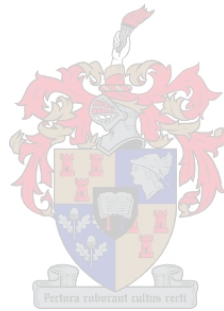


Contested identities: Belhar, Elsie's River and Mitchell's Plain community ideas of queer 'Colouredness'.

by

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Declaration

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Abstract

While queer studies in Africa have risen in contemporary projects of identity, the homogenising of queerness has resulted in the failure to capture the multiplicity of subjective experiences of queer-identifying persons of colour. The consolidation of persons of colour through the utilisation of the term ‘black’ to refer to the various non-white communities of South Africa has become a popular topic of investigation by queer studies scholarship in Africa. The issues that have risen from this homogenising approach to the queer experiences of persons of colour neglect to honour the multi-cultural and particular realities of the various black communities through consolidating the communities under the broad identifier ‘black’. The term ‘queer’ has been reduced to an alternate reference for persons who practice same-sex sexualities.

This research project aims to foreground a subjective portrayal of queer South Africans through a case study of coloured persons who reside in Belhar, Elsies River, and Mitchell’s Plain in the Western Cape, South Africa. This is done to emphasise the lived realities of queer-coloured persons and to highlight how coloured communities’ perceptions are influenced by their historic socio-economic positioning. This thesis queries coloured as a racial identity and broadens the connotation of queer beyond gender and sexuality. This is executed by embarking on an exploration into queer experiences in coloured communities and has been accomplished through the braiding of personal narratives provided by a primary text, which is a transcript of a focus group discussion conducted with six queer-and-coloured identifying participants, and the secondary literary memoirs, Kelly-Eve Koopman’s *Because I Couldn’t kill you* (2019) and Yusuf Daniels’ *Living Coloured (Because Black and White Were Already Taken)* (2019). These personal narratives highlight that specific coloured communities hold an uneven tolerance towards sexualities which contradicts their heteronormative standard. The communal practice of codes of silence, and verbal and emotional abuse of queer persons, exemplify the dehumanising projects that promote coloured communities’ negative perceptions of queer persons.

Opsomming

Terwyl queer-studies in Afrika toegeneem het in kontemporêre projekte van identiteit, het die homogenisering van queer ervarings gelei tot die onvermoë om die veelheid van subjektiewe ervarings van queer-identifiserende persone van kleur vas te vang. Die konsolidasie van gekleurde persone deur die gebruik van die term 'black' om na die verskillende nie-blanke gemeenskappe van Suid-Afrika te verwys, het 'n gewilde onderwerp vir queer-studies navorsing in Afrika geword. Die kwessies wat ontstaan het uit hierdie homogeniserende benadering tot die ervarings van queer persone van kleur, versuim om die multikulturele en unieke realiteite van die verskillende nie-blanke gemeenskappe te eerbiedig, deur die gemeenskappe te konsolideer onder die breë identifiseerder, 'black'. Die term 'queer' is verminder tot 'n alternatiewe verwysing vir persone wat selfdegeslag seksualiteite beoefen.

Die doel van hierdie navorsingsprojek is om 'n subjektiewe uitbeelding van queer Suid-Afrikaners op die voorgrond te plaas deur 'n gevallestudie van bruin persone wie in Belville, Elsiesrivier en Mitchells Plain in die Wes-Kaap, Suid-Afrika woonagtig is. Dit word gedoen om die daaglikse realiteite van queer-bruin persone te beklemtoon en om uit te lig hoe bruin gemeenskappe se persepsies deur hul historiese sosio-ekonomiese posisionering beïnvloed word. Hierdie tesis bevraagteken bruin identiteit as 'n rasse-identiteit en verbreed die konnotasie van queer verder as geslag en seksualiteit. Dit word uitgevoer deur 'n ondersoek na queer-ervarings in bruin gemeenskappe te begin en is bewerkstellig d.m.v. die vleg van persoonlike vertellings wat deur 'n primêre teks verskaf word, wat 'n transkripsie is van 'n fokusgroepbespreking gevoer met ses queer-en-bruin identifiserende deelnemers, en die sekondêre literêre memoires, Kelly-Eve Koopman se *Because I Couldn't Kill You* (2019) en Yusuf Daniels se *Living Coloured (Because Black and White Were Already Taken)* (2019). Hierdie persoonlike vertellings beklemtoon dat spesifieke bruin gemeenskappe 'n ongelyke verdraagsaamheid het teenoor seksualiteite wat hul heteronormatiewe standarde weerspreek. Die gemeenskaplike gebruik van kodes van stilte, en die verbale en emosionele mishandeling van queer persone, verteenwoordig die ontmenslikende projek wat bruin gemeenskappe se negatiewe persepsies van queer persone bevorder.

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Chapter One: Introduction

To query is to question. It is no mistake that the terms ‘queer’ and ‘query’ sound phonetically similar.¹ One should queer(y) the difference of all non-normative manifestations of both sexuality and life, to not only be aware of embodied and experiential differences, but to become more accepting of ideas that differ from your own. People fear what they do not understand, which is why this research is driven by the thread of queer(y)ing that which is considered different.

I have grappled with the layered and complex meanings of the term ‘queer’ for the past two years, beginning with my Honours research essay titled “Tenacious Legacies in the Queer Cape: From Mark Behr to K. Sello Duiker” (2020), in which I compare two queer novels written by Behr and Duiker situated in different socio-political time frames in South Africa. I looked at whether the literary representations of sexual queerness had undergone any changes spanning the time and social evolution that occurred in the time between the novels. It was through the writing of that essay that I had become fond of the multi-use nature of the term ‘queer’ and how aptly it seems to apply to South Africa, its history, and its various social and cultural communities. What interests me is that ‘queer’ can also refer to the strange or the non-conforming. In this way, one could regard South African history as queer. To support this position, I present the following example of what I consider strange: During apartheid (1948-1994), the authoritative power lay in the hands of the racial white minority in South Africa. This racial minority held oppressive power over the black racial majority. There was a hierarchy of power not dictated by the quantity of the group’s populace, but by the fictive ideals that the government mechanised in their favour. This is a skewed power dynamic that on paper reads as queer but has lasting disastrous effects on the social structure of the country. The aftermath of the domination of minority racial communities has effectively distorted indigenous communities’ cultural ideals. In this thesis, I foreground the South African historicised narrative surrounding sexuality and compulsory heterosexuality, which I elaborate

¹ Refer to Jenny Kangasvuo and Sanna Karkulehto "Preface: Querying Queer" (2006) for the full etymological breakdown of both terms.

The etymology and common meaning of the word queer and query differ, however, they sound extremely similar to the untrained non-native English speaker (Kangasvuo & Karkulehto 2).

on in Chapter Two. I believe that the warping of the history of deviant sexuality in indigenous South African cultures has been affected by politically driven erasure, and this in itself is queer.

In “The Lies We Have Been Told: On (Homo)Sexuality in Africa” (2018), Thabo Msibi articulates that “[i]t is only when we persuade those with whom we live, that conditions for same-sex desiring individuals will change for the better in Africa” (72). Msibi further speculates that African people can influence social change regarding ‘deviant’ sexual identities by demystifying the experiences and lives of sexually queer individuals. This is achieved through the broadening South African communities’ social discussions surrounding the topic. This implies that researching and gathering experiences from different cultural groups within the country to further the reservoir of available queer studies research in different South African communities’ experiences of queerness, could be used to foster understanding between the different cultural communities of South Africa. The larger the number of available studies and sharing of experiences from different cultural communities, the higher the chances are that information produced by this thesis and other queer African studies projects could be utilised in the public sphere to foster social unity. Msibi’s quote above reflects the subtextual theme of my research: the only way to shift South African communities’ oppressive rhetoric about queer identities, is to actively work towards gathering subjective experiential data and utilise the knowledge produced from these studies to facilitate and engage in conversations about queerness, both within academic queer African studies and in public realms, like political and educational spaces in South Africa. It is important that queer African studies be implemented practically by including and motivating the dissemination of different cultures’ experiences of queerness in social discussions between families and friends in South Africa. This is the undertaking that this interdisciplinary research project aims to achieve through the blurring of academic discipline boundaries while being rigorous. I immerse myself as an insider and query three coloured cultural communities’² ideas of queerness by reading the experiences of coloured identifying individuals that I have gathered from a focus group discussion and two memoirs. I simultaneously foreground the dominant social ideals within South Africa which influence reading coloured as a queer racial identity.

² I would like to acknowledge that I have made the conscious decision to not place the word *coloured* within inverted commas. I do not wish to disregard the contested nature of the term and the historical connotation it holds. However, for this thesis, I choose to utilise the term in the revitalised positivist way to acknowledge the socio-political value the term holds for myself and the participants of my focus group discussion. See the section ‘Addressing the Contested term in the room’ below, as well as ‘Theoretical departures’ for further elaboration regarding my preferred utilisation of the term.

I highlight the cultural existence of coloured communities of the Cape Flats in South Africa by using the term ‘coloured cultural communities’ in this thesis. I substantiate this position by referring to Frantz Fanon (2008) and Steve Biko’s (1981) conceptualisation of race. I will then juxtapose the authors’ ideas of race with José M. C Causadias’ (2020) definition of culture to support my usage of ‘coloured cultural communities’ in this thesis.

Race as a biological determiner of difference has been debunked by biologists (Vincent 1427). Humanities scholars acknowledge the arbitrary nature of presupposing ideas about a person based on skin colour, however, the division between population groups due to perceived racial difference persists. According to Biko, the continued salience of race in the public imagination of South Africa is due to economically motivated politics (4). This is a historic practice within the country due to the fostering of institutionalised racism which has normalised its prevalence (Biko 6). To expand, the idea that there is a fundamental difference between black and white people in South Africa has been promoted to create and maintain a capitalist hierarchal society; a society in which the black population is transformed into the proletariat and subjugated by the white population. Race is therefore a political and economically motivated ideology which is used to position white people as superior to black. This fallacious difference is constructed by creating a correlation between the phenotype of the black person with negative stereotypes. Fanon unpacks the construction of race in length in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008), in which he conducts a psychological analysis of internalised ideas of race held by the ‘black man’³ within the context of a white dominated environment (4). Fanon does not deny that black and white people look different, but his definition of race does not rely on the physical difference alone. Fanon states that unlike the rest of the living world, the animal and plant kingdoms, humans are unable to be solely differentiated due to phenotypical difference because “society, unlike biochemical processes, cannot escape human influences. Man is what brings society into being” (4). Therefore, race is the conflation of phenotypical difference which is used to structure a fictitious social and political⁴ and is used to further increase and cement this power. Fanon foregrounds this idea, arguing that;

[i]n other words, I begin to suffer from not being a white man to the degree that the white man imposes discrimination on me, makes me a colonized native, robs me of all

³ I acknowledge Fanon’s use of ‘man’ as a substitute for ‘human’ here because Fanon wrote in gendered terms. I use ‘human’ in the place of man in this thesis.

⁴ According to Causadias, “[p]ower refers to forcing others into compliance (power-over people), controlling access to spaces (power-in-places), and behaving as desired (power to practice) (310).

worth, all individuality, tells me that I am a parasite on the world, that I must bring myself as quickly as possible into step with the white world... (73)

It is evident from this excerpt that black people lag behind the white person in terms of civilisation and educatedness. Black humans are considered less evolved and are constantly expected to play catch up and assimilate to the superior white race's ideals of being. Fanon provides the reader with examples of black experiences that he has had, and that has been shared with him, to further the argument that race is not solely credited to physical appearance. I focus on the occurrence of Fanon being granted honorary status as a white man by a French acquaintance after he had presented a lecture about "Negro and European poetry" (25). Due to Fanon's proficiency at French and the skill with which he had presented complex ideas, he was stripped of his status as a 'black man' and awarded the title of a 'white man'. This once again demonstrates the psychological and social dimensions of racial ideologies. Fanon speaking French did not bleach his black skin white. His outward appearance did not change, but Fanon's demonstrated mastery of the French language and educatedness was incongruent with his French acquaintance's ideas of a black man and therefore Fanon was judged to be intellectually divorced of his blackness. According to Fanon "[t]he black man is the symbol of Evil and Ugliness" (139). The black man is considered to be the missing link between apes and white men and therefore less evolved and less civilised (Fanon 84). These are all fictitious, negative ideas spread about black people that are used to justify the domination, oppression and separation of white and black populations.

Fanon stated that "[he] propose[s] nothing short of the liberation of the man of colour from himself" (2). It is evident that through the psychological reading of the experiences of black people in *Black Skin, White Masks* (2008), Fanon was attempting to theorise a solution for the oppressive ideologies that framed his and all black persons' experiences in a white dominated world. Fanon proposes that the only way for a black person, and any colonised person, to escape subjugation, is to turn away from assimilating into white societies and focus their attention on reinvigorating blackness. Fanon calls for black people to take pride and escape the inferiority complex of being black that is the natural aftermath of the influence of the superiority complex of the colonist forces. He asks black people to remind themselves of their histories before being colonised and to forego situating blackness within the hierarchal structure of whiteness. Instead, Fanon reminds us that "[a]s long as the black man is among his own, he will have no occasion, except in minor internal conflicts, to experience his being through others" (82). Therefore, this inferiority complex that Fanon discusses is not a natural state of blackness, but

the outcome of years of attempting to assimilate to a foreign culture that undermines and attempts to erase the validity of cultures that are not white.

It is apparent that Biko is strongly influenced by Fanon's call to colonised persons to take pride in their cultures and histories. The notion of reinvigorating blackness with value is the inspiration of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) of which Biko was a forerunner. In "Black Consciousness and the Quest for True Humanity" (1981), Biko states that "[t]he philosophy of Black Consciousness, [therefore] expresses group pride and determination by Blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self" (6). According to Biko, the envisaged self is not the negative, oppressive stereotypes which were propagated by the Apartheid state, but the reality that black people were equal to whites. Like Fanon, Biko's philosophy of race and racism was contextualised by his environment. Biko was a black South African man who opposed the discrimination and violence imposed on black people through the institutional racism of Apartheid. To rally all oppressed population groups of South Africa, Biko repurposed the term black. The BCM used the term black as one of unification for all oppressed population groups that suffered under apartheid. This is because Biko believed that "[w]e are oppressed not as individuals, not as Zulus, Xhosas, Vendas or Indians. We are oppressed because we are black" (*Black* 8). In other words, people were oppressed because they were not white. Andile Mngxitama, Amanda Alexander and Nigel C. Gibson define what blackness entailed within BCM:

Black Consciousness developed a new conception of blackness where "Black" is constructed - in reaction to the apartheid designation of "non-white"- as a positive expansive concept including those designated as Coloured, Indian, and African. (2)

As Mngxitama et al. describe above, the idea of repurposing the term 'black' and 'blackness' to include all non-white communities of South Africa was to foster unity between the separate communities. These communities were separated due to apartheid ideology which implemented a divide and conquer strategy that the BCM tried to eradicate. The idea that all colonised populations have similar experiences of oppression, mirrors Fanon's theory that "[a]ll forms of exploitation resemble one another" which is evident in the BCM call for unity by all non-white communities of South Africa (65).

I reiterate that race is the conflation of phenotypical difference which is used to structure a fictitious social and political hierarchy based on stereotyping. In order to address the political and social violence that colonisation has enacted on the colonised, it is appropriate to highlight

the related experiences of oppression imposed on these communities. I read the BCM and Fanon's writings as an attempt to unify oppressed people through the shared experiences of discrimination. I, however, consider the usage of the term black for all non-white groupings of South Africa to be misappropriated in contemporary Social Sciences literature. I argue that Biko did not denounce the reality of diverse cultures within the BCM; instead, it is evident that he recognised cultural differences within blackness where he recognises that the BCM had members who identified as black, coloured and Indian. It is because of this that I do not choose to utilise the unifying term black to discuss the coloured cultural communities which I investigate within this thesis. I choose to foreground the lived experience and influence that colouredness has enacted on the ideas of the people I investigate.

Biko states that "[a] culture is essentially the society's composite answer to the varied problems of life" (8). I agree with this statement, as it is the variety of experiences and the variation of outlooks due to traditions and religions that structure a culture. I refer to Causodias' "What is Culture? Systems of People, Places and Practices" (2020) p-model to define and elaborate on how culture is utilised in this thesis. The author proposes the p-model as a remedy for the perceived ambiguity that the term 'culture' holds for the Social Sciences. Causodias states that "[i]ndeed culture is a fuzzy concept, a term without fixed boundaries, meaning different things according to situations" (310).

The p-model defines culture "[a]s a system of people, places and practices, for a purpose such as enacting, justifying or challenging power" (310). This definition lends itself to be used in order to describe different political movements and groups of people in South Africa. Causodias discusses the "power-to-practice" that refers to people desiring to behave and live the way they would like to; this is often in opposition to the force known as the "power-over-people" which is the oppressive kind of power the apartheid state held (310). According to this definition, the BCM is a kind of culture which unified various groups of marginalised people opposing the "power-over-people" the apartheid government had as they fought for their "power-to-practice". I understand coloured cultural communities as having their own battle for "power-to-practice" as a subgroup of marginalised persons in South Africa.

The author further provides definitions for the different components of the model. Firstly, people within the model refer to the population dynamics, social relations and the culture enacted within groups (310). In this thesis, the people are coloured and queer identifying persons. I expand on the history of colouredness in Chapter One below. Secondly, places refer

to cultures in context, the context being Cape Flats communities such as Belhar, Elsies River⁵ and Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town, South Africa. There is a history to these located residential areas that are often defined as coloured areas. This denigration of space was implemented during apartheid when the apartheid state spatially separated different groups into racially specific residential areas. Lastly, practices are the participatory dynamics that occur between these coloured communities that includes community engagement and culture in action (310). The purpose of the p-model is to highlight that culture is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and defines culture as a system wherein people, places and practice all influence how a culture is structured and implemented within a community, while culture simultaneously influences how a person is socially constructed. It demonstrates that culture is time and context specific and therefore, "culture is not simply a personality trait characteristic of one person but has a supraindividual nature" (312).

The p-model definition of culture suits the scope of this thesis as it narrows down the investigation into a particular group of people and displays context specific practices. I wish to highlight that this thesis is not attempting to essentialise all coloured cultures as "[e]ssentialism leads to the neglect of individual differences and viewing people as 'carbon copies'" (Causadias 312). This is a criticism I level at the BCM philosophy of the umbrella utilisation of 'black' to refer to all non-white South Africans. Instead, by looking at the culturally influenced ideas and practices of the participants in a focus group discussion who reside in specific communities, I engage in the practice of investigating the varied experiences of smaller cultural communities of South Africa. I have transcribed a focus group discussion conducted in December 2021, where the participants identified as sexually queer and culturally coloured. The discussion focused on intersecting context-specific factors that affect the communities of Belhar, Elsies River and Mitchell's Plain, all Western Cape South African communities. This includes, but is not limited to, the effects of class, culture, geographic location, history, language, and race on the formation of identities in South Africa. Through conducting this focus group discussion, I have gathered experiential examples of persons residing in three different coloured residential areas who identify as culturally coloured and sexually queer. I use the focus group transcript to create an experimental form of life writing which I use as the primary text to conduct a critical literary reading into narrations of queerness. I do this in order

⁵ I am using the popular spelling of Elsies River throughout this thesis.

to produce a narrative of the focus group participants' subjective experiences as both queer and coloured.

