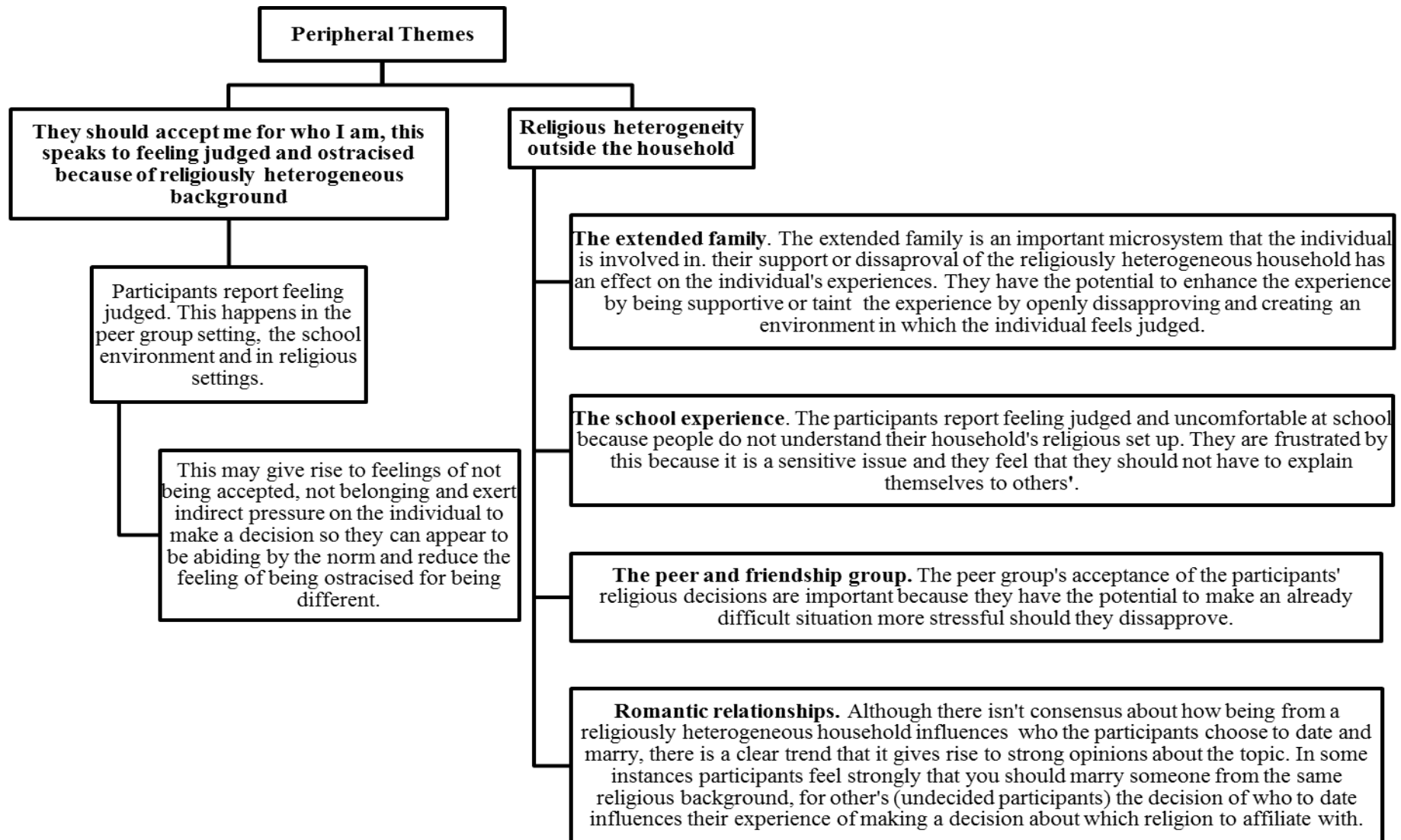


Figure 4.3 Peripheral themes

4.4 Putting the themes into perspective: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model

4.4.1 Introduction

The discussion is now steered towards making sense of the findings (themes) that were set out earlier in this section. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1977) is applied as the lens through which the themes will be viewed. The themes put forth earlier will be mentioned again and be approached in terms of the systems they fall into. Each theme and corresponding sub-headings will be dealt with separately.