I utilise the transcript from the focus group discussion as a primary text to compare and parallel narratives of queer and coloured experiences with two autobiographical texts: *Because I Couldn't Kill You* (2019) by Kelly-Eve Koopman and *Living Coloured (Because Black and White Were Already Taken)* (2019)⁶ by Yusuf Daniels. Through this experimental approach I add to the growing body of African queer studies scholarship by focusing on the cultural articulation and ideas of queerness in the identified coloured communities. I will now explain the conceptualisation of colouredness that this thesis will utilise by expanding on the contested history that the term 'coloured' has held in South Africa.

Addressing the contested term in the room

According to Mohamed Adhikari in the book *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa* (2013), coloured identity in South Africa denotes a person of mixed racial ancestry, which deviates from how the term is utilised in most other parts of the world where it refers to a person who is black (iii). Contrary to the social usage of the term in South Africa that Adhikari offers, there has been a recent development in academia where the term coloured is used to refer to a cultural identity instead of an essentialised racial identity (Jeftha ii). This assertion is supported by Zimitri Erasmus' definition of culture as an identity that is recognised by the sharing of practises and traditions (*Conceptualising* 24). There is an increase in the available literature that relays coloured history and identity through the rise in writing in opposition to widely shared historical narratives surrounding the contested cultural identity. Books like Adhikari's *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough: Racial Identity in the South African Coloured Community* (2005), attempt to chronologise and place coloured communities' histories within the timeline of South Africa's political development. There remains a glaring under-theorisation that queer/ies the life of non-heterosexual members of these cultural communities.

According to Jamil Khan, there is an ongoing disagreement amongst coloured communities about whether the term 'coloured' should be done away with, or repurposed in post-apartheid

⁶ I refer to this memoir as *Living Coloured* (2019) from here on in the thesis.

South Africa (14). The contestation surrounding ‘coloured’ as a term that I utilise to denote a cultural identity in South Africa is debated by black and white South African communities but is also contested by coloured persons who reside in coloured residential areas. This is due to the dominant social connotations of the term as a racially third subgroup in South Africa (Khan 14). This thesis utilises the term ‘coloured’ to refer to a subgroup of cultural communities in the Western Cape, South Africa, instead of the essentialised racial understanding of the term used socially in the country. There is a conceptual difference between coloured residential communities, which are defined by racial categorisation, and coloured cultural communities. Coloured residential communities emerged due to the geographic separatist policies of the Apartheid state which were enforced during South Africa’s apartheid period. Adhikari states that:

Being racially classified by the white supremacist state and pushed together into racially defined residential areas, with many, especially among the small elite, spending their formative years in educational institutions reserved for coloured students, were all significant factors in creating a sense of separateness and community among people of ‘mixed-race’ parentage. (xii)

Apartheid South Africa was a society that legislatively instilled a racial hierarchy that promoted separatism and racial purity. This was an ideal that coloured persons’ existence contradicted, as ‘coloured’ was used to refer to people who did not fit the racial classifications of white or black. This effectively supported the social imaginings of separate races in South Africa during apartheid and is a social ideal that remains in the dominant, racist social dialogue in the country today.

The contemporary conceptualisation of ‘coloured’ in South Africa as a racial hybrid third group can attribute part of its formation to the colonisation of the Western Cape by the European colonists. According to Nigel Worden, Cape Town, was a popular rest stop in the 18th century for a multitude of European traders because it was the midpoint of the oceanic trading route between Asia and Europe (Worden viv). Worden further states that the “early history [of the Cape] was ... one of Settler appropriation of Khoe herding and grazing lands, a history which caused major dislocations of local societies” (x). Traders stopped at the Cape to obtain water and meat supplies. A small urban community grew in the Cape which consisted of African, European, and Asian settlements (Worden viv). After decades of use as a trade rest

stop by the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC)⁷, English, Scandinavian, French and other European trading vessels, the VOC built a refreshment station which was the first permanent settlement in 1652 at the Cape (Cornell 3). According to Antonia Malan, this outpost was not built to be a colonial settlement, instead, the purpose of construction was to benefit international trade by creating a place to disseminate fresh water to ships, rest, and a place for tending to the sick and injured VOC servants (1). Six years later, the first slaves were brought to the Cape from West Africa in 1658 to build the Castle and the formation of a Dutch colonial town began to form in the Cape (Cornell 3). In the 1750s and 1760s, the rootedness of the VOC in the Cape became apparent: this was due to the colonists' need to "tame the wilderness and impose order on chaos" (Worden xv & Malan 1). Ships of slaves who were forcefully relocated to the Cape arrived ashore from around the Indian Ocean to supply labour to the colonists. These slaves were imported from the islands of Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Ceylon, the East African coast, Madagascar, China Japan, West Africa and Angola. It is estimated that around 63000 people were brought to the Cape as slaves between 1650 and the 1800s before slavery was officially abolished in 1838. The Cape became a cultural hot pot as African, Asian and European slaves and settlers drew from their cultural repertoires to construct identities in Cape Town (Worden xvii). Cape Town's population primarily consisted of immigrants outside of Southern Africa (Worden x). Worden argues "that Cape Town was directly shaped by forces beyond its geographical confines, as a port which was part of a much wider network of interchanges of people, material goods and ideas" (xiii). This included the distinct cultural, linguistic, and religious beliefs that accompanied all VOC officials, slaves and settlers that came to the colonial town. In 1796, the British took control of the Cape after defeating the VOC in 1795 and maintained control throughout the 19th century except for a short period between 1803 and 1806 where control was reclaimed by the Dutch (Cornell 3). Under British rule, "[n]ew ideas about a particular type of British colonial respectability started to permeate the social and cultural milieu of the town, at all levels, as recent historical work has shown" (Worden xxii). I continue my reading of cultural identities and ideas from the perspective of British domination of the Cape.

The racial binary logic of the British colonists cast people identified as being of mixed racial ancestry as separate and between the politically dominant European white minority and indigenous African majority on the social spectrum of the colonies (Adhikari ix). The racialised connotations of 'coloured' in the country were formed due to both the Settler and indigenous

⁷ Translation in English: as the Dutch East Indian Company of Netherlands,

communities of South Africa as they determined “how people of mixed heritage were accommodated in these societies” (Adhikari ix). Adhikari further states that “[t]he colonial state, in its drive to classify and control people, played an important role in demarcating social identities by imposing racially-based legal categories and segregation policies on the population” (ix). The social emergence of coloureds in South Africa is connected to the emancipation of the Khoisan in 1828 and the slaves in 1834 in the Cape. Adhikari states that the shared experiences of social and economic status saw the slave and indigenous populations of South Africa developing a collective identity and culture as the lower-ranked grouping in Cape colonial society (xi). The emergent community consisted of the labouring classes of African and Asian origin and were referred to as “half-castes, bastards, Cape Boys, off-whites or coloureds” (xi). According to Adhikari, negative social connotations were linked to coloured groups’ racial intermediate position in colonial South Africa, due to the ideals of the European colonists. The European colonists asserted that racial mixture would result in weakness and degeneration (iii). ‘Coloured’ became the standard term associated with mixed racial communities in the latter half of the 1880s (Adhikari xi).

The mineral revolution of 1867-1889 further crystallised coloured as a social identity in the 19th century, as these colonial mixed communities asserted a separate social identity from indigenous African communities in an effort to have a claim to social privilege in colonial South Africa. They asserted this claim to privilege by highlighting their relational civility and their being partially descended from the European colonist to further separate themselves from black Africans. This demonstrates the active part coloureds have historically played in the formation of their political and social identity in South Africa: being apart from black communities and claiming a separate identity.

Following the South African war (1899-1902), British colonial rule was once again replaced with the Dutch settler dominated white supremacist state and the racist separatist policies were constitutionally implemented in South Africa through the Group Areas Act. In Hermann Gilliomee’s article titled “The Making of the Apartheid Plan, 1928-1948” (2012), the author outlines how Afrikaners justified the implementation of Apartheid as a political and social strategy to obtain and maintain political and social power in South Africa after freeing themselves of British rule. Gilliomee highlights how apartheid separatist ideas were influenced by Christian missionary ideals within the country. The author states that the National Party leaders claimed that the apartheid system mirrored the example set by the major churches in South Africa (Gilliomee 382). The missionaries at the time facilitated segregated schooling for

indigenous black Africans and coloureds. Fearing that they would be usurped by the African majority, Afrikaners cemented their political power by institutionalising the separation of racial groups in South Africa, ensuring that economic wealth remain with their communities (Gilliomee 382).

A society of separatism along racial lines was instilled on a national scale through the Group Areas Act (GAA) of 1952. The GAA relocated around 150,000 coloureds, which effectively led to the reinforcement of economic and politically afforded status differences exercised through the residential area and what we often still experience today as the inextricable linkages of race and space (Hammett 23). The goal was to stop further racial mixing (Yarwood 161). The prohibition of racial mixing was not only enforced through the GAA but also through the implementation of the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1940) as well as the Immorality Amendment Act (1950) (Yarwood 161). This enforced the legal separation of various groupings due to the false narrative of essentialised racial discourse which, in turn, gave rise to the false understanding of a monolithic racially defined coloured community that is often still utilised in dominant social discourse (Khan 15). On a political level, a racialised coloured identity during apartheid existed and was imposed on all who were classified as coloured by the apartheid state through arbitrary classification of skin colour, ancestry, and hair tests.

This racial discourse is still prominent in political redress talk today, as proven through the categories utilised during the national census and political manoeuvring in South Africa (Hammett ii & Vincent 1427). Louise Vincent's research, "The Limitations of inter-racial contact: Stories from Young South Africa" (2008), highlighted that the stories he investigated reflected this sentiment. His participants' stories relayed that most South Africans continue to uphold the belief in the existence of four distinct races as a matter of fact (1427). The same categories that were created and implemented during apartheid have now been altered to redress the inequalities of the past. One example of this is the Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), which uses these racial categories assigned by the Population Registration Act as a reference to employ affirmative action and "[...] thus legislation aimed at reversing the effects of apartheid continues to rely on, and thereby reproduce, the relevance of apartheid racial categories in its implementation and the measurement of its success" (Whitehead 9).

There is no monolithic coloured community. Instead, there is a multitude of different communities that choose to utilise the term 'coloured' as a cultural and social identifier. Therefore, there is no fixed definition or characterisation of what it means to identify as

coloured. However, the term remains entwined with the historically imbued social connotation that it has been attributed through the course of South African history. This social connotation is usually racially justified. An example of this is H.B. Fartham, a biologist who maintained that coloured persons who were the offspring of a black and white parent, displayed negative social and mental characteristics (Gilliomee 385). As I have explained above, South Africa has a racialised history which marked populace groups within the country through puritan racial discourse to create and cement a racial hierarchy of power. I further elaborate on the racial situatedness of colouredness in Chapter Two of this thesis.

There is an overlap between coloured residential communities and coloured cultural communities: the formation of these residential communities was instrumental in the formation of coloured cultures due to its members creating and normalising traditions and codes of behaviour which unified the people within the community. The formation of new cultural communities in the context of pre-existing dominant cultures within a country is called creolisation. I expand on the formation of coloured culture and creolisation theory in the paragraph below.

Erasmus defines Creolisation Theory as “[...] cultural creativity under conditions of marginality” (*Coloured* 16) and that creolisation is the formation of an identity made from the elements of the ruling as well as subaltern cultures,⁸ often due to oppression and lack of cultural and traditional claims which force the group to form a community to substitute and fulfil this lack. This occurrence happens globally, making South African coloured cultural communities one of many iterations of creolisation worldwide. An example of a creolised community outside of South Africa is discussed in Lynette Russell’s 2005 article titled “Kangaroo Island sealers and their descendants: Ethnic and gender ambiguities in the archaeology of a creolised community”, in which the author looks at European-Aboriginal creolised communities of South Australia. These creolised groups formed due to the colonisation of the aboriginal Australian populations by the European settlers. Russell states that it was “[d]uring the first decades of the nineteenth century that a society developed on Kangaroo Island that was an amalgam of newcomer and Aboriginal” (2). In the formation of this new community on

⁸ The term subaltern refers to the colonised populations. It is characterised by being socially, politically, and geographically excluded from the hierarchy of power of the imperial colony. This was accomplished in South Africa through the Group Areas Act (GAA) that ensured the separatism and exclusion of all non-white persons geographically and politically from the dominant white minority’s access to power and space. See Nasrullah Mambrol “Subaltern (Postcolonialism)” (2016).

Kangaroo Island, the Aboriginals and settlers intermingled, and the sharing of traditions and cultures birthed a new society. Similar to this example of the creolised community of Kangaroo Island, coloured cultures “provide [researchers with] the opportunity to explore the process of creolisation in which ‘indigenous and adopted cultural elements blend[ed] into a new mixed culture, of extreme vigour, which differs from its predecessors’” (Russell 2). Like the Australian Aboriginals, South Africa was colonised by European settlers and new cultural communities emerged in the country as the indigenous tribes were influenced by the traditions and cultural norms forced onto them by the numerous invading newcomers. Due to Cape Town’s history as a trading rest stop and the importation of slaves, South Africa’s population consisted of indigenous Africans, European settlers and convicts and slaves from Asia. The centering of numerous cultural imports and intercultural marriages created an environment cultural exchange and cultural imposition. In any instance, where the sharing and combining of different cultural groupings occur, the possibility of a creolised cultural community can emerge.

Khan states that utilising creolisation theory to read the genesis of coloured communities works at destabilising the rigid racialised understanding of colouredness previously associated with its apartheid connotations. Creolisation theory instead reframes colouredness with the fluidity that accompanies all identities that are formed through creolisation, by focusing on the shared experiences common with novel cultural formation (Khan 21).

I believe that coloured identity serves as a marker of a subjective experience of blackness, that is both independent from, as well as part of, the racial category of blackness. As Khan states: “Colouredness [is] a cultural difference within the spectrum of Blackness” which is a social experience they all share (60). Here, I believe that we are simultaneously acknowledging the shared oppressive past these communities had experienced under the rule of apartheid, while paying attention to the different cultural norms these groupings established on their specific historical trajectories. The term ‘coloured’ works as an identifier to encapsulate this difference. I will now introduce three schools of thought that theorise coloured identity and foreground which theories best encapsulate the ideas of colouredness presented in this thesis.

Jamil Khan’s three discourses on coloured identity

As I have mentioned above, there is a history of contestation surrounding coloured cultural and social identities (Khan 14). This debate is fuelled by the three discourses surrounding racial identities, namely, essentialist, instrumentalist, and social constructionist discourses (Khan 2). I will expand on the latter two schools of thought, which influenced my line of inquiry regarding coloured identities. The instrumentalist school of thought highlights the idea that the term ‘coloured’ originates from white supremacist rule during apartheid as a divide and conquer strategy implemented to subjugate black communities. This school of thought is inspired by Black Consciousness thinking and took favour during the later periods of apartheid to inspire union between the various black communities (Khan 14).⁹ There is still a small, but vocal minority of activists associated with the anti-apartheid movement who continue to adopt the Black Consciousness philosophy. The philosophy states that blackness is not determined by pigmentation but reflects an ideology. Specifically, to choose to identify as black is to set off on a journey of emancipation from the oppressive forces that rank blackness as inferior (Khan 21-23). The term ‘blackness’ is used to refer to the shared experiences of oppression, discrimination, and marginalisation of people of colour (Yarwood 158).¹⁰ Although this unifying ideology around blackness served to unite and help usher in the change of democratic South Africa, the philosophy has recently shown signs of falling out of favour with post-apartheid youths who believe that the philosophy fails to acknowledge the reality of racial divisions in black South Africa, as well as coloured exclusivism (Khan 22). Instead, positivism surrounding colouredness and the utilisation of the term ‘coloured’ as a social identifier has been on the rise, supported by the social constructionist school of thought about the origin of coloured identities and what it encompasses. This is discussed in articles written by academics attempting to grapple with what coloured identity could entail in post-apartheid South Africa and querying the legitimacy of its claim as an identity.¹¹ Some of these texts include Jamil Khan's “So what are you?: Analysing erasure, shame and (mis)appropriation of Coloured narratives in South Africa through social media” (2018); Janette Yarwood's, *Deterritorialized Blackness: (Re)making Coloured Identities among Youth in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (2006), and Daniel Hammett's “Constructing Ambiguous Identities: Negotiating Race,

⁹ I refer here to all non-white communities in South Africa that experienced oppression during the apartheid period.

¹⁰ I utilise the term ‘people of colour’ here synonymously with the Black Consciousness conceptualisation of the term black. Both terms here reference non-white South Africans who have historically experienced oppression and discrimination due to racial othering by the politically empowered white minority.

See “Writing our Freedom: Stepping into and outside neoliberal racism in South Africa” (2022) by Nadia Sanger and Benita Moolman for further elaboration on the usage and ideas of the term ‘people of colour’ (1-10).

¹¹ See the YouTube web series *Coloured Mentality* by Kelly-Eve Koopman and Summer.

Respects and Social Change in ‘Coloured’ Schools in Cape Town, South Africa” (2007). Social constructionism departs from the understanding that coloured identity is a result of human agency – for instance, the role coloured persons played in the separation of coloured social identity and black Africans in order to have privilege in the political racist hierarchy of apartheid – and that identity is continuously being influenced by history, society, class, culture, and politics within the local geographic context in which the identity forms. Due to this influential nature of identity, coloured identity undergoes an ongoing process of social remaking by those who find belonging within the identity (Khan 14).

Theoretical framework and points of departure

In this section, I identify and detail the frameworks and theoretical departures that have informed the research in this thesis. I begin by contextualising my study in three residential coloured communities on the Cape Flats South Africa. I provide a brief history of these residential communities by referring to the history that aided the formation of Belhar, Elsies River and Mitchells Plain. An Afrocentric framework, constituting seven characteristics, is the primary framework that roots this case study. I elaborate on the use of queer theory within my research, because I am conducting a reading on the experiences of queerness contextualised in three coloured communities through reading the focus group transcript as a primary text and two memoirs as secondary texts. I end the section below by detailing the work that personal narratives and memoirs do in aiding qualitative data collection.