4.4.2 Over-arching themes

4.4.2.1 Making sense of religion

How I grew up wasn't a normal situation

The religiously heterogeneous household exists on the microsystem level because it refers to the immediate family setting that the individual grows up in. The household being perceived as not being the norm may stem from exposure to other households (microsystems), that are religiously homogeneous, on the mesosystem level. The realisation that very few families are religiously heterogeneous happens at the mesosystem level. The fact that religiously heterogeneous families are still a rare phenomenon is a chronosystem function because it is a characteristic of the period of time in which the participants live. As much as religiously heterogeneous households are on the rise, they are still very far from being an accepted norm or characteristic of the society.

Which is right because both of them are

The questioning may stem from the different religious messages the child is experiencing in the immediate family environment. This happens on a microsystem level and arises because the child is faced with two religions and has to decide for themselves what they want. Negotiating the differences between the two religions could give rise to internal conflict for the individual. Bronfenbrenner (1986) argues that the mesosystem functions best, and the development of the individual is enhanced, when the messages conveyed in the various microsystems the individual is involved in are similar. This brings to light the potential issues that may arise when the most influential microsystem (the immediate household family) itself does not send a congruent message in terms of religion. Religion influences many aspects of family life (the primary microsystem). In a direct way it influences religious observance but it also indirectly influences the everyday decisions of the household. These include decisions such as the where the family will live, how the children are to be raised, how money will be managed and who the family will associate with (Lehrer, 1998; Sigalow, Shain & Bergey, 2012). The family's religious heterogeneity therefore, has far-reaching implications in the household and for the children. Therefore the children do not only have to deal with differences pertaining to religious observance but also with their parent's potential difference of opinion on household matters (Lehrer, 1998; Mahoney, 2005). This complicates the primary microsystem setting that the individual grows up in.

Feelings associated with having two religions to choose from

The participants report feeling frustrated, confused, resentful and like they are stuck in the middle. These feelings all speak to being torn and uncertain. These feelings may stem from the fact that they receive mixed messages in the micro- and meso-system environments. Not only are they exposed to two different religions in the household (microsystem) but they

also experience pressure from the other microsystems they are involved in (e.g. extended families and peers). Furthermore, they are also influenced by the way these microsystems, (outside of their immediate family microsystem) engage with each other. For example, the relationship between the two sides of the extended family has an indirect influence on the child's experiences and appraisals of the situation. This may give rise to the feelings they experience associated with choosing a religion.

4.4.2.2 Making the decision

Which way are you gonna go with a religion

The religiously undecided participants speak to the idea of choosing a religion and sticking to it. They want to make a decision but there are many factors that they need to consider before such a decision is made (factors such as disappointing a parent and which religion suits them best). The desire to decide may stem from growing up in a situation where there are two religions to choose from whilst living in a broader environment where being exposed to and practising one religion is the norm. The desire to decide is thus an outcome of the micro and meso-system environments. The participants might feel pressure from their parents, extended families and peer group to make a decision. This pressure could be direct or indirect; they could be told outright to choose a particular religion or they could feel that if they choose one religion over the other their friends would disapprove or judge them. This is yet another example of how the individual is negatively affected when the microsystems that comprise the mesosystem do not send a cohesive message (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Sometimes I will go to church, you know and sometimes I'll go to mosque

The participants report that being undecided in terms of religious affiliation is "probably wrong" and gives rise to feeling "lost". The feeling that being undecided is

“probably wrong” may be influenced by the fact that the participants are exposed to people that are decided or have never had to make a decision about which religion to affiliate with. This exposure happens on the mesosystem level. It is on this level that the individual realises that being undecided is not the norm and starts to feel that it is not right. If everyone around them is decided that makes their being undecided seem more unusual and perhaps even unacceptable. The feeling that it is “probably wrong” can also be argued to be a chronosystem occurrence because the fact that household religious heterogeneity is not the norm is a function of the period of time in which the individual lives.

Feeling “lost” speaks to not knowing which way to go. Being exposed to two religions at the microsystem level (the household) leads to this experience. This may be because the messages conveyed to the individual in the household are not similar and this causes the individual to feel lost and confused.