The three spatially contextualised areas of study

I spatially contextualise my thesis in three residential coloured communities on the Cape Flats in Cape Town South Africa. I do this in response to Khan’s assertion that “[c]olouredness cannot be defined by one standard, since regional differences influence identities differently” (56). I believe that this difference could extend to different residential areas coloured-identifying persons reside in because there are variations within colouredness that could be attributed to class difference. Spatial separation because of race may have fallen, however, residential communities in Cape Town are currently divided due to economic inequalities and class based on housing affordability, job opportunities and access to public transportation. Zina Jacobs states that the continued segregated apartheid geography of Cape Town is maintained due to affordable housing provided by the government along the urban periphery (28). It is because of this that the Cape Flats continues to have a population constituting of mainly non-

white residents. I have recruited participants from three large suburbs that form part of the Cape Flats based off prior knowledge that the areas house many coloured residents.

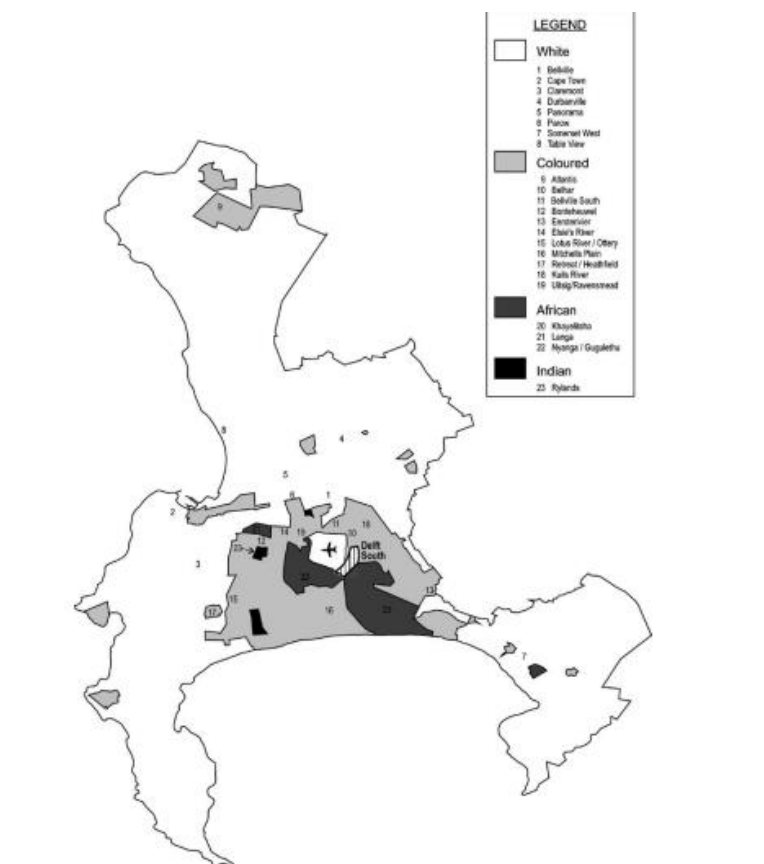


Figure 11: Map of Group Area demarcation in Cape Town (Oldfield 1983).

According to Glen Holtzman, “[t]he Cape Flats is an expansive, low-lying, flat area situated to the southeast of the central business district of Cape Town” (9). This means that the residential areas of the Cape Flats are on the outskirts of the central business district that is Cape Town. Jacobs states that currently, nearly all of Cape Flats communities continue to be poverty stricken (28). Azeem Badroodien and Steffen Jensen claim that there is a pervasive narrative in Cape Town held by Social Sciences academics and popular discourse that the catalyst of racial separation of non-white populations from the white populations in Cape Town was because of the forced removals of the GAA (1). Aubrey C. Redlinhuis states that numerous communities had been uprooted as early as the 1960s in South Africa (29). Badroodien and Jensen contest this oversimplification of spatial history in Cape Town, stating that in conjunction with the forced removals that occurred in the Cape, there was a simultaneous migration Coloured populations to the outskirts of the city (2). These migrations were incentivised by people attempting to move closer to the city for job opportunities as the

importance of agriculture had decreased (2). Therefore, concurrent with the devastation of District Six being declared a white only area in 1965, there were simultaneous relocation occurring within the Cape which increased coloured populations in townships on The Cape Flats. The national government had declared that the inner-city areas were reserved for white only residence and installed policies to regulate and limit the number of black people entering the cities of the country through policies like the GAA that enforced pass laws allowing coloured people to move and work in the city freely while barring black people from the same opportunities (Jacobs 26). The agenda of limiting and even eradicating the migration of black people to the cities, was achieved through the implementation of the Coloured Labour Preference policy that ensured that coloured categorised people would have job preferences. This created further social separation between racial classified groups under apartheid rule and created a racially contingent separation of space in Cape Town. The effects of these forced removals are visible today as areas remain separated along apartheid racial categorisation facilitated by uneven economic resources. The Cape Flats continues to have a majority populace of coloured residents and the city centre continues to be accessible only to those who have economic means to relocate. Currently, spatial separation is upheld by histories, languages, and economics (Jacobs 27). Historical economic oppression has made the move into the city centre one of difficulty for the less wealthy people of Cape Town who continue to be predominantly black and coloured people.

The first residential area I identify is called Belhar that is an area historically categorised as coloured under the GAA. Belhar is located approximately 27 kilometers from Cape Town. The oldest part of the suburb was founded in the 1960s. This area is commonly referred to as 'Old Belhar', identifying it as separate from the expansion of the area which is now called 'New Belhar' (Anofuechi 51). The older section of the residential area is more prestigious than the newer extension. This is reflected by the formal structures of houses that contrasts the poor infrastructure of houses and informal settlements that is situated in Old Belhar. The expansion of Belhar took place in the 1970s to accommodate the coloured people who would be displaced from their homes. The forced removals of the 1980s saw the relocation of many coloured categorised people moving to the area. The suburb's population continues to be predominantly coloured. New Belhar is characterised by socio-economic depression and crime, and this is because of high unemployment rates, reflects the trend witnessed in many previously racially coloured demarcated areas.

Elsies River is the second area I identify. According to Pieter Jansen, Ashley du Plooy and Faika Esau, Elsies River is a large, coloured residential area situated at the North-East of Cape Town (1). It is approximately fifteen kilometres west of Cape Town and six kilometres east of Bellville. At the beginning of the 20th century, the area was changed from farmland to housing many informal settlements. An increase of coloured relocations to Elsies River occurred in three waves (du Plooy et al. 2). Firstly, the Anglo-Boer war saw thousands of coloured people forced to relocate from the Transvaal and the Orange Free State due to lack of job opportunities and poverty. Second, the Great Depression of 1925 to 1933 saw farm labourers and their families forced to relocate and settle elsewhere. Elsies River offered cheap land and lead to the construction of many informal shacks in the area. The third wave was due to the decrease in importance on agriculture and a shift to the focus on the industrial sector. Job availabilities were centralised to the cities and people looking for employment moved closer to the city into areas like Elsies River (du Plooy et al. 2). Elsies River has a history of overcrowding, poverty and gang epidemics which negatively affect the working-class residents of the area. Many families of the area have resided in Elsies River generationally and do not relocate due to high rental prices in Cape Town (du Plooy et al. 9). The percentage of residents that own housing compared to those who rent is symbolic of the continued absence of economic empowerment for many Elsies River residents.

The last area that I identified in this thesis is Mitchell's Plain. In 1973, Mitchell's Plain was designated a residential area for people racially classified as coloured by the national government (Esau, Horner & Ndegwa 5). Located approximately 32 kilometers from Cape Town city centre, Mitchell's Plain was the largest single development for coloured housing in 1974 (Ziervogel 46). Like Elsies River, Mitchell's Plain is characterised by overcrowding and a mixture of formal government and informal shack housing structures that once again reflect poverty experienced by many residents (Ziervogel 47). Mitchell's Plain remains one of South Africa's largest townships and though it is no longer known as an official coloured township, the majority of the population continues to be coloured-identifying persons (Jacobs 6). The access to railway and public transportation to the city centre is characteristic of these majority working-class residential areas. As with many previously coloured designated areas on the Cape Flats, Mitchell's Plain currently houses a diversity of class populations within subsections of the area. Charlton Ziervogel acknowledges that in a census conducted in 2001, the unemployment rate documented within the area reflected that of the sample adults aged 18 to 65 years of age, twenty eight percent were unemployed (47). Furthermore, the author

speculates that persons who have access to economic resources and opportunity often choose to move out of the area.

The Afrocentric framework

As articulated above, this thesis strives to gather information that will provide insight into the lived experiences of individuals residing on the Cape Flats, who claim a coloured and queer identity. This thesis is rooted in an Afrocentric framework, which according to Zomakwakho Hlela's article titled "Learning through the action of research: reflections on an Afrocentric research design" (2016), effectively focuses less on traditional Eurocentric methods (discussed below) which previously dominated African cultural and queer studies. Hlela provides several characteristics that define an Afrocentric methodological framework which I elaborate on below.

Hlela asserts that the first and most significant characteristic of the Afrocentric research design is that African experiences must guide and inform all enquiry. The foregrounding of personal narratives through conducting a focus group discussion with individuals across the three coloured communities on the Cape Flats, accompanied by close readings of two memoirs, are incorporated in this thesis to represent lived experiences of both 'colouredness' and 'queerness' and how they intersect in these specific geographical spaces in contemporary South Africa. This ensures that the enquiry into the embodied experiences of queerness within these communities is rooted in the experiences of the first-person narrators of the texts.

Secondly, Hlela asserts that spirituality is an important aspect and should be given due attention within Afrocentric research. Themes of religion as they intersect with race and class, present themselves within this thesis in participants' discourses. Delida Sanchez and Dorie J. Gilbert assert that "[b]oth religion and race are powerful forces that shape identity, providing an overall sense of purpose, a feeling of connection with others. And a sense of community" (313). In this thesis, I shift focus from how religion independently creates community, as referenced by Sanchez and Gilbert above, and instead highlight the dependant relationship cultural groups of South Africa have in rooting their ideologies of race, gender and sexuality within religious teachings. I incorporate Sanchez and Gilbert's definition of religion, which states that:

The term *religion* refers to an institutionalized system of attitudes, beliefs, and practices expressed in such world religions as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism through which people manifest their faith and devotion to an ultimate reality or deity. (315 - 316)

The institutionalised system of beliefs and practices that Sanchez and Gilbert refer to above is the instrumental effect of religion on all who follow its teachings. A person's moral code and ideologies are often directly influenced by their membership within religion. Janet L. Gebelt and Gary K. Lewak state that a person's "spiritual beliefs can provide a foundation for one's ideological commitments" (80). An example of this is how the ten commandments from the Christian Bible are used by Christians as a guide for good morality. A person that breaks one of the ten commandments – for example, if a person steals - would be considered morally bad in the eyes of the religion and its members. This demonstrates how the active incorporation of religious doctrine as a cultural community's moral script influences the ideal of morality and positive identity formation within a community. Christianity has been particularly influential in the history of the social dialogue and ideas regarding race and queerness in South African communities. In Chapter Two, I foreground how religion and the notions of deviant sexualities in South Africa may have emerged. I outline how religion played a pivotal role in national moralistic dialogue which directly influenced negativity towards same-sex sexuality in South Africa.

The third characteristic Hlela identifies is that immersion in the research subject is a necessity for the researcher. I am a South African citizen residing on the Cape Flats who identifies with colouredness as a racial and cultural identifier and queerness as my gendered and sexual identity. It is my self-identification as a member of both coloured and queer communities that inspires this research project. Therefore, this thesis has an autoethnography methodological component which is supported by Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner, who state that "[a]utoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience (ethno)" (273). My familiarity and identification as both culturally coloured and queer frames the questions I ask of the focus group participants and the two memoirs. Nwabisa Shai states that autoethnography acknowledges and allows for the subjective and emotional positioning of the researcher to be recognised as part of enquiry (3). It does not assume researcher neutrality. Furthermore, autoethnography assists the narrowing of the thesis scope,

as this is a case study of experiences of specific people who identify as coloured and their experiences of cultural ideas of queerness.

I situate myself as an insider in the case study I conduct in this thesis. Immersion within the narratives of queer-coloured experience through facilitating, and then conducting a close queer reading of, the focus group transcript and the two memoirs, is the crux of this thesis. Due to my affiliation with my residential community, which is culturally coloured, and the queer communities of Cape Town, the bias that accompanies being an insider researcher will arise at various points within this research journey. This bias includes looking for responses from participants that match my own hypothesis of how queerness is experienced in my community. There is also a risk of misinterpreting the data to align with personal ideals. Maxinne Baca Zinn states that an advantage of being an insider researcher investigating a minority group is that “[...] the lenses through which they see social reality may allow minority scholars to ask questions and gather [the] information that [other] [researchers] cannot” (211). This implies that an insider researcher could utilise their weakness of looking for personally motivated answers from their gathered data as a possible strength. A researcher that is familiar with a cultural community’s practices may ask questions that would not occur to a researcher unfamiliar with a cultural community’s ideals and norms. Furthermore, an insider researcher would be better equipped to interpret the non-verbal communication of the participants of a focus group due to being familiar with empirical experiences of their community’s practices. There would not be a need to have a translator, due to the researcher’s knowledge of the jargon used within the community they are researching. Shai further supports the advantages I outline above, stating that the insider researchers shared “[...] cultural, linguistic, ethnic, national, and religious heritage [...]” with the community they are researching, coupled with the researcher’s intimate understanding of the community’s related concepts, enriches the collection of narrative data (10). The primary criticism that insider researchers receive is that researcher bias due to the researcher’s connection to the community may, in turn, lead to bias in collecting and interpreting the data (Zinn 213). Zinn provides a counterargument to this objection when she states that the weakness of the researcher’s subjectivity could also be understood as a strength (213). Zinn argues that “[s]ubjectivity does not disqualify work as scholarship or science as long as data gathering procedures and values are both made explicit” (213). Zinn further claims that the central criticism previously levelled at insider research is that the traditional, often Western, frameworks of qualitative research gathering through structured interviews do not apply well in researching minority experiences (212). The main fault Zinn finds with previous

traditional Western qualitative data-gathering frameworks in identity and cultural studies, is that identity research was conducted without being interdisciplinary. Zinn refers to the phenomena of previous identity study projects focusing on white, Western subjects and how there was an absence of cultural specificity and race. Due to the historicised oppression and heterogeneity of minority groups, a single disciplinary approach is not practical. I use the Cape Flats' coloured communities as an example to demonstrate why it is imperative to incorporate the knowledge of multiple disciplines for holistic data collection and interpretation. The researcher would need to be knowledgeable about the historical formation and multicultural nature of these residential communities. In addition, the researcher would also need to take into consideration class, racial hierarchy and historic oppression experienced by the residents in the past and how this could impact the current ideals and experiences of community members. The knowledge required to research Cape Flats coloured communities would require the researcher to utilise cultural studies, social sciences, and identity studies to situate and ensure that the knowledge produced is not generalised as it would not reflect the reality of experiences in these residential communities. If the researcher is researching queer experience, as this thesis does, they would also need to utilise queer studies. Implementing a single disciplinary approach, for instance, homogenising the experiences of all queer-coloureds, would falsely homogenise and generalise the data and lead to inaccurate results. This reaffirms the positive influence that the Afrocentric framework contributes to this thesis as an alternative to the traditional Eurocentric research frameworks Zinn opposes due to an Afrocentric framework's characteristic of promoting the utilisation of holistic and interdisciplinary knowledge. I elaborate on how a holistic data approach is implemented in this thesis below.

In the Afrocentric framework, the researcher's connection to their culture and subject of study is encouraged as an important characteristic as it promotes African researchers to build the scholarly body of social science academic literature, which had been neglected in the past or had been misrepresented by 'outsider' researchers (Hlela 5). The mission is to give the power of narration to the members of the communities. I utilise Paul Hodgkinson's suggestion as my approach to this thesis which is that I commence my research as an insider and "go academic", positioning myself in a space in which I can empathise and critically read the experiences of the focus group participants and the memoirs to draw insightful conclusions based on holistic research (144). Although I have been raised in one of the communities I use as part of the case study, I am aware that my experience of my local communities' culture and traditions are not applicable to all experiences of colouredness. I counteract my generalisation of coloured

experience by doing background research – a literature review – in Chapter Two and conducting a focus group discussion to obtain qualitative data.

The fourth characteristic of the Afrocentric framework is that research must be holistic (Hlela 4). I expanded in the paragraph above on how holistic data is facilitated through using an interdisciplinary approach to gathering knowledge. Now, I'll further highlight how my thesis fulfils the Afrocentric framework's call for holistic research. In Chapter Two, I provide a multifaceted collection of data. I focus on the histories of coloured and queer identities and black and white communities in South Africa to contextualise the proceeding discussion of coloured-queerness in the broader discourse of African queer studies. I look at the influences of culture, race, religion and political situatedness of the coloured communities in this thesis. I then conduct a close reading of the source data, the focus group transcript and memoirs, by utilising identity studies and queer studies literature to interpret the narrative data. I believe that the coupling of academic research, qualitative data from the focus group discussion, and the two memoirs, fulfil the Afrocentric framework's call for holistic research.

Fifth, the paradigm asserts that intuition is a valid source of information (Hlela 4). I reference the importance of insider knowledge. One of the strengths that Zinn highlights above are that an insider researcher's personal affiliation with the group they are investigating may lead to novel information. This is because an insider researcher may ask questions that a person unfamiliar with the researched group would not think to ask. These types of questions would be motivated by the insider's own experiences and understanding of the community. I believe that intimate knowledge of a group would facilitate questions that an outsider researcher would not think to ask due to being unfamiliar with the group's experiences. I consider this to be an example of intuition. Intuition is identified by Hlela as contrasting with most Eurocentric research designs, as it deviates from the scientific method. This is because the scientific method is based on empirical and testable knowledge. Intuition would not be considered knowledge that can be empirically tested and therefore does not align with the scientific method. I do, however, believe that all semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions that set out to gather qualitative data require a researcher to apply their intuitive knowledge. A semi-structured interview entails that there are primary questions planned for the interview, but that they are open-ended to allow for further dialogue between the researcher and participants. A researcher could further the discussion by posing questions that they intuitively feel would add to the conversation and this could enrich the data that is produced within the interview. I further propose that all narrative interpretations and readings require intuition as a researcher relies on

their understanding of the narrative to gather data. Acknowledging the intuition of the researcher is compatible with the personal nature of this research project and the strength that insider research promotes.