It was just choosing the lesser evil

The reasons for choosing a particular religion are normally based on microsystem considerations. Reason’s such as resonating better with a particular religion because of the influence and teachings of a family member, being born a particular religion and the belief that that is not something you should change and choosing by weighing up the negative consequences associated with both and choosing the “lesser evil”. These reasons are all based on the household/family setting in some way (e.g. through parental influence, pressure or fear of consequence).

I must now choose between my father and my mother

Religion as an institution is an exosystem phenomenon; but it is primarily transmitted through the household/ family microsystem (Desmond, Morgan & Kikuchi, 2010). The

parents play an integral part in relaying the teachings of religion as an institution to the individual. In the religiously homogeneous household this normally happens relatively simply because the parents send one religious message to the child. However, in the religiously heterogeneous household bringing religion as an institution into the household can become complicated because there are two religions involved. In the religiously heterogeneous household what should be the transmission of the beliefs and teachings of an exosystem institution on a microsystem level becomes much more. When each parent has their own religion and own beliefs and teachings to transmit the lines appear to become blurred between choosing a religion and choosing a parent. This may be so because the parent teaches their respective religions principles and beliefs and the child may feel as though they are disappointing the parent if they do not align themselves with that particular religion. The distinction between the parent and the religion becomes difficult to make because the parent is largely responsible for teaching the child about religion and may even pressure the child to choose their religion. This experience is very difficult for the child to negotiate even without the pressure. The pressure only serves to increase the confusion and frustration the child experiences, and amplifies the difficulty of the decision for the individual.

4.4.2.3 Idealising religiously homogeneous households and valuing the lessons gained from living in a religiously heterogeneous household

I just have friends with parents who have both religions the same

The participants often idealise or prefer the idea of growing up in a religiously homogeneous household. This may be the result of the difficulties associated with growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household at the various levels of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1986). At the microsystem level religion may cause conflict and result in the child being pressured in the immediate family setting. In terms of the meso level,

religious heterogeneity may influence other microsystems such as the extended family and school and peer experience. The difficulties experienced in these microsystems could create clashes on the mesosystem level that the child struggles to deal with. As a result, they idealise the religiously homogeneous household.

Both helped me get where I am now

The difficulties experienced by the participants on the micro- and meso-system levels however seem to teach them lessons that they value. The participants make arguments for being more sensitive to other people's beliefs, more tolerant of different religions and they consider their difficulties to have built character.

4.4.3 Explicit theme

4.4.3.1 Divorce

The management and negotiation of household religious heterogeneity by the parents may be a good predictor of divorce. Instances where the parents were supportive of each other's religions and adopted fair guidelines which they abided by in the household (family microsystem) could be described as more stable and pleasant for the child. In instances where parents were less supportive of each other's religions and pressured the children there was more conflict and a less pleasant environment for the children. Thus the way the parent's negotiated their religious differences had an important influence on the experiences the child had growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. The extended family's support or disapproval of the religiously heterogeneous household also influenced the child's experiences especially when they had an influence on what happens in the household (e.g. where the immediate household family included grandparents).

4.4.4 Peripheral themes

4.4.4.1 They should accept me for who I am

Participants report feeling judged and ostracised for their family's religious set up and for their religious indecision. These feelings may come about as a result of the fact that their household microsystem (in terms of religion) is not the norm. And this results in a divergence of the ideas and teachings on both the micro- and meso-system levels and is not the standard on the chronosystem level. Therefore, other people who are part of the individual's environment do not understand the situation or do not agree with the situation and make them feel judged.

4.4.4.2 Religious heterogeneity outside the household.

Both families were very open/ all of them weren't very welcoming

The extended family is a microsystem that the individuals form part of. The approval or disapproval of the religiously heterogeneous household by the extended family may enhance or adversely affect the child's experiences. This occurs on the mesosystem level because that is where these two microsystems that the child forms part of converge. Familial religious heterogeneity may become difficult to negotiate in the other microsystems the child forms part of outside the household.

Other microsystems outside the household include the school environment, peer group and in romantic relationships. In terms of the school environment and peer group, the individual's religiously heterogeneous background may be hard to understand and accommodate for. This may give rise to being judged and mocked. In terms of negotiating romantic relationships, religion is a consideration for the participants. Here the influence of religion goes beyond being judged and actually influences who the participants choose to

date and marry. This can be argued to be an important consideration to the participants as a result of them being exposed to the difficulties associated with a religiously heterogeneous relationship. It becomes apparent that religious heterogeneity does not only affect the child in the household microsystem but infiltrates the other microsystems the child is involved in.