The sixth characteristic Hlela asserts is that not everything that matters is measurable. I believe that the subjective experiences of queer South Africans matter; that all tales should be documented and explored both academically and empirically through facilitating focus group discussions and interviews. The goal is to create social change by addressing South Africa's negative dialogue of queerness. I contend that this can only be achieved if African queer research is subjective and based on the experiences of queerness of all South African communities. The conducting of research into one or two communities fails to capture the culturally varied experiences within the country. In failing to capture the difference in queer experience in South Africa, African queer study researchers will continue to create generalised knowledge that does not reflect the experiences of the country and therefore would not be applicable to many citizens. In this thesis, the narratives gathered from the focus group discussion and the two memoirs may not be measurable, nor generalisable. This thesis is a case study on three coloured communities and the knowledge created is only applicable to the participants involved. I have previously stated that coloured culture is not homogenous. Therefore, the data collected can only draw conclusions about the experiences of queerness of the participants and memoir authors that are provided by the narrative sources utilised in this thesis. This thesis' value is found in it adding to the growing body of queer African studies, specifically, adding to narratives on queer-coloured experience, which is an under-researched field in queer African studies. The value of this study could be furthered if more research like this thesis is generated.

The last characteristic of the Afrocentric framework is that the knowledge generated must be liberating. As I have stated above, this research could serve in broadening the available knowledge about queer and coloured experiences in South Africa. This may aid in the demystification as well as acceptance of queer lives in Africa by adding to the growing body of queer African studies. The homogenisation of queer persons of colour under the umbrella term 'black' does little to address the subjective experiences held by the multitude of black cultural communities in South Africa. I reiterate that this is a disservice to minority groups in a multicultural country like South Africa. The embodied experience of queerness within the different cultural communities in South Africa is influenced by the country's political history. The apartheid period of South Africa which constitutionally enforced separation between South

African racial groups, aided in creating divergent cultural trajectories within the spectrum of blackness. I once again highlight how the legalised residential and political separation of black Africans and coloureds created separate communal identities. This separation fostered different cultural ideals and may have led to different experiences of queerness. I theorise that black Africans and coloureds are examples of separate cultural communities which enact different ideals on queerness. The notion of cultural difference underpins this thesis as I posit that different cultural communities experience queerness differently. This thesis presents three coloured communities' experiences of queerness as one sampling of a cultural community in South Africa.

Introducing Queer Theory

I choose to root my research within the social constructionist understanding of coloured identities. Like queer identities, coloured identities highlight the non-uniform nature of identity. Queer and coloured identities pose progressive questions regarding identity formation and how it is not necessary to be a uniform group to claim identity and group membership (Khan 17). Judith Butler states that 'queer' should be understood as a term that is constantly undergoing formation (Jagose 2). This thesis asserts that multiple parallels can be drawn between the contested social identity of colouredness and queer sexualities; in other words, both are contested terms that have undergone historical discursive evolutions from having a negative linguistic association to an uprising of positive discursive reclaiming by persons who choose these categories as social identifiers. The idea of queerness being an anti-essentialist approach to identity characterised by its fluidity through continuous re-construction, mirrors the creolisation theory of colouredness that highlights the fluid nature of identity. Similar to the utilisation of the term 'queer' referring to destabilising the rigid ableist, gendered, racial and sexual norms of dominant social discourse, colouredness also holds associations of destabilising the essentialised understandings of race.

In Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999), the author states that there is a distinction between sex and gender. I expand on the interconnectedness and dislocation of sex and gender as it is relevant to my reading of queer identities. Sex in this thesis refers to biological categorisation dependant on an individual's reproductive organs identified at birth: the body is then sexed as male or female. I acknowledge that this binary distinction is not exhaustive as intersex individuals are persons who do not fit the chromosomal or reproductive biological criteria of female or male sexed bodies. Comparatively, gender is

culturally constructed by factors like environment and practice, and is therefore not a fixed category (9). In my experience, cultural socialisation normatively prescribes gendered scripts of femininity and masculinity as being determined by biological sex. The failure or direct opposition of these culturally scripted gendered norms can be construed as representative of a queer practice of identity. I contextualise this argument in a culture that I believe prescribes gender to the sexed body. I will be enquiring whether my hypothesis is correct by reading the experiences of gender in the focus group discussion and memoirs.

My research focuses primarily on the dual identity-forming contributors that arise for queer-coloured identifying individuals. Therefore, it is unavoidable to ground my research in queer studies as a primary theoretical framework. Judith Halberstram asserts that queer theory has fallen out of favour with contemporary scholars due to speculated deficiencies attributed to the theory being relegated as the new gay and lesbian studies (361).¹² The oversimplification of queer theory has invited criticism for being exclusionary of the experiences of persons of colour and homogenizing differences under the umbrella of ‘queer’ (Johnson 3). E. Patrick Johnson levels criticism against queer studies, stating that, “[a]lthough queer studies has the potential to transform the way scholars theorize sexuality in conjunction with other identity formations, the paucity of attention given to race and class in queer studies represents a significant theoretical gap” (1). It is because of this apparent lack that Johnson proposes a broadening of the discipline and the re-articulation of queer studies to “quare” studies. “Quare” presents the solution to the perceived deficits of queer studies and specifically includes racialised sexual knowledge that has been lacking in the discipline thus far (Johnson 1). Queer studies criticism has risen out of the incorrect ownership of the theory by sexuality scholars which directly deviates from Jagose’s assertion that “queer is unaligned with any specific identity category [and that it] has the potential to be annexed profitably to any number of discussions (Jagose 2). According to Noreen Giffney, “lesbian and gay studies does not equal queer theory” (74). I reassert this non-discipline-specificity, inclusive and “playful” nature that queer theory originally offered literary academics (Johnson 4): I situate my understanding of ‘queer’ as thought and behaviour that is odd or off-kilter in the context of the heteronormative matrix, which includes, but is not limited to, identity construed by sexual desire (Johnson 2). Giffney

¹² Gay and lesbian studies are the theorisation and construction of same-sex relationships of men and women. Steven Angelides states that the “[c]onstructionist historians, cautious of conflating homosexuality and homosexual identity, have found it useful to examine the history of sexuality through this distinction” of the two biological sexes (128). It is the continuation of the normative gender binary to read and attempt to understand non-normative sexualities.

asserts that queer theory focuses on the “categorization of desiring subjects” and how some desiring subjects are perceived as morally good, while alternative desiring subjects are perceived as a threat to heteronormativity (74). Giffney further notes that “[d]esire does not always have to proceed from or be related to, sexuality (as it pertains to sexual desire)”, and it is my understanding that an example of desire could include a cultural community’s desire for recognition (Giffney 74). Due to coloured communities’ desire to be recognised as valuable social subjects in South African society, a criterion of what is morally good and socially acceptable to be considered a socially valuable community in the country is necessary. The desire of coloured cultural communities who seek social recognition has influenced the positive social scripts of members within coloured communities. The example I provide of this phenomenon is expanded on in Chapter Three, where I discuss coloured cultural communities’ moral codes of respectability. I assert that coloured communities foster scripts of respectability within community practice and that these scripts were influenced by the historic agenda of coloured communities wanting to reposition themselves to be a socially privileged group in South Africa. The foundation for many of the ideals of what constitutes a respectable coloured person in the three communities I investigate is delineated by religious teachings which I identify and explain in Chapter Three.

My thesis overlaps various manifestations of queerness which includes sexuality as one embodied difference in this study of identity and cultural construction (Halberstam 361). I will also look at two other embodied manifestations of queerness in coloured communities that arise from my close reading of the focus group discussion and the two memoirs. I look at coloured communities’ existence as a ‘third race’ as representative of racial queerness in South Africa, which unsettles the normative discourse of the racial binary of black and white. I present the normative ideal of what constitutes and deviates from desirable mental health in coloured communities. The overlapping of gender, race and queer sexual experience reiterates the non-monolithic nature of all identities as it attests to the multiplicity of subjective experience.

The personal narratives of the focus group discussion

The secondary sources that I use in this thesis to read experiences of queer-coloured experiences are the memoirs *Because I Couldn’t Kill You* by Kelly-Eve Koopman (2019) and *Living Coloured* (2019) by Yusuf Daniels. The incorporation of these life writing texts fulfils the Afrocentric framework’s call for data collection rooted in experience. I have chosen to

couple the primary information gathered from the focus group discussion and the two memoirs to present multiple experiences from different sources in the limited time frame of a Masters thesis.

I have gathered qualitative, empirical data representing subjective perspectives on queer-coloured experience. This multi-methodological approach I implement is experimental as it blurs the boundaries of life writing and qualitative data commonly found in the Social Sciences. I foreground and use the focus group discussion as a qualitative method because it “[...] allows researchers to investigate their object of study from the perspective of individual participants” (Hennink et al. 10). This allows the researcher to have valuable insight into what is meaningful to the participants and highlights certain ideological factors of the participants’ identity construction. In future, I would advocate holding more focus group discussions with more participants. These focus group discussions would include different questions exploring various manifestations of queerness that I was unable to cover in this thesis. I believe that the focus group discussion allowed me to ask direct questions, which aided my reading of the two memoirs. I questioned colouredness, practices of culture, experiences of queerness, gender, religion, ideas and practices of respectability and the interplay that all these identity constructing factors had on the focus group participants. I was able to ask these questions and expand on the experiences of the focus group participants because of the physical nature of conducting a live focus group discussion. The conducting of a focus group discussion allows dialogue between the researcher and participants. The facilitating of a focus group discussion allows direct questions to be asked by the researcher and elaboration granted by the participants. Reading a memoir, a researcher can apply theoretical knowledge and interpret questions from the source, but the researcher is unable to verify questions not explicitly provided within the text or pose direct questions that could be elaborated on. The text is only able to provide the answers housed within the narrative. The interpretation, therefore, lies in the hands of the reader. The focus group discussion also allows me as a researcher to get current and unedited responses from the participants which contrast the polished information that is presented in published memoirs.

Participants were recruited for the study through the Snowball Sampling method that is also known as the chain referral method. According to Ilker Etiken, Alkassim Rukayya and Abubakar Sulaiman, the use of Snowball Sampling is advantageous when recruiting a hidden population. A hidden population in this thesis refers to sexually queer practicing individuals who identify as culturally coloured. I identify the group as hidden due to the possibility of some

participants not openly practicing their sexuality or with the opinion that some participants may be afraid of being identified as practicing a queer sexuality. To commence the recruitment of participants, I had to recruit one initial participant to serve as the “seed” who would recruit the second participant (Etiken et al.). The second participant would then recruit the third participant and the process continued until a total of six participants were recruited. The “seed” participant was the girlfriend of my cousin. The woman openly identified herself as a lesbian. Prior to contacting the participant to participate in the focus group discussion, we had no familiarity or history. The seed participant was then asked to forward the focus group invitation to someone whom they thought might be interested in joining the focus group discussion and fit the criteria for participation.

The parameters set for participation is as follows: the participant needed to be between the ages of twenty-five and thirty. The age range was purposeful - I wanted to recruit people who were born during the transitional period of apartheid and people born soon after the end of apartheid. I believed this age range would provide participants who had parents directly influenced by apartheid ideologies. This would hypothetically lead to specific ideas of sexuality that the participants’ parents would convey to their children. The participants themselves, maturing in democratic South Africa with its liberal policies on sexuality, would place the participants ideologically in the interim of transition which I believed would lead to interesting data. The “seed” participant led to the recruitment of a second participant who subsequently reached out to me and conveyed interest in participating in the focus group. This trend continued until all six participants were recruited. Due to the nature of Snowball Sampling, an average of half of the participants were familiar with one another. This was beneficial to the study. Familiarity between participants led to comfortability and free flowing discussion. This also made obtaining participants that fit the parameter of the case study easier as many participants knew each other from living in the same residential area. I had zero prior personal or professional familiarity with any of the participants.

The focus group participants were not prepared for the focus group discussion beyond receiving a consent form and an outline of the aim and focus of the upcoming discussion. Unfortunately, due to technological failure, the focus group discussion was conducted twice. Due to this, the focus group transcript in Appendix A is the second time the discussion was conducted. I elaborate on the possible effects of this in Chapter Three.

The memoirs

Hellen M. Bannan states that memoirs are a prime resource for reading the key cultural issues of the era (109). I investigate the cultural attitudes of three coloured communities' different embodiments of queerness, and this made the life writing genre of the memoir a good choice of source material. The genre of memoir appears to be ironically suited for a thesis about a cultural group that has its origin in hybridity, as the memoir is considered a hybrid genre. Jūra Avižienis states in his article titled "Mediated and Unmediated Access to the Past: Assessing the Memoir as Literary Genre" (2005), that "[m]emoir distinctly hybridizes history and memory, telling history as memories while at the same time contextualising the memoirist's memories within history" (40). Avižienis outlines the emergence and history of the memoir as a literary genre. Avižienis foregrounds how memoir, as a genre, has been contested in life writing studies as an informal genre not worthy of academic attention (46). Julie Rak also discusses the rise of the memoir in literary studies and refers to the disputed history of the genre (306). Rak states that the memoir is "[...] understood to be less sophisticated than an autobiography and therefore, in the province of the less-skilled writers" (310). Where other life writing scholars might see a deficit in the informal and public rooted nature of the memoir, I see strength as the memoir presents a personal, intimate narration of the authors' life which lends itself to reading experience and is therefore ideal for this thesis.

A memoir is the telling of the memoirist's memories and experiences and therefore "[...] foregrounds events that may [have] shape[d] his or her perspective" (Rak 310). The influences on this 'shaping' of experience are precisely what I am focusing on and attempt to relate to the cultural ideologies of the authors' local communities. Rak positively discusses the personal characteristic of the memoir and how the author uses their memories and experiences as content. Michael Steinberg queries whether the retelling of memory is meant to be factual and falls into the category of non-fiction (143). Steinberg states that not all memoirs are written the same way. There are memoirs that prioritise the factual presentation of events and then there are memoirs that take creative liberties to present the "aesthetic truth" (143). Steinberg does not criticise this creative approach as he emphasises that memoirists may have different reasons for writing and that those who write reflectively, write to make sense of their experiences and for self-exploration (144). Therefore, memoirists are not always reliable narrators as the narration of their experiences is influenced by the author's ideological standing at the time of the composition of the text. This entails that the reader is presented with a polished and guided form of information that the memoirist offers. This does not devalue the source as insight into

the personal coupled with the contextual events the memoir provides, but is rich with qualitative data that this thesis utilises to present the experiences of queer-coloured persons.

Summarising Koopman's and Daniels' memoirs

I have chosen these two specific memoirs because both authors identify as coloured and have written narratives in which they share their experiences growing up in coloured communities. I reiterate that like the experiences shared in the focus group discussion, the memoirs provide subjective data that is not indicative of all experiences and ideas of queerness by the different coloured communities of Cape Town. I do, however, contend that the experiences and insights shared by the two authors are relatable to me. I believe the memoirs to be adequate in conveying subjective experiences of coloured culture and ideas in context. I expand on the spatial and social contextualisation of the two memoirs below. Both authors grew up in middle-class residential communities that are identified as coloured on the Cape Flats and therefore are suited to the parameters of this case study.

I begin with Koopman's debut memoir, *Because I Couldn't Kill You*. Kelly-Eve Koopman is an alumnus of Stellenbosch University and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama and English. The writing of her memoir was a project that was strongly encouraged by her publisher, Melinda Ferguson. In an interview with the *Sunday Times* (2019), Koopman described her memoir as "a weird mishmash between personal storytelling, political commentary and the constant questioning around memory". The title of her memoir references the main plot of the text, driven by her search for her missing father. The author has a strenuous relationship with her father, which is evident through the recollection of childhood memories in which Koopman highlights the rapid decline of her father's mental health. Koopman's father was a political activist during apartheid and appears to have suffered from PTSD. There are instances where the father violently reacts to his children and wife after drinking, which leads to the author's mother eventually leaving him. Koopman's memoir is extremely personal and rich with narratives that foreground the experiences of the author as a lesbian woman, a coloured woman and a daughter. The search for the author's father both physically and metaphorically ends with the author realising that she had been misdirecting her mental and emotional energy toward a person who did not deserve it. In the end, Koopman acknowledges that the importance of her father may be an idea that she would always have to deal with, but

she has also realised that her mental and emotional energies are better suited for the loved ones who have chosen to be a part of her life. At the end of the memoir, the author realises that instead of mourning and questioning the loss of her father, she would prefer to acknowledge and learn from the strength of the women in her life: her grandmother, mother and girlfriend.

Koopman's narrative is written beautifully, with clear feminist and identity studies influences. There are moments within the narrative where the author acknowledges feminist theories which influence her understanding of her own experiences as a lesbian woman within South Africa, as well as why she is fixated on trying to find her father. I believe the author's self-reflection, based on theories of feminism and identity, further enriches the reading experience. It highlights how our memories are shaped and understood by our current worldviews.

In comparison to Koopman's memoir, Daniels' memoir is a quicker and more humorous reading experience. The memoir is a short ninety-six page read wherein the author narrates experiences from his childhood of growing up in District Six, Cape Town during the later years of apartheid, and then moving to Mitchell's Plain. The author is a comedian in South Africa who became recognised for his short *Facebook* stories which he posted online. City Press posted a book review on Daniels' memoir, in which it is stated that "[i]f you're looking to understand the character and complexities of the coloured community, then this is a perfect glimpse into what living coloured is really like" (2019). Although I disagree with the journalist's assertion that this memoir presents the "perfect glimpse" into the experiences of coloured persons of Cape Town, I do agree that the memoir narrated by the author as his *child* self, provides a glimpse into one coloured person's experiences within his specific coloured residential community. Daniels' memoir is not reflective of all coloured communities' experiences during apartheid, but it does provide one subjective coloured person's experience that is valuable for this thesis.

Living Coloured (2019) is Daniels' debut book. I read the title of the memoir as insisting that colouredness is a cultural and social community within South Africa that is alive and that coloured community members have subjective located experiences in South Africa. The subtitle of the memoir, "Because black and white were already taken", exemplifies the racial social imaginings of South African communities, and that these communities continue to be understood according to the apartheid racist ideals. It displays the author as situating his cultural community within the racial discourse of his country as not being a part of white or

black communities. Instead, he situates his community as the racially categorised third community in South Africa.

Daniels' memoir follows the author's life from his perspective as a child in apartheid South Africa. The author narrates fun childhood stories about growing up in apartheid as a young, Muslim, coloured boy. I noticed that many of the author's stories highlighted a hypermasculine presentation of himself. He does this throughout the memoir by continuously referring to his interactions with females from a young age. I elaborate on the theme of the presentation of hypermasculinity in Chapter Four of this thesis, where I conduct a close reading of Daniels' memoir. The memoir provides the readers with great examples of coloured culture and traditions. An example of this is when the author describes childhood games that were played by all the children on his street. The author writes the memoir in the first person, with an informal register wherein he incorporates colloquial language from his residential community. The inclusion of these nuances of Daniels' culture encourages the use of this memoir as a secondary source within this thesis.