4.4.4.3 What it did teach me is to be very understanding

This is an example of how the household microsystem benefitted the individual who grew up in it. Growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household is argued to result in increased levels of tolerance towards different people's religions and views and an awareness of the sensitivity and respect that other people's religions need to be treated with.

4.4.4.4 That's my name apparently

The issue of the name is another example of how the decisions made in the household microsystem by the parental unit influences the child. A religion is often attached to the name and this either makes the participant feel like they belong more to that particular religion or it makes them want to change it should they resonate more with the other religion. The name is also important because it sets the tone for what other people know them as and it becomes an issue to negotiate when they want to change their religion because their birth name does not match their current religious affiliation. A decision made by the parents thus influences all the other systems they are a part of and can even influence the way the child sees themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 The benefits and pitfalls of growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household

Although there are some patterns of shared experiences among the participants, it is more important to note how dependent the individuals experience is on the microsystems they form part of. More specifically, these microsystems include the parents management of their religious differences, the extended families' acceptance or rejection of the religiously heterogeneous household and peer and school groups support or rejection of the individual's religiously heterogeneous background.

It becomes clear that the way the parents manage their religious heterogeneity largely determines the child's experiences. Influences on their experiences include; parent's religious participation, the intensity and fervency of their beliefs in their different religious doctrines, their approach to resolving religious differences and conflict in the household and their decisions pertaining to the children's religious upbringing. These aspects can either make the individual's experience more pleasant and make them feel supported in navigating their exposure to two different religions or it can make the experience difficult, stressful and make them feel frustrated, judged and pressured while trying to make sense of religion for themselves.

Extended families and the peer and school a group also influences the individual's experiences. This is so because these are the microsystems that the growing child is most involved in outside of the household microsystem. It therefore stands to reason that these environments would impact on the individual's experience. These microsystems can either enhance or negatively affect the individual's experiences. If these microsystems are

supportive of the individual's religiously heterogeneous background the individual will not feel as though they are different and as though they have to explain themselves to others. Instead they are more likely to feel supported to explore who they are religiously in a safe environment. This study serves as an excellent example of the value that Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1977) adds to understanding people, their experiences and the way meaning is created.

The participants report that there are benefits to growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. These benefits include; increased levels of tolerance, respect of and sensitivity to different religions and they understand the benefits and pitfalls of growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household and this informs their ideas about marriage and children.

Growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household also has many pitfalls. Depending on how the microsystems coalesce (on the mesosystem level) to manage the religious heterogeneity of the individual it can be a very difficult situation. Feeling pressured to decide could give rise to feeling frustrated with the situation, feeling lost and feeling as though they are choosing a parent as opposed to choosing a religion. Heightened conflict in the household may also be stressful for the participants to navigate and may influence their views on religion and religiously heterogeneous households negatively.

5.2 Evaluation of the study in terms of the proposed aims

Research Aims

- The primary aim of this study is to explore how the religiously heterogeneous household influences the developing child and subsequently the young adult.

- To produce rich, thick descriptions of the experiences of individuals who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households.
- To ascertain if there are similar or overlapping experiences that will enable the development of a pattern of experiences common and specific to the individual who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household.
- To make a knowledge contribution to the gap in the literature.

This study did what it set out to do in terms of its primary aim. Exploring and describing the influence that growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household has on the individual. The valuable experiences described by the participants in this study would not have been gained through the use of a quantitative methodology. The description of their unique experiences adds a degree of depth that existing literature lacked and future literature should take heed of.

In terms of the development of a set pattern of experiences in this study it became quite clear early on in the data collection stage that although there were similar broad ideas that emerged, the experiences of each individual was nuanced. Often times a specific set of circumstances gave rise to a particular experience, Mischka and Amy for instance went to the same high school but their experiences were very different. Mischka describes her experience as unpleasant and difficult, while Amy did not report any difficulty or feelings of being judged at school. This could speak to the different religions they were exposed to. Amy was exposed to Christianity and Judaism and reports that she was the only Jewish person at her school. Since no one else understood her background they might not have felt as though they could comment or pass judgement. Mischka's background however, was Muslim and Christian and the majority of the students at that particular school were either Muslim or Christian. This may have influenced her experience because they could recognise that she was not abiding strictly by either religion and as a result they judged her.

5.3 Limitations

The main limitation of this study was the number of participants. Although the interviews had a great deal of depth and allowed for thick, rich descriptions the number of participants might have limited the range of experiences. As an exploration of participant's experiences the number of participants sufficed but it was limiting because it did not allow enough different experiences and perspectives for the development of an identifiable pattern of experiences.

The availability of participants from a wider range of different religious backgrounds was limited. This was a function of the population. The South African Census (2001) indicates that 80% of the South African population is Christian, 15% are non-religious, 2% Muslim and the remaining 3% is shared between Hindus, Jews, African Traditional beliefs and Other. The population's religious demographics closely approximate the predominant religions the participants of this study were exposed to, especially considering that the definition of religious heterogeneity employed by this study excluded religion-none heterogeneity. Five of the participants were exposed to Christianity and Islam in the household and the remaining participant was exposed to Christianity and Judaism. Although the findings of this study would hold some value for the South African population an argument can be made for the possibility that different religions could have different outcomes and experiences associated with it. Lehrer & Chiswick (1993) found that if one of the partners is a conservative Protestant and the other is not then the marriage is more prone to conflict and dissolution. This serves as an example of how the degree of difference of the religious doctrines involved in the heterogeneous marriage can increase the negative outcomes associated with it. These outcomes are important because they become the characteristics of the household that the child will grow up in.

Despite these limitations, the study still produced good qualitative data on the experiences of individuals who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households. It contributes to a significant gap in the literature that focuses primarily on issues relating to the religiously heterogeneous couple (marriage, marital satisfaction, conflict and divorce). The influence that the religiously heterogeneous household has on the child has long been neglected by qualitative researchers.

5.4 Recommendations

The primary aim of this research endeavour was to explore and establish some of the experiences associated with growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household. This was done because a great deal of research is required on this widely neglected topic. My suggestion is firstly, that similar research needs to be replicated in different populations to validate and add to the findings of this study. Secondly, once enough literature exists on the topic researchers can begin to look at developing a theory that accounts for the experiences of individuals who grew up in religiously heterogeneous household and the possible outcomes linked to these experiences.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Turn it in originality report



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This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

Paper ID	368189270
Paper title	The lived experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households.
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Author	R Mohammed
E-mail	15415368_43327@tiwebct.com
Submission time	31-Oct-2013 06:56PM
Total words	25128

First 100 words of your submission

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION 1.1 Problem statement Religion is argued to play a unique and important role in the life of the individual (Ellison, 1991). Religion is seen to be so important that historically it has been deemed a vital factor to consider in marital partner choice (Kalmijn, 1991). However, the literature broadly suggests that religious intermarriage and religiously heterogeneous families are becoming more common (McCutcheon, 1988; Williams & Lawler, 2001). Meanwhile, the greater proportion of the literature relating to the role of religion in the family assumes the family to have a common religion where in reality this is increasingly not the case. As a result there is a gap in the...

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Appendix B: REC Ethical Clearance Form



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Approval Notice New Application

05-Dec-2012
MOHAMMED, Raghshanda

Protocol #: HS883/2012

Title: A description of the lived experiences of young adults who grew up in religiously heterogeneous households.

Dear Miss Raghshanda MOHAMMED,

The New Application received on 19-Nov-2012, was reviewed by Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Committee Review procedures on 29-Nov-2012 and has been approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

Protocol Approval Period: 29-Nov-2012 -28-Nov-2013

Present Committee Members:

Theron, Carl CC
Somhlaba, Ncebazakhe NZ
Viviers, Suzette S
Van Zyl, Gerhard G
Fouche, Magdalena MG
Van Wyk, Berte B
Oberholzer, Susara SJM
Horn, Lynette LM
Newmark, Rona R
Prozesky, Heidi HE
Benkes, Winston WA

Standard provisions

1. The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.
2. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
3. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
4. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.

You may commence with your research with strict adherence to the abovementioned provisions and stipulations.

Please remember to use your **protocol number (HS883/2012)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research protocol.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

After Ethical Review:

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) number REC-050411-032.