I provide a summary of the two memoirs in order to highlight the value they offer to this research that sets out to identify and expand on the ideas of queer identities within coloured communities. I argue that the best way to understand how a cultural community interprets and reacts to queerness is to read the experiences of queer persons within the community. For this thesis, I look at the experiences of queer-coloureds within three Cape Flats communities. This will provide me with data in order to read whether the selected coloured communities on the Cape Flats have negative rhetoric about queerness, as well as elaborate on what ideologies influence these communities' ideas about colouredness. These findings will not, of course, be representative of all coloured communities, but they will help us to understand the dynamics – both historical and contemporary – within these specific spaces that lead to particular understandings of queerness.

I present the literature review for this thesis in Chapter Two. I present the historic ideas of queer sexualities in black, coloured and white communities in South Africa. This historic understanding of queer sexualities is meant to contextualise coloured communities' ideas of queerness. It is also utilised to further exemplify that negative ideas about queerness are influenced by South Africa's history. It becomes evident that this history of oppression has led to the deliverance of the ideological imaginings of queerness adopted from European colonists and the apartheid state. I elaborate on how the importation of religion has affected black

communities in South Africa which have led to negative perceptions of queerness in South African communities. Lastly, highlighting the similarities and differences between black and coloured communities' political situatedness in the social hierarchy of South Africa, contextualises the importance of the subsequent reading of queer experiences in coloured communities.

Chapter Two: Background

The foundations of homophobia in South Africa

The focus on queer African scholarship has undergone an evolution. This reflects the political shifts that have accompanied South Africa's transitions throughout its turbulent political history. I have chosen to focus on the shift of political power in the country from being a British colony, the dawn of the apartheid regime, and now being a part of a democratic country, and how these political ideological shifts have affected the communities of South Africa's conceptualisation of sexuality. Amanda Lock Swarr supports this sentiment in her text, "'Stabane', Intersexuality, and Same-Sex Relationships in South Africa" (2009), wherein she asserts that:

[f]eminist theorists of sexuality and the body have led us to the point where we can confidently assert that the relationship among sexuality, gender, and sex are not fixed and stable but are contingent outcomes of located and historical practice. (524)

This implies that the ideas of what constitutes normative gender scripts and sexuality within society at any point in history are contingent on the dominant social ideologies of the local communities at the time. Below I will highlight how true this assertion is by briefly mapping the historic changes in, and the causes of, and the socially constructed conceptualisations around sexuality in support of homophobic ideals in South Africa.

The queer history of South Africa and the various social communities' negative ideas of queerness have different historical roots which are, in turn, linked to various political periods of the country. Within South Africa, there is a dominant social ideal that deviant sexualities are not desirable, and that heterosexuality is compulsory. Ruth Morgan and Graeme Reid argue in

their article titled “The Gay and Lesbian Archives: Documenting same sexuality in an African context” (2006), that:

[w]hile South Africa’s Constitution and legislative framework protects the rights of lesbians and gay men, the idea that homosexuality is un-African and un-Christian is echoed in everyday life, especially by certain political organisations and religious groups. (377)

The legislative frameworks Morgan and Reid refer to above is the inclusion of the equality clause for queer sexualities in South Africa’s Bill of Rights (1996). Section 8(3) of the Bill of Rights states that:

Neither the state nor any person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

This legislative clause in the Bill of Rights made South Africa the first country in the world to legally support and enforce non-discriminatory practices toward non-heterosexual relationships. According to Marian and Morgan, at the time that their article was published in 2006, other African countries have not followed South Africa’s example of constitutionally protecting the rights of queer sexualities due to “repressive and homophobic governments in the region” (30). Instead, Jacklyn Cock states that the constitutional protection of queer sexualities in South Africa has been instrumentalised to foster negative rhetoric in the minds of other African countries unwilling to include equality legislation for queer sexualities within their legal frameworks (41). The leaders of these countries refer to South Africa as the “satanic state” (Cock 41). Cock further concludes that this negative discourse is supported by statements denouncing the acceptance of same-sex relations from African leaders like the respective presidents of Namibia, Kenya and Uganda (41). These leaders continue to promote the rhetoric that same-sex relationships in Africa are “unnatural”, “un-African”, and a “Western import” (Cock 41).

The liberal characteristic of Section 8 (3) in the Bill of Rights does not reflect the empirical experiences of the majority in the country who practice queer sexualities. It is also important to note that this inclusion into the legal frameworks of the country was not influenced by most of the citizens of South Africa. There were political organisations, like the African Christian Democratic Party, who opposed its inclusion and gathered supporters in the country to

denounce the sexual equality clause in the Constitution. This is proven by a survey taken in 1995, one year into post-apartheid, which had 2163 respondents from all races and regions within South Africa (Cock 38). The survey responses displayed that forty-eight percent of the respondents opposed the granting of equal rights to homosexuals. Furthermore, sixty-four percent of the respondents opposed homosexuals having the same rights as heterosexual married couples and sixty-eight percent were against homosexuals being allowed to adopt children. These responses display a negative social ideal of homosexuality held by the residents of the country. It appears that even though the minority of the populace supported same-sex practising citizens having social rights within the country, they were not supportive of these rights being equal to the heterosexual citizens of South Africa.

I contend that this continuation of the negative social rhetoric of homosexuality is based on different ideologies and practices in South Africa's cultural communities, which contradict the country's liberal constitution. These differences are attributed to years of racial segregation and oppression. I provide historical context for this assertion by outlining a summary of the various political and religion-driven influences that the country has undergone below.

The British colonies of South Africa

I begin with the political and social effects that South Africa underwent as a British colony and how the period influenced ideas of queerness in the different cultural communities' social dialogue within the country. I reiterate Wordon's assertion that with the introduction of British domination, changes occurred in the Cape (xxii). The idea of colonial respectability propagated by the British permeated social and cultural formations of the colony despite of the existence of pre-existing communities consisting of different cultures that resided in the Cape at the time. The normative sentiment of homophobia found its basis in the practice of Christianity. The conversions of slaves and indigenous populations of Africans were common prior to and during British domination. From 1777, a baptised slave could not be owned which incentivised conversions amongst the slave populations (Cornell 58). VOC slaves, which consisted of imported and indigenous Africans, were prepared for church membership during this time. In 1799, the two main church denominations were the Lutheran and Dutch Reform Church (DRC) and the Moravian church that was a smaller church community among the Khoi at Baviaanskloof. The Moravian church was the first Christiaan mission station in South Africa (Cornell 58 & 60). The two main churches joined together to form the South African

Missionary society whose aim was to “[e]vangelise the heathen in the Cape” (Cornell 58). In 1802, the South African Missionary society began offering literacy classes in a meeting house in Long Street to the congregants. This provided the lower ranked individuals of the colonial society, slave and indigenous populations, the opportunity for possible ascension in social ranks on perceived civility due to learnedness. Due to the importation of Asian slaves, Islam existed parallel to Christian religions within the Cape and in 1820, literacy teaching was extended to Muslim youth. The conversion drive by the Christians was paralleled by the free black Muslim community to convert slaves to Islam. The prevalence of Christianity and Islam and the associated moralistic codes of these religions aided the demonisation of homosexuality in the colony due to scripture.

Glenn Holtzman, in his paper “Coloureds Performing Queer, Or Queer Coloureds Performing?: Assessing Belonging Through Queer Behaviour in Cape Town South Africa” (2017), argues that “intolerance, which would not be permitted in Britain, could also not be allowed in the colonies”, which villainised deviant sexualities during the colonial period of South Africa (19). As a British colony, the colonised had to follow the social teachings of the colonist, which included adopting homophobia as the moral standard of the country. Holtzman highlights “[...] that the nineteenth-century ideology on the British society as a respectable society was firmly established within the psyche of the residents of the Cape colony ...this was particularly apparent in matters of gender” (26). All members of the British colony were encouraged to present as respectable through socially accepted dress and by exercising the strict gender norms prescribed by British society. According to Holtzman, there was less separationist emphasis placed on skin colour and, instead, one’s hierarchal position in colonial South Africa was dependent on personhood and bodily attire. I find this to be a redundant assertion though, as the indigenous people of South Africa were already at a disadvantage of being a new British colony and were still having to learn the language and the manners of dress. There was a racial divide between colonists and the colonised, due to the nature of the transferal of the dominant ruling class’ – the British’s – normative ideals. The oppressed populations who were colonised were often considered to be savage if they did not meet the behavioural criteria of their colonists. Their previous nakedness and lack of education were used in the primary argument for their lack of civility and rendered the indigenous inhabitants of South Africa in the lower classes of this British colony. It is also noted in historical analysis of South African scientific and medical discourses at the time that the colonist believed there to be a marked biological difference between non-white bodies and white bodies; this sentiment was extended to gender

with the assertion that female and male bodies are markedly different from one another (Swarr 526).

To have a chance at attaining a degree of respectability within the colony, the oppressed populace – made up of imported slaves and the indigenous tribes of South Africa – was encouraged to join the churches and therefore had a claim to diasporic citizenship of the British empire. These persons adopted not only the religion, and dress, but also the usage of English along with the notion that English was the language of respectability and education. The colonised implemented the social codes of the British colony to rectify the colonist's preconceived ideas that they were uncivilised and therefore lesser human beings. Many groups of the colonised populace believed that there was a chance to have a claim to a degree of respectability if they presented themselves as the ideal British citizen through dress and forming part of the church.

It is pertinent that I mention that at this period in history, although the term 'coloured' as an official term to identify a creolised populace was not formally recognised, it was used socially at the time (Khan 2). According to Hammett's PhD thesis, due to the industrial development in the mid to late 19th century, which instigated urbanisation, there was a separate politicised coloured identity. There was an alignment of class and race during this period that led to the coalition of Khoisan and ex-slave communities which emerged as an urban proletariat and were perceived as separate from the Bantu-speaking indigenous population (Hammett 14).

Introducing the new white regime

In 1948, South Africa's political leadership was taken over by the apartheid government. Under the leadership of the National government, the ideal of Afrikaner nationalist power became the normative societal criteria and its hold was solidified with the dawn of apartheid (Holtzman 45). Ruby Schaap in his article, "State of Emergency: "An exploration of attitudes towards homosexuality in the SADF, 1969-1994" (2011), states that "[a]partheid as an ideology served to legitimate and sustain relations of white (male, straight, Afrikaans) domination over indigenous black people" (22). This entailed a society with ideals which relied on a patriarchal blueprint of masculinity, prioritising military conscription for Afrikaans boys as well as the heteronormative traditional family made up of a father as a provider and the nurturing, caregiving mother. Afrikaner nationalism relied on the leadership of the DRC as the main reference of morality and therefore the conservative puritan moral values of the church-led state ensured that public discussion of all 'deviant' sexual behaviour was prevented.

Homosexuality was touted as being unnatural and a sinful sexual orientation. The Bible continued to be the sole reference for moral behaviour until the end of the 19th century and this continued to support religiously motivated homophobia within the Cape. Like the British colonist, Afrikaner nationalism depended on the notion of hegemonic masculinity and its presentation. To be a man in Afrikaner society was to be heterosexual, patriotic and the head of the household. Procreation was encouraged to strengthen the military forces and continue Afrikaner lineage which further made homosexuality a non-option for the Afrikaner community. Joining the military was perceived as a necessary induction into manhood for young Afrikaner boys. This was a nationalist driven initiative as the apartheid government needed a military force to fend off the perceived threat of the ‘swartgevaar’, which was the fear of being overthrown by the non-white majority populace, who at the time, continuously demanded equal rights (Schaap 5).

The Afrikaner nationalist government was determined to keep the white minority in power. As Schaap notes, “[w]hite male homosexuality threatened a patriarchal and racial order that shaped interlocking structures that provided many white Afrikaner males with access to power in South Africa during apartheid” and was the reason why a homosexual identity was not tolerated for Afrikaner males (Schaap 13). This does not insinuate that there were no homosexual identities in the Afrikaner society. Schaap’s article supports this assertion as he maps the history of Afrikaner nationalism and the experiences of Afrikaner homosexuals who served in the army during apartheid. I will further elaborate on the experiences of queer sexualities for the white communities during apartheid below.

Divergent queer identities: White monopoly

Schaap’s study of the experiences of gay Afrikaner military men mentioned above inspired my research into the different evolutions of male same-sex practices experienced by the apartheid categorised racial groups, namely black, coloured and white (2011). This is because Schaap’s research highlights the different ideals held by Afrikaans speaking white South Africans and English-speaking white South Africans. I foreground this ideological difference below, hypothesising that the different ideas of male same-sex sexualities evident between these two cultural white groups within South Africa imply that ideas of queer sexualities may differ between other cultural communities within the country. The author states that, “[d]ue to segregation, the background of black and white homosexuals was separate as well” (24). The

author highlights the contradictory narratives among the white populace by stating that the apartheid state police blamed the English for having brought homosexuality into South Africa (Schaap 27).

The National Party came into power in 1948, marking the commencement of the apartheid regime. A separation in the white minority arose as different stances towards masculinity and sexuality were taken between the Afrikaners – mainly of Dutch descent – and the English, primarily British descendants, which were further separate from all non-white person's experiences of homophobia. The Apartheid regime lived up to its name and ensured that different racially categorised communities evolved apart from one another, due to the implementation of the Group Areas Act (GAA) which had persons' residential geographical locations determined by national state racialised categories.

As noted above, the homophobia of the British diasporic colony was instigated by religious values, however, during apartheid, the English white communities were blamed for bringing a liberal attitude regarding homosexuals in the country. This appointment of the blame for the cause of homosexual influence onto the English white populace may have been a ploy by the national government to marginalise alternative masculinities that did not form part of the hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity, a social script that the national government was attempting to instil nationwide to cement its claim to power over the country. It also served to situate the Afrikaner populace as superior over the British descended English-speaking whites of South Africa based on moralistic superiority. The criteria of this hegemonic masculinity relied on military conscription and all men who did not form part of the military – whether by choice or due to racial discrimination – were labelled as lesser men. Therefore, it was imperative to promote Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity over alternative masculinities, as they were identified as being lesser and utilised as an example of what a man should not embody.

Part of cementing the all-encompassing control of the Afrikaner national government was implementing the demonisation and eradication of all homosexual practices within their communities. This doubling down on homophobic practices created a contradiction in the power claims of the Apartheid national government. Afrikaner men were situated as all-powerful within the national state as they were the pinnacle representatives of racial and gender superiority, while Afrikaner men and women who enacted a homosexual identity were marginalised and were perceived as a threat to the power claims of Afrikaner nationalism over the rest of the country. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick explains the phenomena of the necessity of

homophobia in a patriarchal power structure like the race and gendered hierarchal order exercised by the Afrikaner national government in her book, *Between men: English literature and male homosocial desire* (1988). She states that homophobia serves the patriarchal system as it ensures the furthering of the society which will continue its overall domination, as well as strengthen its numbers, ensuring its control. Thirty-two years after the National Party came into power, they instilled the 1957 Immorality Act, which prohibited all relations deemed to be unnatural and immoral in the eyes of church and state. This law criminalised relations between different races, but also criminalised all same-sex practices in Afrikaner society.

The Immorality Act included the policing of “hermaphrodites, paedophiles, bisexuals, transgendered individuals, cross dressers or any persons with sexual or lifestyle distinctions that varied from the heterosexual norm” (Schaap 27). This demonstrates that the apartheid laws opposing queer sexualities were all encompassing of deviations from heterosexuality. This also proves that the sexual binary of heterosexuality and homosexuality did not exist during the apartheid period. I now highlight the National government’s stance on same-sex practices between men because of a law that made sodomy illegal (1980). The criminalisation of sodomy refers to the criminalisation of sexual relations between men as sodomy is usually attributed to sexual practices between men. The creation of this legal policy to further criminalise same-sex practices between men further highlights the importance of men in Afrikaner society. Although homosexuality was not acceptable by the church for both men and women, the occurrence of same-sex practices between men were more harshly discouraged due to the importance of the male in Afrikaner nationalism.

The lack of importance placed on the criminalisation of lesbian women during apartheid is explained by Marius Crous, who argues that Afrikaner society held the belief that “love between women” did not exist (53). It is theorised that this idea is founded on the alleged opinion of Queen Victoria and helped facilitate silence on the existence of Afrikaner lesbians. This social silence was imposed on the discussions regarding sexuality because of religious teachings and the social script of morality and was particularly prominent regarding non-heterosexual sexualities. Furthermore, due to the patriarchal ideals of Afrikaner society, lesbian narratives remained relegated to the margins of Afrikaner history. Schaap argues that “lesbian communities did exist, but they were much more clandestine than their male counterparts”, which the author attributes to restrictive patriarchal policies that outlined marriage and childbearing as a necessity for Afrikaner women (25). What is apparent is that these lesbian women were also subjected to the ideals of the nuclear family and the social pressures of

procreation which was promoted to continue Afrikaner lineage and therefore power. The importance of increasing the Afrikaner populace would not be achieved through same-sex relations by women and therefore lesbian Afrikaner women could not be accepted in Afrikaner society. Cock states that between 1969 and 1980, men and women in the army suspected of partaking in same-sex practices, would undergo electro-shock treatments and sex change operations (40). The goal of this was to punish these persons for deviating from the heteronormative script of the apartheid regime and served to dissuade homosexuality in Afrikaner communities.

The apartheid state influenced the structure of social norms and therefore influenced all the oppressed groups within this structure. Apartheid created separate, racial hinged identities and communities to maintain and enforce power over the dominated minority groups. It is because of this separation that the different communities formed individual communal identities, but these identities were still greatly influenced by state policy and therefore still influenced by the Afrikaner conceptualisation of gender and sex. The apartheid ideologies continue to influence the socio-realities of many sexually queer South African communities. There are “no common experiences of sexual oppression” in South Africa, which is a sentiment shared by Cock (43). The author attributes this to the separation of gender, race and class in the country and agrees that this continues to leave residual effects in the minds of its citizens. Marrion and Morgan argue that “[w]e need to change the mindset that has been deeply entrenched during apartheid when same-sexuality was criminalised, pathologised and forced underground” (33). The ideological scar of apartheid continues to be reinvigorated through essentialist racial teaching by persons and parents who lived during the apartheid period.

Non-white minority: Black majority

The purpose of outlining the history of queer sexualities in South Africa is to demonstrate that differences exist between the cultural communities of the country. I argue that these differences emerged due to the country’s political history. In the apartheid period, homosexual practices by white and black persons were constructed in different ways within South African citizens’ social discourse. This is due to the racial power hierarchy exercised within the country. White homosexuals were not tolerated due to religious teachings, however, a gay white man in South Africa still held more political power than white women and black communities. I refer to the 1980s in South Africa when there was an increase in white men being arrested and charged for

breaking sodomy laws. The South African police redoubled the effort of eradicating homosexual behaviours in Afrikaner society. The aim was to minimise ‘weakness’ in Afrikaner society caused by homosexuality (Schaap 12). This was the ideology held by the Afrikaner national government, which was founded in the leaders of the national government’s fear of being overthrown by the black majority populace in the country. The apartheid national government asserted that “homosexuality would bring about the utter ruin of civilisation in South Africa” (Schaap 26). The Afrikaner community could not be seen conducting homosexual acts when they preached that homosexuality was immoral and the practices of ‘lesser’ men. This would undermine the moral capital of the Afrikaner community and therefore had to be vehemently opposed by Afrikaner heads of state. This created a contradiction within the matrix of power held by the Afrikaner minority. The Afrikaans man was the apex of the power hierarchy in South Africa during apartheid, but this power claim was contingent on the man following the hegemonic script of masculinity in which he was expected to head a household and procreate to continue Afrikaner lineage. This could not be achieved if he was gay. In 1982, the Gay Association of South Africa (GASA) formed as gay activists began promoting visibility for homosexuality within the country. It is important to note that most homosexual activist organisations predominantly consisted of white gay men. Furthermore, white gay men, mostly middle-class, were privileged to have access to private locations where they could express their sexuality in relative safety. There were few places where homosexual racial mixing occurred during apartheid. One can assume that this was due to the racial segregation policies of apartheid, while also displaying the uneven power dynamics of race in the country. White gay men were more privileged than white lesbians and all black homosexuals. There were only a few locations where queer sexualities and racial mixing did occur – these places included the fiestas, Sophia Town in Johannesburg, and District Six in Cape Town (Schaap 24-25). Homosexuality was opposed in Afrikaner society to prevent threatening Afrikaner moral capital, but the criminalisation of homosexuality was mechanised differently for black South African citizens. This is because black Africans were relegated to the lowest rung of the racial hierarchy during apartheid. An African man that did not meet the hegemonic masculine script of Afrikaner society, and being gay would further make that person politically and socially vulnerable in apartheid society. I argue that homosexuality laws were one of many racially motivated legal policies that served the further belittling of black African men. This belittling could only be possible if homosexuality was eradicated in Afrikaner society and that is why it was important for Afrikaners to punish all members that did not meet their social ideals. I further argue that due to the black African experience of racial oppression,

black communities would not want to further exasperate their poor social and political standing in the country and would therefore feel compelled to disseminate the Apartheid ideals of gender scripts and hegemonic masculinities to ease the social oppression they experienced. The black communities adopted apartheid and church ideologies on gender and sexuality to survive, and this necessitated the erasure of homosexuality within their communities.

Two discourses on the origins of queer sexualities in South Africa

There are two theories surrounding the supposed cause or origin of homosexuality in South Africa. The first theory is that homosexuality was an import that arrived with the settlers on the shores of South Africa during the colonial period (Msibi 55). It then proceeded to ‘infect’ the previously heterosexual indigenous tribes. This idea is hinged on the notion that indigenous African cultures only partook in heterosexual relations and that it was the arrival of the sexually ‘perverse’ British, and then the Dutch, that ‘infected’ the indigenous residents of South Africa, effectively proving that the concept of deviant sexual practice was foreign until the arrival of the colonist. This theorisation positions the colonists as the sexually ‘perverse’ infectors of the country and contradicts the same-sex histories of British colonists and apartheid state government. It is interesting that even though the argument of the importation of homosexuality by the colonist is a popular persuasion technique used by African politicians, it is never explained how and when this ‘infection’ of ‘deviant’ sexuality occurred (Msibi 662). The idea of the sanctimonious British colonist or Afrikaner state teaching the indigenous Africans to follow what they themselves abhorred and attempted to extinguish within their own communities, is a contradictory narrative. Furthermore, instilling homosexual ideals within the colonised communities, which the national government later criminalised, poses more questions. I could argue that the Afrikaner-dominated National Party government wanted to teach the black communities’ queer sexualities to have justification to further persecute indigenous African people. I could also argue, like the Afrikaner-dominated National Party government did, that it was the liberal attitude of the British that was the cause of homosexual practices by black African communities. Regardless of its faults, this theorisation of the origin of homosexuality in Africa is commonly utilised by Africanist politicians who argue the un-African nature of homosexuality and that homosexual practices are a perversion and symptomatic of the “moral decay” of the African family institution (Morgan and Reid 377).

I provide the following example of this negative rhetoric utilised by African leaders by referring to the former president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. During a public address, Robert Mugabe stated that “gays are perverts and their behaviour is worse than that of pigs” (Luirink iii). This emphasises the overt negative assertions made towards homosexuals in Africa by the leader of an African country. This statement was made to the Zimbabwean citizens and facilitates a negative social discourse of queer sexualities within black communities. The condemnation of non-heterosexuality by African politicians who perpetuate the discourse of homosexuality being ‘unnatural’, ‘sinful’ and an active threat to the morality and well-being of the country, serves to distract public discourse from “more glaring social and economic problems”, according to Marrion and Morgan (30).

The second theory is dependent on the argument of the hypersexual African. This theory hypothesises that prior to colonisation, indigenous Africans’ practices of sexuality were free of the gendered and heteronormative scripts of the British and Dutch colonists. In pre-colonial Africa, a person’s identity was not tied to whom they had sexual contact with. Msibi provides support for this argument as he relays the discovery of bushmen paintings depicting same-sex relations dated before colonisation in Africa (64). Msibi argues that “African men do have, and have always had, sex with one another, the same can be said about women” (63). Studies on accounts of pre-colonial Africa display a patriarchal and gerontocratic society in which power was hierarchised on the principles of seniority within a community (Msibi 64). Based on the assertion that pre-colonial indigenous Africa did not have the formal social concepts of queer sexualities that European countries had, this theory maintains that it was in fact the ideological influences of the colonists that created the social condemnation of queer sexualities in Africa.

In Chapter One of this thesis, I assert that the erasure and silencing of queer sexualities of indigenous Africans were due to the colonisation of the country. I expand on this now as I foreground the false narrative that asserts that precolonial Africans only partook in heterosexual relations. I argue that this idea was created by colonial ethnographers who visited the country during colonisation. Msibi argues that “[i]t was European ethnographers who first declared that homosexuality was un-African, arguing that Africa was a sodomy-free zone” (63). He further argues that this was done by the British colonial powers to motivate the ending of the slave trade within Africa based on the perceived morality of the indigenous communities (63). The absence of homosexuality in Africa was used by the British monarchy to support the negative perceptions of homosexuality within their society because if the ‘savage’ inhabitants

of Africa did not partake in homosexuality, then surely the ‘civilised’ citizens of Britain could do the same (63).

This false rhetoric created by the British powers was disproven when an ethnographer called Evans-Pritchard visited the country and was shocked and confused when he was confronted by the empirical truth of same-sex engagements among the African people (Murray and Will 2). The fact that the discourse of a homosexual-free country stems from the British colonists makes the assertions from the country’s leaders strange. In post-apartheid South Africa, there has been an increase in indigenous black communities reclaiming and asserting their African identity by choosing to exemplify their pre-colonial culture and traditions. The wilful erasure and silencing of the history of sexual practices of indigenous South Africans by modern politicians in the name of black communities’ empowerment through moral capital, which was influenced by the oppressive colonisers of the country, is a contradictive narrative. I state this due to the decolonial initiatives that these political parties claim to promote. There are activist drives in South Africa to decolonise education, reclaim positive black communal identities and preserve African history. These simultaneous projects of reinvigorating indigenous cultures and practices while denouncing the country’s precolonial sexual reality, reveals that the ideological frameworks of the country have assimilated the religious doctrine that was imposed on its citizens during colonisation and apartheid. This assimilation into the imaginings of African communities was so effective that in modern-day South Africa, the social idea of religion is positive regardless of the historic reality that religion was mechanised against the South African indigenous communities and did not exist in pre-colonial Africa. I am not arguing that spiritualism did not exist in South Africa pre-colonisation; indigenous African people have always been spiritually inclined and practised this spirituality in their own ways, but European and Asian religions were only introduced into the country during South Africa’s colonial periods. I argue that in a country that asserts the importance of addressing the past and detangling the ideologies of British and Dutch colonisation to reclaim African history, the oversight that religion receives and the imposition of compulsory heterosexuality within the country, is queer.

The second theorisation around same-sex desire in Africa is the theorisation this paper will be utilising. I argue that the effects of colonialism have entrenched Western ideals into the fabric of African culture. One of the monumental influences that changed the moralistic and ideological worldview of many Africans was the introduction of religion. Strong ideological influences of the two Christian sects highlighted above – Dutch Reform and Protestant

churches – are provided as the homophobic influences during the colonial and apartheid periods. The heteronormative, patriarchal society that South Africa resembles now would not have existed without the direct, violent influence that accompanied its colonisation. Therefore, “[t]he implication is that what has been imported from the west is not homosexual behaviour but a homosexual identity” through the ideological and legal criminalisation of same-sex practices (Cock 41).

To conclude, in the democratic period of South Africa where same-sex relationships and marriages are not only legal, but protected by the Constitution, one would assume that these are the actions of a tolerant and accepting society, however, this is not the social reality of many sexually queer-identifying persons that form part of the numerous multicultural social communities of South Africa. As I have elaborated above, there appears to be an increase of political leaders displaying overt demonisation of same-sex desiring individuals. These political leaders achieve this demonisation of non-heteronormative sexualities by highlighting the supposed ‘un-African’ origins of the phenomena. These leaders claim that homosexuality was a colonial import that previously did not exist in Africa until the influence of the colonist soiled the morality and virtue of the indigenous people (Msibi 55). The theory of the hypersexual African contradicts modern South African politicians’ assertions that the British colonist and apartheid state ‘infected’ the country with same-sex practices. Msibi states that “[t]he political economy of heterosexuality, in effect, silenced indigenous homosexuality and traditional African societies tended to place great emphasis on maintaining a ‘proper’ outward appearance” (64). The adoption of the gendered and sexual ideologies of their previous oppressors and the politically driven sanctions opposing same-sex sexualities has served to effectively erase the history of indigenous communities existing without the gendered binary and compulsory heterosexuality. Msibi clarifies that “[b]oth the concepts of ‘homosexuality’ and ‘gay’ have no meaning in Africa, as they come from specific historical and political Western experiences” (57). This does not mean that same-sex activities and attraction did not occur in South Africa; these occurrences were usually hidden, but there are cases where it was proven to be culturally acceptable for same-sex practices to be conducted (Msibi 55). It is because of the historical origin of the term *gay* and *homosexual* that Msibi prefers the utilisation of the phrase ‘same-sex desiring individuals’ when discussing homosexual relations in Africa. I think that this distinction of terminology is an important one to make as it highlights the subjective experiences of location and history that directly influence the societal perception of sexuality.

Being Queer and being coloured

To identify as both part of coloured and queer communities is to doubly subvert the societal norms of South Africa. In Chapter One, the introduction of this thesis, I have outlined the social imaginings of coloured communities during apartheid which positioned the communities as the abnormal third in the racial imaginings of the country. Above, I have foregrounded the negative rhetoric of queer sexualities and how the imposition of colonisation has influenced the ideas of queer sexualities as morally bad in both white and black communities in South Africa. I will now continue expanding on the social ideas of queerness in coloured communities during apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa to contextualise my research of queer-coloured experiences. I begin by acknowledging that unlike the queer African studies scholarship I have utilised thus far, there is a lack of African queer studies research that could be utilised in expanding the ideas of queer-colouredness that I offer below.

South African research on same-sex sexuality is sparse. Black men living in rural areas, and particularly coloured men, have often been neglected in same-sex sexuality research. (Rabie & Lesch 717)

This excerpt is from Francois Rabie and Elmien Lesch's text, "I am like a woman: Constructions of sexuality among gay men in low-income South African communities" (2009). The authors pointedly draw the reader's attention to the 'neglect' of research that focuses specifically on the subjective experiences of 'coloured men'. Within this thesis, I take the stance that queer groups within coloured communities are not given sufficient research attention. Twelve years after Rabie and Lesch's paper, there appears to be a slight increase in academic African queer studies reference material for this project, which is evident by the few journal articles I utilised within my literature review. I argue that this motivates my assertion that there remains a lack of interest or motivation in spearheading research that contemplates the nuanced realities of queer individuals in coloured communities. There has been a rise in academics attempting to grapple with what 'coloured' identities entail in post-apartheid South Africa. I have listed references of these identity scholars in Chapter One. However, when it came to finding academic reference material that specifically researched both queer and coloured identities simultaneously, I found there to be a glaringly obvious shortage. Amongst the few I found useful was Holtzman "Coloured Performing Queer, Or Queer Coloureds

Performing? Asserting Belonging Through Queer Behaviour in Cape Town, South Africa” (2017). I have had to rely on broader academic literature on African queer identities like Kevin, J. Graziano’s article titled “Oppression and Resiliency in a Post-Apartheid South Africa: Unheard Voices of Black Gay Men and Lesbians” (2004) that references black queer experience, and the two memoirs that I use as secondary sources to supplement this lack. Graziano conducted focus group interviews to gather experience data and give voice within queer African studies to gay men and lesbian women in the black communities of South Africa. His focus group participants shared a theory surrounding the apparent lack of queer creative literature for black communities. The researcher’s participants “agreed that gay and lesbian literature in South Africa caters mainly to a white readership” (Graziano 310). The interview participants further highlighted that in the cases where black gay men and lesbian women did appear in literature, the portrayal was decidedly negative. There was no elaboration on what constituted this negative portrayal. This further highlights my contribution to this discussion, which will aid in the broadening of African queer studies by including narratives of queer-colouredness which will allow succeeding researchers to have a stronger starting point when researching queer-coloured experience. This also reaffirms that there is more research to be done regarding queer knowledge in South Africa.

All communities have specific ideas about sexual identities. The above mapping of the history of queer sexualities in black and white communities of South Africa has demonstrated how religious and political ideologies were used within communities to control and criminalise queer sexualities in the country. There are nuanced differences attributed to political and economic power that had the white and black communities of South Africa construct differing social narratives of queer sexualities. I reassert that this thesis constructs coloured communities as an experience of blackness within South Africa, denoting a separate cultural identity. This would necessitate the implementation of the apartheid ideological conception of moral capital within these communities through membership in the church and fulfilling the homogenised scripts of masculinity.

Cape coloured¹³ communities – especially the communities that formed part of District Six during apartheid – were not only tolerant of homosexual relations and queerness, but openly respected it. Andrew Tucker credits District Six with providing the context and space for queer

¹³ The prefix of the adding ‘Cape’ before the social identifying term coloured denotes the geographical context of these specific communities. Namely, that these coloured communities reside on the Cape Flats, a specific geographical location in Cape Town.

subjects to enact their visibility, birthing the term ‘*moffie*’¹⁴ and the practice of *moffie* drag (393). Holtzman discusses how *moffies* were revered in many working-class communities as they were given a privileged position in the annual Coon festivals (155). They were sought after due to their skills in hairdressing and fashion. Holtzman states that it was the *moffies*’ ability to entertain the community that made their presence desirable (162).

Rabie’s paper, “Gay Sexuality in a Coloured community” (2007), highlights the current ideological position that many South African communities have regarding queer identities. It is made apparent that much of the South African queer research deals with a singular concept of queer identity. There is a trend to focus research on the relationships of gay and lesbian South Africans. This could be viewed as the promotion of gay and lesbian sexual studies and a deficit of queer studies being conducted in and about South Africa/ns. It is due to this lack of exploration into queer studies in South Africa that Rabie supports the implication that South Africa – like many other developing countries – lags in liberal sexual discourse (97). Cape Town may boast the nickname ‘Gay Capital’, but the city maintains a rigid binary of norms.

There appears to be a sexual identity binary of heterosexuality and homosexuality foregrounded in African queer studies research by scholars like Adhikari, Klaasen, Marian and Morgan, Sanchez and Gilbert, and Rabie and Lesch. This does not imply that the reality of this binary is as simple as the categorisation implies. This oversimplification is due to South Africa’s dominant social insistence on maintaining rigid gender norms, and this complicates the usage of queer terminology and how broader society incorporates the terms that are often readily accepted in the West as part of normative discourse. I have personally realised the impact of rigid gendered norms on social discourse in my upbringing as a queer-coloured person. I previously, and incorrectly, understood that one could either be gay or straight. The only exception was whether a person was born intersex, and this ‘issue’ was readily remedied by the parents of the ‘afflicted’ child choosing a gender and having the other sexual organ surgically removed. The effects of stereotypical gendered norms that I was raised with affected my understanding of what it meant to present oneself as gay and how we read other gay persons’ presentations. I was under the impression that an effeminate boy or man would have to be gay. The moment a male displayed stereotypical feminine traits – liking dolls, cooking, and the colour pink – I would have assumed that he romantically preferred to date men, and I

¹⁴ ‘Moffie’ is also considered a contested term, as it has been used as a slur. It is commonly used by Cape Kaaps users – a variation of Afrikaans utilised by Capetonians – to refer to a feminine male, whether the person engages in same-sex sexual practices or not.

would therefore consider him gay. Over time I became aware that this binary was not as simple. I was introduced to ‘straight passing’ men on my university campus who would proudly identify as gay. Naturally, still ruled by instilled stereotypical norms of my upbringing, I justified the existence of ‘manly’ gay men by understanding the relationship to require one female and one male acting partner. Though I had been accepting of homosexuality, I still transferred my understanding of heterosexual relationships – as the norm and standard of measuring all relationships – to homosexual relationships.

I view my own ideologically traditionalist upbringing through Swarr’s article, wherein she investigates the cultural understanding and phenomenon of *stabane* in Soweto communities. She states that “[f]eminist theorists of sexuality and the body have led us to the point where we can confidently assert that the relationships among sexuality, gender and sex are not fixed and stable but are contingent outcomes of located and historical practice” (524). This implies that the normative understanding of gender and sexuality within a community is hinged on the practices of the community at any given time. Growing up in a Christian household within a generally homophobic community has influenced my upbringing and bias, which I was able to question only when I entered a new context with different ideas. This is not negating that there are people within the coloured communities who maintain different ideologies; however, the vast majority’s ideologies are the ideals that the community reflects the most because, “[n]ew ideas about gay identity do not simply replace older, received ideas, rather they intersect, compete, and co-exist” (Reid, *How* 9).

Holtzman states that he observed a uniqueness to the effeminate portrayal of ‘gayness’ that coloured people have reiterated for years and that this has, in turn, led to a measure of acceptability within the communities that is absent from other community groupings in South Africa (62). I do not wholly agree or disagree with Holtzman’s assertion of the uniqueness of the effeminate gay portrayal of the accepting nature of these coloured communities. I have personally observed a similar effeminate presentation of ‘gayness’ from other black communities and cannot confidently say that I find it unique, though I do find this portrayal of gayness the norm in my community. Secondly, regarding acceptance, I do agree that there is a degree of acceptability of feminine portraying gay men in my community, however, this acceptance is littered with contradiction, especially when religion enters the conversation. Rabie has similarly noticed this feminine trend of coloured gay men’s portrayal, going further to attribute this performativity to the need for the rejection of masculinity to first occur, before same-sex relations are accepted (66). During interviews that Rabie and Lesch conducted, the

participants discuss that many of them date ‘straight’ men and have intercourse with these ‘straight’ men, sharply putting into focus how these communities separate sexual preference from gender performativity. I was continuously perplexed as to how these communities could recognise these men as ‘straight’ when they continued to have sexual interactions with the same sex. One of the participants stated that these ‘straight’ men have sex with him and proceed to maintain a relationship with their girlfriends. My reaction to reading this was to consider this man bisexual, as he seems to be facilitating sexual interaction with both males and females. However, this does not seem to be the consensus of these interview participants (87). These communities value gender presentation over sexual practice and the identification remains within the gender binary.