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

Provincial and City of Cape Town Approval

Please note that for research at a primary or secondary healthcare facility permission must be obtained from the relevant authorities (Western Cape Department of Health and/or City Health) to conduct the research as stated in the protocol. Contact persons are Ms Claudette Abrahams at Western Cape Department of Health (healthres@pgwc.gov.za Tel: +27 21 483 9907) and Dr Helene Visser at City Health (Helene.Visser@capetown.gov.za Tel: +27 21 400 3981).

Research that will be conducted at any tertiary academic institution requires approval from the relevant parties. For approvals from the Western Cape Education Department, contact Dr AT Wyngaard (awyngaard@pgwc.gov.za, Tel: 0214769272, Fax: 0865902282, <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>).

Institutional permission from academic institutions for students, staff & alumni. This institutional permission should be obtained before submitting an application for ethics clearance to the REC.

Please note that informed consent from participants can only be obtained after ethics approval has been granted. It is your responsibility as researcher to keep signed informed consent forms for inspection for the duration of the research.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218089183.

Included Documents:

DESC Application

Informed Consent

Research proposal

Questionnaire

REC application

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer

REC Coordinator

Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form



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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

A description of the lived experiences of adults who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Raghshanda Mohammed (BA Masters in Psychology), from the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will be compiled into an article with the possibility of being published. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a young adult who grew up in a religiously heterogeneous household.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is designed to describe and create an understanding of the way in which growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household may influence and affect the young adult.

1. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- (1) Sign this form which indicates that you gave your consent to be a part of this study.
- (2) Agree to a one-on-one semi-structured interview with the researcher and later a focus group discussion with all of the participants.

2. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The questionnaire deals with sensitive and private issues. It is not likely but it could result in some emotional distress.

In the advent of any emotional distress please contact:

Stellenbosch:

Dr. Jason Bantjes
Tel: 021 808 2665
E-mail: jbantjes@sun.ac.za

Kimberely:

Mr. Mark Barends
Tel: 084 577 6698
E-mail: marksteven@webmail.co.za

Miss Robyn Hannie
Tel: 0722459888

3. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The study is beneficial to society in that it adds to a limited existing knowledge base.

4. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Subjects will NOT be paid for participating in this study.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of the information being kept safely locked and only accessible to the relevant research staff.

In terms of publication, no result will ever be traceable to any subject.

6. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

7. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Raghshanda Mohammed via e-mail: 15415368@sun.ac.za or cell phone: 0731231886 or Mr. Zuhayr Kafaar via e-mail zkafaar@sun.ac.za or office tel: 021 808 3447.

8. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE
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The information above was described to [*me/the subject/the participant*] by Raghshanda Mohammed in [*Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other*] and [*I am/the subject is/the participant is*] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [*me/him/her*]. [*I/the participant/the subject*] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [*my/his/her*] satisfaction.

[*I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study.*] I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject/Participant

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative _____ [*name of the representative*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/*English/*Xhosa/*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into _____ by _____*].

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix D: Interview Schedule

Introduction

- Self
 - Ethical considerations: (1) confidentiality and anonymity
(2) no compensation/remuneration
(3) option to opt out at any point
(4) referrals for distressed participants
(5) interview will be recorded
 - Research question and associated pertinent concepts (religious heterogeneity)
1. Okay so you know why you are here. Do you know the story of how your parents got married but they each practiced their own religion?

Probe: Birth order?

How were you raised in terms of your religious upbringing? which religion (if any) did you identify with growing up?

2. Did your households' religious heterogeneity influence the other areas of your life growing up?

Probe: How did your extended family (mom & dad separately) react to the religious setup in your house?

Negotiating commonalities and differences.

Were you ever called names because of you household's religious setup?

3. What were religious holiday's like for you growing up?

Probe: Were your parents supportive of one another's religious decision?

4. How have you come to understand and make sense of religion in your personal life now that you are a young adult?
5. Would you say growing up in a religiously heterogeneous household made you more tolerant of other people's religions? What is it about growing up in a household like this that makes you more tolerant?
6. Do you think that being exposed to two different religions in your household influenced your approach to relationships? Who you choose to date? Marry?

Probe: Would you have children with someone from a different religion to your own?