Referring once more to Rabie and Lesch’s text, the authors identify that religion plays an influential role in coloured communities (719). Both scholars identify a strong affiliation with Calvinist convictions to be rife and that there appears to be a divide between Islamic and Christian religious sects to coexist in these communities. Both religions often practice homophobia, and this promotes a non-accepting aspect of queer identities in these social communities. I would personally relay that though I have not seen violent rejections of queer identities in my own community, discrimination in the form of teasing and discouragement is common in the general community rhetoric.

There is a limited terminology and discourse of the available labels in the spectrum of sexual identities within coloured communities that continue to only classify these identities within the gendered binary. Tucker solidifies this reliance on gendered norms by relaying that those effeminate gay men can have relations with heterosexual presenting men if gender norms were enacted (393). Growing up within a community that reiterated these ideals, I compare this data with my previous understanding that my community only housed heterosexual and homosexual identifying persons and that other queer identities did not exist within my community. I reconsider this now with the understanding that perhaps my family did not know or understand the vast fluidity that the sexual spectrum had to offer, or even that it existed, and continued to limit the understanding of queer performing persons based on past biases.

In conclusion, it is evident from the history of queer sexualities outlined above that the dominant social ideas of queer sexuality were, and continue to be, negative in South Africa, regardless of the country’s liberal Constitution. I also reaffirm that it is evident that the ideologies of the apartheid regime have affected the moralistic ideal within the various

communities of South Africa which continues to facilitate the negative imaginings of queerness in various ways. I have situated and highlighted the positioning of coloured communities' ideologies on queer sexualities by expanding on the histories of queerness in Africa for black, white and coloured communities. It became evident that compared to the academic research conducted in African queer studies on black and white South African communities, research conducted on queer experience in coloured communities is sparse. Chapter Three will constitute a discourse analysis of a focus group discussion I conducted, with the aim to contribute to the lack of African queer studies scholarship.

Chapter Three: The focus group discussion and its findings

The close reading of the focus group discussion's transcript presented below is this thesis' contribution of queer-coloured narratives to the field of African queer studies. In this chapter, I conduct a discursive analysis of the experiences of the focus group participants. The participants discuss how queer sexualities are understood and experienced within their local communities. I begin this chapter by detailing the process of the focus group discussion. I then move on to highlight the presence of the various schools of thought that theorise coloured identity. The following themes will be highlighted and elaborated on in this reading of the focus group discussion; The first theme I will discuss is the theme of queer-coloured experiences of the focus group participants. I discuss the phenomenon of participants choosing to move away from their local communities. Religion is a prominent theme in the discussants' discourse which reiterates the pervasiveness that religious ideologies have on all South African communities. I look at the nuanced incorporation of religion within coloured communities. Linked to the theme of religion, the theme of shame is foregrounded in participants' discourse. I end my reading of the focus group discussion by detailing the gendered scripts that are enforced within coloured communities.

The themes from this discursive analysis will be utilised as a primary source to assist the close reading of the two memoirs in Chapter Four. The combination of the data collected from this reading of the focus group discussion, along with the two memoirs, serves to answer this thesis' questions: What are the cultural articulations and ideas of queerness experienced by the focus group participants and how are essentialised racial coloured identities in South Africa queer? I commence this chapter by describing how the focus group discussion was conducted.

The focus group discussion

I conducted a focus group discussion with six participants who currently reside or previously resided in working class residential areas on the Cape Flats in Cape Town, South Africa. All participants openly identify as practising minority sexualities¹⁵ and identify as coloured. The participants are between the ages of 25-30; this age sample was chosen to represent a small sample of coloured adults who were raised in post-apartheid South Africa. This age sample

¹⁵ Minority sexualities refer to the array of non-heterosexual identities.

was purposely chosen to enable a theorisation about the evolution of coloured communities' ideas about queerness in contemporary South Africa which exist parallel to older ideologies influenced by the country's oppressive past. A focus group discussion was conducted to gather empirical data to provide insight into these coloured communities' ideas of queerness. The participants' discourse is used to identify and read their empirical examples of cultural articulations, lived realities and conceptualisation of what queerness entails for the identified communities. Below, I discuss how the focus group discussion will be used in this thesis.

Focus group discussions offer a social context for meaning-making by creating a micro-social environment that supports a natural mode of discussion (Wilkinson 226). I utilise the transcript of the focus group discussion as the primary text of this thesis, contending that the discourse analysis transcends the constraints of author bias, which is commonplace within life writing literature¹⁶ (Coulter & Smith 578). I have elaborated on the usefulness of life writing in the form of memoirs in Chapter One, explaining that they offer important insight into social and historical context, tied to the experiences of the author as an insider of the investigated communities (Greenhalgh, Russell & Swinglehurst 443). The themes of memoirs are often influenced by the author's cultural and social upbringing. The disadvantage of relying on life writing literary texts is the influence and constraints of the one-sided narrative and insights of the author. The researcher is reliant on the truthful narration of events by the author or the protagonist who narrates the story. The coupling of contextualised, qualitative evidence that the focus group transcript offers, alongside the critical literary analysis of the two memoirs, has the potential to provide rich subjective data of the discussants' beliefs about, and experiences of, queerness.

The focus group discussion was held virtually in December 2021. The discussion was held over *Zoom* and lasted for approximately an hour and a half. All six participants signed a consent form in which they consented to participate in the discussion, which was recorded. Before commencing the discussion, participants were reminded that participation was voluntary, and consent could be withdrawn at any time. The participants were also reminded that mental health services, provided by the Triangle Project,¹⁷ were available and that volunteers' identities were to remain anonymous. Anonymity was assured by assigning all six participants with a

¹⁶ Refer to Chapter One: 'The personal narratives of the focus group discussion and the memoirs' where I detail the use of life writing texts within this thesis.

¹⁷ The Triangle Project is a non-profit human rights organisation that makes professional counselling and support services available for all Cape Town residents who experience strife and mental health challenges due to harassment and negativity due to their queer sexuality. <https://triangle.org.za/about/>

participation number. The general constraints of a Masters thesis dictated a small sampling size. However, in future, it would be ideal to conduct multiple interviews with a bigger sample size. This would lead to inclusive and thorough sampling of the communities being discussed.

All voluntary participants identified as part of coloured communities within which they currently, or previously resided. These communities include Belhar, Elsies River and Mitchell's Plain, in Cape Town. All participants identified as either non-heterosexual or non-normative in terms of gender. Of the six participants, two participants identified as transgender women, two identified as lesbian and two identified as gay. This ensured a varied subset that encouraged a rich discussion of the participants' experiences.

The focus group discussion was officially conducted twice. The first attempt had to be abandoned as the failure of technology led to data loss. The recorded discussion's audio was corrupted, which made it impossible for a transcript to be created. The unfortunate loss of the data, however, led to a positive outcome in the research. At the first focus group discussion conducted, one of the participants was unable to attend and the conversation appeared to be more restrained and conservative. The benefit of having to conduct a second focus group discussion led to the participants feeling more familiar with one another and fostered an accepting environment. The second hosting of the discussion encouraged participants to be more open and willing to share their experiences. The second discussion had all participants in attendance and since they were familiar with the line of inquiry, the extended time to think about their responses had certain participants prepared with examples and reflections of their experiences that they previously found hard to retrieve. Overall, conducting two focus group discussions led to detailed and insightful information sharing from the participants.

I have provided a detailed description of how and why the focus group discussion was conducted. I assert that a focus group discussion was conducted in order to supplement the lack of queer-coloured scholarship in African queer studies. I also highlight that this thesis contributes to queer-coloured narratives within African queer studies. I begin the discursive analysis of the focus group discussion below by discussing the various theorisations of coloured identity that correspond with the discussants' narratives. I do this to explain the presence of racist discourse within the narratives of the discussants. Although this thesis argues against the usage of essentialised racial concepts of coloured identity, it is apparent below that the social idea of coloured identities held by the participants does not follow the same ideological idea of colouredness that I choose to use within this thesis, and therefore must be acknowledged.

The various intellectual schools of colouredness

The participants in my focus group display an awareness that the ability to claim colouredness as a social and political identity is a recent development. Participant Seven states, for instance, that coloured identity has only been a part of the conversation in the last five to ten years, which they consider to be a positive step in having coloured culture respected and seen as a ‘proper’ culture. The resurgence of insisting on this distinction from other black communities is the outcome of a communal shift of consciousness as coloured individuals remake their identities in opposition to being absorbed into “Black Africa” (Holtzman 4). I discuss this in detail below.

Khan states that “[t]he official apartheid script has not presented a very nuanced appreciation for the distinction between coloured and black African people” (16). I contend that an example of this is witnessed through the apprehension literary scholars have towards utilising the term ‘coloured’. This is apparent through the practice of some identity scholars putting the term ‘coloured’ in inverted commas to convey that it is a contested term (Hammett 4). There is also the practice of putting coloured subjects under the umbrella term ‘black’ to denote all non-white South African communities who have experienced oppression. I attribute this to the effects of Black Consciousness ideologies that advocated eliminating the use of the term ‘coloured’ in favour of ‘black’, due to the term’s oppressive racial conception (Khan 16). This apprehension towards utilising coloured as an identifier is not shared by the focus group participants. Instead, coloured as a social and cultural identity in South Africa is utilised to promote distinction between black and coloured communities (Fischer 2008).

The focus group’s dialectic of coloured identities is analysed using Mohammed Adhikari’s (2009) schools of thought outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. Social constructionist and instrumentalist schools of thought appeared to dominate the focus groups’ discussion of how they understood identifying as culturally coloured. It is evident that socially in South Africa, the empirical usage of the apartheid racial categories persists in referring to differences between black, white and coloured communities. Vincent argues that regardless of the assertions made by scholars focused on identity who continue to reiterate the fallacy of the racial classification of people, this is “not the social view of most South Africans” and racialised identities in the country “remain[s] a taken for granted item of common sense” by citizens (1427). Therefore, although I choose to refer to the cultural existence of coloured communities, I cannot ignore

the racial discourse that the focus group participants use to construct their identity as coloured persons in South Africa.

Erasmus' creolisation theory is identifiable within the participants' narratives, which situates coloured racial identity as in-between black and white communities of South Africa. This reaffirms the impossibility of 'pure' racial origins while highlighting that the communities are characterised by mixed ancestry (Holtzman xvii). This situates colouredness as a racially queer identity in South Africa, where the apartheid government historically fostered the racial binary of black and white (Khan 21). I implement queer theory in my discussion of the racial conceptualisation of coloured identities that deconstructs the ontological nexus of identity formation, inferring that race, like gender, is performative (Swarr 78). Swarr further parallels race and gender stating that, "[t]he embodiment of race is similar to the embodiment of gender and sex; both are without significant biological basis but articulated through repeated nebulous practices, beliefs and behaviours" (80). Holtzman further affirms this idea by stating that coloured communities maintain "[a] layer of queerness related to being racially mixed and positioned as an 'in-between' whiteness and blackness" (xix). I highlight the narration of Participant One below as evidence:

I will say no dear, Ek is mixed. Please, there's white, coloured, and black. I am the one in the middle. I'm black, I ma white and black mixed to make a coloured, so leave me a coloured, I'm a coloured and I love and am proud to be a coloured.

Like Participant One above, five out of six participants justified identifying as coloured as being influenced by dominant racial dialogue. Identifying as part of coloured communities is presented by participants as the grey area on the spectrum between black and white racial identities within South Africa. As I have mentioned above, regardless of the assertions made by scholars focused on identity who argue about the fallacy of the existence of biological races in the world, South Africa's racialised history has fostered a social discourse hinged on the ideas of racial difference that continues to be visible in the country today. This racial dialogue is rooted in the apartheid regime's puritan scripts and coloured residential communal experiences during the apartheid period in South Africa.

According to the social constructionist school of thought, coloured identity – like all identities – is not a natural identity, but exists because of the group members' agency through reproducing behaviours which distinguish coloureds from black South African communities. As I discuss below, participants contend that this difference is developed through a separation

of history, culture, and politics (Khan 14 and Farred 178). In Chapter One, I discussed how the implementation of the Group Areas Act had effectively separated coloured and black communities in South Africa. I stressed how the unequal political and social privileges afforded to coloured communities by first the British colonists, and then the apartheid state, positioned coloured communities in better political standing than other black communities in South Africa. This effectively created different historical experiences of capital and political privilege between the coloured and black communities. I further elaborated that a communal identity formed in coloured communities due to the shared experiences of oppression during apartheid and that the enactment of cultures and traditions were developed within these residential communities, isolated from black identities. The members of the coloured communities also adopted the ideologies and cultural practices of the white minority to improve their social status within apartheid South Africa. Identity formation is a continuous constructive process that occurs today as embodied social realities are remade by individuals who relate to coloured as their social and cultural identity (Khan 14). Yarwood refers to this continuous reproduction of coloured cultural and racial embodiment through forms of dress, language – slang in particular – and traditions (169).

This understanding of coloured communities' positioning as racially queer is evident in the participants' discourse. The participants place emphasis on the rhetoric of essentialised races in South Africa. The participants lament that they do not identify as black or white due to them not identifying with the essentialised racist scripts of the two racial communities. Participant Eight states, for instance, that "[w]e don't fit in with the black people", while Participant Five states that "I am clearly not black". This implies that the participants understand there to be a tangible difference between black and coloured persons and suggests that they see these racial identities as being grounded in the false belief of biological race. Participant Five's foregrounding that "I am clearly not black", alludes to a phenotypical difference produced by racial mixing, which determines their categorisation of black or coloured. Participants also tended to accentuate their physical similarities to white South Africans. For example, "[...] I was again too white for them because light of complexion and too sturvy"¹⁸ and "[...], I'm the white of the coloureds [...]".

The members of the focus group share resignation towards identifying as coloured due to what they identified as the coloured communities' historical exclusion from white and black

¹⁸ "Sturvy" refers to being stuck up or conceited. It is a slang term used by Cape Flats coloured communities in South Africa.

communities. Participant Four states that “[w]e are coloured by default”. Participant Five similarly asserts that “[...] I do identify as coloured [...], there’s no other [identification] that’s close [to my reality]”. This essentialised understanding of coloured communities is evidence of the false narrative in South African popular discourse that constructs coloured people as a homogenous group made of ‘bastard’ by-products of racial mixing which fostered separation between black and coloured communities (Holtzman 3). Coloured as a separate racial category created by the apartheid state created a community born out of displacement. This categorical racial separation also alienated persons who were labelled as coloured, and their descendants, from feeling included and relating to black identities (Holtzman xvii). The loss of claim to black identity is acknowledged by Participant Seven who laments that, “[...] pre-apartheid we were all grouped into this one group of black people”. The state-imposed separation between coloured and black communities during apartheid is currently enforced in democratic South Africa through the continued uncritical acceptance of racial classifications by its citizens (Bock 15). Grant Farred states that “in the current dispensation, coloured [people] see themselves being subjugated by black [people] who are [of] “purely” African descent [...]” (183). An illustration of a stereotyped characterisation of indigenous African identity, which the group participants highlighted as separating coloured cultural identity from South African black communities, is reflected in the importance the participants place on their *lack* of indigenous African accents. The focus group participants emphasize that speaking English was presented by their community members as a desirable trait. This is related to the idea that white cultural capital – achieved through enacting linguistic and behavioural presentations of whiteness – is pertinent for a racial grouping that historically lacked social capital (Salo, *Respectable* 15).

The focus group participants agree that coloured persons’ racially conceptualised mixed ancestry influences their choice of not claiming black identity. The stressing of this multicultural inheritance leads to the next theory of coloured cultural identity to be discussed, which is creolisation theory and the effects that creolisation has had on the formation of coloured groups. I discuss this in relation to the articulations of coloured positivism within the focus group.

The creolised group

The focus group narration reflects what I call modern-day coloured positivism. Through statements such as: “I love being a coloured”, and “I am a proud coloured”, participants

articulate “[c]oloured as an identity around which they organise their social worlds that encompasses nuanced and complex ways of being” (Khan 26). The participants advocate practising pride in identifying as part of coloured communities and attribute this collective identity to a shared history and culture. The construction of coloured identity through creolisation, due to the shared history and culture of coloured communities, is this thesis’ chosen conceptualisation of colouredness. I expand on the effects of the creolised nature of colouredness experienced by the participants below. One of the main counterarguments to the existence of coloured cultural communities is the claim that the communities lack culture (Holtzman xxii). This is a stance that both Holtzman and I disagree with. Like Holtzman, this thesis positions its:

narrative against those who say there is no such thing as a coloured culture, because there are in fact multiple coloured cultures defined by an array of practices that constitute senses of belonging for mixed race families within this broader geography of the Cape Peninsula. (xxii)

Holtzman argues that coloured communities reflect identity constructions, like all South African communities, as ingrown prejudices and social hierarchies that position group membership within coloured groups (xx). The focus group attests to the existence of this collective history and culture by actively claiming their colouredness. Part of this history is the “[f]ragmented cultural material that was generated in the context of slavery, colonialism, and cultural dispossession” (Lesch 718). Coloured communities make up the minority of South Africa (Holtzman 1). It is important to acknowledge that citizenship has historically been defined as belonging to a group that holds political power in South Africa. This is a prerequisite that coloured communities may find hard to fulfil as they make up the political minority (Holtzman 1).

Many focus group participants vaguely referenced the concept of coloured culture without specifically listing its characteristics. Instead, the group agreed on two aspects of what they identify as elements of coloured culture. Firstly, that coloured culture does not denote the negative stereotypes that mainstream South African media presents as being synonymous with colouredness. Participants disagreed with the idea that coloured persons are all gangsters, with their front teeth missing, and drunks. The active distancing of this negative portrayal of their communities is evident through Participant Six’s response to this line of inquiry: “That’s a big aspect of what is being sold and we as coloured people are identified as just that “[...] [a]nd it

is not true” (5). Instead, the group agrees that the primary characteristic of coloured communities’ identity construction is related to the multiplicity and varied nature of all who claim coloured identity. An example of this multiplicity is summarised by Participant Seven:

And then what we as coloured people do; we always have to take it a step further. So, you always have like gham coloureds, and the sturvy coloured, or there were now different groups in the coloured community. (9)

The excerpt above supports the idea that there is no essentialised hegemonic identity between the different coloured communities. These differences are attributed to geographic location, specifically different coloured suburbs on the Cape Flats that had been previously delineated by the apartheid state through the Group Areas Act (Holtzman 2). Although these different communities identify as part of the umbrella identification of coloured, they enact this identity in various ways which are influenced by economic hierarchies. This creates different presentations and experiences of colouredness. Easily identifiable differences are that working-class Cape coloured persons commonly speak Afrikaans, or a community-specific variant of Afrikaans called Kaaps, whereas the members of middle-class Cape Flats coloured communities choose to raise their children to speak English (Schuster 16). The language divide often denotes claims of respectability and is attributed to the socio-economic hierarchy between the financially well-off coloured communities and the economically impoverished (Salo, *Respectable* 303). Furthermore, the coloured participants who primarily speak English, emphasised their claim to whiteness and their perceived division between the ‘sturvy and ‘Gham’ coloureds. This is an example of what Holtzman refers to as “Voorstellen”, which is an identity projection technique and is how the subject strives to strengthen being perceived as morally and socially superior (xxii). I provide Participant Six’s excerpt below as an example of the social imaginings of prototypical colouredness in South Africa.

Okay maybe just to summarise what I was saying is that, as a coloured community
[Cross talk regarding unmuted participant disturbance]

What I was saying was, that we’ve been deprived of equal opportunity as a coloured community. To that, it has created a blueprint ..., so like that is why there is a slums,¹⁹ that is why there is this extreme of colouredness, because we almost been forced into that. Uh. Compared to pre-apartheid time or pre-democratic South Africa, it was the white people get all the opportunities and then it’s flipped to a point the black people

¹⁹ Also known as a ghetto. This refers to economically impoverished townships in Cape Town.

get all the opportunities. So, the coloured people are technically still in the same space that they were. Just slightly in a worse space.

Above, Participant Six attributes what they identify as the cause for what South Africa's dominant discourse presents as the prototypical coloured person. The participant insists that this negative stereotype only exists due to the oppressive history that initialised the identity formation. The inheritance of this violent past influences both the social construction from within the communities as well as how the communities are perceived externally by other South Africans. The idea that coloured identities, traditions, and culture are the result of apartheid enforced relocation and exclusion from black and white communities, reflects the characteristics of Erasmus' creolisation theory which states that creolised identities are cultural identities formed under marginality (*Coloured* 16). The marginality in the above extract is how coloured communities remain politically 'caught in the middle'. Participant Six states that during apartheid as well as post-apartheid, being coloured is synonymous with being the political minority. Referring again to Erasmus, she states that the coloured communities are made of multi-ethnic ancestry that is cohesive due to shared historical experiences of slavery and oppression (*Coloured* 16). This shared experience does not, however, produce a homogenous cultural identity (Khan 17).

Creolised identities are identity formations that are not hinged on shared racial ancestry. Instead, creole identities are influenced by a shared negative experience by a group of people which creates an environment where group forming is a necessity to survive social violences perpetrated on the group. Coloured identity is an identity formed out of social cohesion through shared traumas from both colonisation and the apartheid period in South Africa (Yarwood 160). Therefore, colouredness is a prototypical social and cultural identity. The following section of this chapter presents a discursive analysis of the focus group discussion through the lens of queer theory. I set out to highlight and discuss the main themes that emerged from the discussion's narratives.

Queer experiences on the Cape Flats

The following section presents narratives within the participants' dialogue that relate to queerness. These themes will later be compared with my reading of Koopman's (2019) and Davids' (2019) memoirs with the aim of utilising narrative fragments to create a discourse on

the participants' understanding of queerness within their communities. I begin below by discussing the negative discourses of queer sexualities presented by the discussants. I highlight and elaborate on the uneven tolerant attitudes the participants' local communities hold toward queer sexualities. The reading of the focus group discussion transcript is then utilised to explore the reason behind many of the participants choosing to move out of their childhood communities in favour of relocating to the margins of Cape Town's city centre. The influence of religion within the coloured communities is foregrounded and ideals of religious teachings present within the participants' communities are used to discuss the narrative of shame and the ideal of the respectable mother. The participants' discourse exemplifies patriarchal ideologies, which I elaborate on below. I utilise the participants' dialogue to query the gendered norms presented in their discourses.

At the beginning of this chapter, I detailed the sexualities of the participants. The focus group included two transgender identifying women, two gay identifying men and two lesbian identifying women. It was important for this study to recruit a varied (in terms of sexuality) focus group to allow a more thorough investigation into Cape Flats coloured communities' construction of queer sexual identities. Elaine Salo, Mario Ribas, Pedros Lopes and Marcio Zamboni in "Living Our Lives on the Edge: Power, Space and Sexual Orientation in Cape Town Townships, South Africa" (2010), state that previous research on coloured communities' queer sexualities had been limited to focusing primarily on either gay or lesbian research due to the continued social ideal of compulsory heterosexuality instilled within these communities' moral economy (307). I contend that the current scholarship on African queer sexualities does not provide a thorough enough investigation of the ideas of queer sexualities beyond homosexuality in coloured communities. Reducing sexual experiences to heterosexuality and homosexuality reinstalls the gender binary, erasing the reality of sexuality as a spectrum. It is evident below that the existence of varied sexual identities exists contrary to these communities' heterosexual ideals. Therefore, this study insists on the utilisation of the term *queer* to refer to non-normative gendered and sexual relationships, because it designates an anti-essentialised identity within identity studies and is unfixed to any academic discipline. The term 'queer' refers to all constructions of identity and asserts that identities are always under construction and not limited by one prescription.²⁰ I begin highlighting the main themes the

²⁰ Refer to Chapter Two, where I detail queer theory and the conceptualisation of queer which is used within this thesis.

focus group discussion produced by articulating the participants' negative experiences within their local communities, because of their sexuality.

One pattern I found in the participants' narratives was that publicly expressing queerness was received negatively within the participants' communities. This is reflected in Participant Two's assertion that "[their] community and [their] street as well, they [are] very small-minded" (20). The groups' revelation of their communities' tolerance of queer sexualities reflects the uneven acceptance of deviant sexualities which are socially forced to the margins of coloured communities as discussed by Salo et al. The authors state that queer sexualities are uncomfortably tolerated only if the individuals who practice these sexualities do not pose a threat to the "[...] localised notions of respectable personhood insofar as this personhood is anchored within a moral economy on which heterosexuality is central" (309). In order to confirm the tolerance that Salo et al. propose these communities hold, I asked the participants to rate the tolerance of queer persons within their communities. They were to do this by assigning a numerical value on a scale from one to ten, with one being intolerant and ten indicating acceptance. The average rating among all six participants is a five out of ten; a neutral rating that confirms a level of tolerance of queer sexualities within coloured communities.

The participants' narratives reflect that their communities display apprehension towards queer sexualities. The participants state that this is evident through their experiences of shame. It is through social interactions within these communities that coloured community members encode their local physical environments with a hierarchy that enforces the marginalisation of queer sexualities (Salo et al. 301). The public claiming of 'deviant' sexuality is then relegated through this hierarchy in which the ranking is influenced by the intersecting influences of class, race, and structural marginality, in which heterosexuality is centralised (Salo et al. 299).

All participants stated that the negative opinions and actions of their families restricted them from openly admitting that they did not fulfil the normative heterosexual blueprint they had been prescribed. This reaffirms the effects that community socialisation has on the group. It also highlights that these communities hold a local conceptualisation of respectable community membership. Coloured communities' ideologies reflect the after-effects of the oppressive history that situated them as physically and economically separate from the wealth of the city centre. This separation proves to be an obstacle in the modernisation of these communities as they continue to be at the mercy of "material deprivation and social violence" (Salo,

Respectable 15). To resist and survive the oppressive policies of apartheid, these communities promoted the construction of a positive sense of personhood grounded in gendered respectability and the moral sphere (Salo, *Negotiating* 347). Salo (2003) and Salo et al. (2010) foreground the various contributory factors that construct coloured communities' ideas of what it entails to be a moral, respectable citizen of South Africa. I foreground characteristics of coloured respectability below.

Coloured communities, like all black South African communities, were racially marginalised during apartheid, which manifested in limited citizen rights and economic deprivation. Coloured communities, in contrast to black communities, maintained a position of privilege due to the implementation of the Coloured Labour Preference policy. This policy granted coloured persons job preference in the Western Cape textile and farming industries (Salo, *Negotiating* 349). Coloured families also received a preference for obtaining social welfare and housing, which further solidified racial and economic separation from black communities (Salo, *Negotiating* 349). The access to job preference and social grants during apartheid facilitated the emergence of gendered respectability. This emerged because coloured women were the workers, collectors, and treasurers of finances during apartheid (Salo, *Respectable* 14). Social welfare grants were provided to nuclear family households – consisting of two heterosexual parents and children – that were collected by the family's mother. This positioned the mother as the holder of economic and social power within the household and representative of the coloured family when journeying to retrieve welfare money (Salo, *Negotiating* 349). In many households, welfare and money earned at textile factories by coloured women were the only funds sustaining the household. These mothers afforded their families relief from economic scarcity, and provided shelter, while also

bridg[ing] the gap between the coloured social location as an inferior race during apartheid and the positive identity that was produced via social relations and within the spaces of the townships. (Salo, *Negotiating* 350)

Coloured women's roles as economic providers positioned these women as judges and officiants of preferable characteristics that would ensure respectable personhood within the coloured community (Salo, *Negotiating* 351). Salo states that the script of the moral community was based on notions of purity and modest behaviour which, exemplified the hegemonic nuclear family and ensured generational access to welfare (*Negotiating*, 353). This local moral community was:

comprised of the social group, where moral and social obligations to others took precedence over the economic instrumentalism and where values such as modesty, loyalty, mutual respect, self-sacrifice, interdependence and assistance were valorised. (Salo, *Negotiating* 353)

Salo further relays that this practice of the respectable mother and her reign of the local moral economy has begun to wane in South Africa's democracy (*Negotiating* 354). However, I would contend that this overthrow of maternal governance is a slow changing script: this can be gleaned from the continued salience of coloured communities' idealised dialogue regarding the presence of respectability and morality enforced by the participants' families. It is apparent that the participants' experiences of their communities remain influenced by this code of purity and respectability that continues to homogenise heteronormativity and the nuclear family in coloured communities. Like Salo, I agree that the democratic youth of these communities are attempting to usurp the constructions of personhood as they try to join the rest of the country in modernising historic ideologies built in resistance to apartheid policies (*Negotiating*, 354). This attempted voyage into modernisation is a complex phenomenon as coloured communities contend with the reality of being "[..] at once within the 'modern' and yet forever not a part of it: forever yearning [for modernisation]", for the associated benefits that modern, economically privileged South Africa boasts (Salo, *Respectable* 15). I utilise Graeme Reid's definitions of modernity as that which contradicts tradition as well as referring to "[..] social and political values based on individual rights and responsibilities that characterise the post-apartheid era" (*The* 8). One of the actions taken by the participants to join modern South Africa is the choice of moving away from their childhood communities to live closer to Cape Town's city centre. I elaborate below on how the phenomenon of moving out of residential coloured communities is an attempt at liberation from the social ideals of their local communities.

Moving into liberation

Most of the participants have opted to move away from their childhood residential communities in favour of more accepting, ‘chosen’ families that they have found within LGBTQ+²¹ friendly spaces. It is due to their communities’ negative social discourses towards minority sexualities that the participants claimed that they identify as queer first and coloured second. Salo et al. state that it is because of the combined effects of economic deprivation and the lack of acceptance of sexual minorities within their communities that encourages many queer identifying persons to create safe spaces in the form of bars and hangouts on the margins of their communities (309). If they are unsuccessful in creating or finding this safe space, these queer persons may feel compelled to leave their residential communities in favour of more accepting locales. These ‘safe’ spaces are often found nearer to Cape Town’s city centre, which once again highlights the progression that economically wealthy spaces allow when compared to communities that lack the privilege of being economically and socially stable. These spaces are sought after by youth of all races due to the historical resources that these locations have been granted. This situates Cape Town’s city centre as the beacon of modern South Africa, a liberal space, which these marginalised persons desire to occupy (Salo, *Negotiating* 355). Unfortunately, the idealistic move to this promised land of liberation and wealth is unobtainable for persons who do not have the required economic resources to make the move to the city. The phenomenon of relocating to these economically privileged spaces that allow liberal attitudes toward sexuality is evident in the sampling of the focus group, as many participants have chosen to move closer to the city centre. Group participants state that they left ‘home’ in favour of spaces where they could be ‘themselves’ and openly practice their sexual identities. Participant Six reiterates the positive effects that moving to different social spaces and communities offer once reaching adulthood, as they insisted that “[...] community and different spaces allow different things”.

Four participants shared that they only felt comfortable openly claiming their sexuality when they were legally adults. According to Participant Four, “I only came out as gay at the age of twenty because for the last [couple of years,] growing up in high school it was a bad thing to be”. Participant One revealed that the effects of the oppressive negativity towards queer identities prolonged their journey to self-discovery. This participant recounted that she initially

²¹ The LGBTQ+ abbreviation stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, and the plus indicates that the abbreviation is open to the addition of more sexualities. ‘LGBTQ+’ and ‘Queer’ are often used interchangeably to refer to all non-heterosexual sexualities.

came out as gay at sixteen, but when she reached her twenties, she came to the realisation that she did not identify with her biological gender and began hormone therapy to transition into a woman. These participants may have felt safer claiming their sexuality when they turned eighteen and older, due to having the opportunity to move away from home. At the legal age of consent, the participants are also no longer at risk of having what Salo refers to as “[t]he most potent threat” from parents which is the practice of being disowned and forcefully evicted from their family homes (359). A prime contributor to the ideals that the participants’ parents hold regarding queer sexualities, is the influence of religious doctrine. Below, I detail the effects that religious teachings have had on the participants’ communities’ concept of queer sexualities.

Religious ideas on coloured-queerness

The most frequently referenced influence on the negative social attitudes of participants’ communities was the prevalent presence of religion within the discussion. All participants attested that their families were religiously inclined, and that religion played a prominent role in the moralistic stance their families have taken regarding ideas about sexual practice and identity. Notably, the religious practices of different denominations of Christianity were prevalent in the discussion. Coloured communities have creolised religious origins which is apparent in the presence of the co-existence of a variety of Christian and Islamic denominations within the communities (Salo 16). What these different religious sects have in common is that, historically, they served to demonise the existence of same-sex lives, while cementing heterosexuality as the moral and respectable practice (Msibi 68). One participant stated that their immediate family members were practising Christians, and their extended family on their father’s side practised Islam and reflected the same negative response to perceiving ‘deviant’ sexualities. Participant Six shared that they had previously falsely presented as a straight man for most of their life, due to fear of being identified as a homosexual. This ‘act’ resulted in the participant feeling pressured into marrying a woman and starting a normative family. The participant was asked to expand on what contributed to his fear of identifying as gay and why he believed it to be preferable to fulfil the normative script, despite being aware that he is sexually attracted to the same sex. The participant stated that it was due to family values, particularly that his family values were grounded in religion, that reinforced the idea that homosexuals are lesser than their heterosexual devout brethren. This reinforced the

participant's belief that his homosexual identity would not be positively received by his family and would bring shame to all associated with him. Participant Seven stated that he had grown up in a "[...] very, very, very staunch Catholic family" and acknowledges the effect this has had on his parents' approach to discussing sex with him. Their approach was to not speak about sex and sexuality at all as it was not an encouraged topic of discussion. This understanding of strict silence on the topic of sex being related to religious influence is reflected in Participant Four's narrative wherein she states that her staunch New Apostolic mother refrained from discussing sex, except to express how queer sexualities poorly reflected on the families of the queer-identifying person.

From the focus group discussion, there appears to be a direct relationship between coloured communities' striving for perceived respectability and the following of religious doctrine. This adds to the discourse of positive coloured personhood inscribed in the ideologies of purity and moral standing. It is imperative for a community member to be a devoted follower of their family's chosen religious sect. In the communities selected for this study, to be sexually queer is to be 'deviant'. This positions a sexually queer person as socially 'below' a heterosexual person. Heterosexuality is a compulsory requisite which is instilled in coloured community membership through the simultaneous practice of gendered respectability and referral to religious teachings.

The discussion of religion and how coloured communities entrenched this ideal through religious teachings, can be construed as a religious inheritance due to the influences on colouredness as a creole identity. Erasmus states that "[c]reolisation involves the construction of an identity out of the elements of ruling as well as subaltern cultures" (*Coloured* 17), which is what I believe can be identified as part of how respectability, as well as the opinions regarding queer sexualities, has been constructed in coloured communities. I attribute the importance of religion to the colonial importation of religion that was imposed on all indigenous African communities during colonisation, as well as during apartheid. Rabie and Lesch state that "[r]eligious organisations based on Calvinist convictions appear to have great sway in these communities; consequently, the church organised events are important in the social lives of these people" (719) and is why the communities' ideological stance regarding sexuality is entrenched through religious teachings that permeate the communities' social narratives.

As related in Chapter Two, within the history of coloured-queerness, the approximate claim to diasporic British citizenship promoted many coloured persons to prioritise religious practice as part of the family and communal tradition. This was particularly important to the communities that were attempting to claim personhood in a country, and era, that had marginalised them through citizen and economic deprivation. As presented above, coloured people created their own social capital within their communities in response to being racially marginalised to survive the apartheid era. This created local discourses of moral economy that, I argue, were influenced by apartheid religious ideology. Salo highlights that “[...] the Afrikaans language and the Christian ideal of monogamous marriage and the nuclear family were considered to be codes, [...] of respectability and belonging” (16). Holtzman provides context to how coloured persons came to include religion as part of their narrative of gendered respectability as he states that religious ideologies were instilled by mission schools (40). Specifically, the coloured residents of the inner city were made aware that in the absence of coloured persons having a history or culture, they should emulate white culture to enact respectability in the colony (Holtzman 40). During Apartheid, the reiterating of the mannerisms and ideologies of the dominant power, which was now the National Party, continued to be a method of claiming a sense of respectability for coloured communities. It is therefore not surprising that queer identities would not be acceptable within coloured communities.

Coloured communities are influenced – as all creolised identities are – by the mixed cultural inheritance that accompanies a group emerging as the ‘in-between’ of different existent communities. This implies that coloured communities’ ideals regarding queer identities are, in some ways, influenced by the ideologies of black and white communities of South Africa. This provides a new layer of reasoning to the negative attitudes the communities hold towards all minority sexualities while simultaneously demonstrating a culture of tolerance. In this argument, the culture of tolerance could have been influenced by the tolerant attitude of English, white persons of South Africa, whom have historically been credited by the Afrikaner white populace as promoting homosexuality (Schaap 25). The narrative of the sexually liberal African prior to colonisation could be another example of influential ideas regarding queer sexuality in Africa that, in turn, could have influenced coloured communities’ ideas of queerness. According to this discourse, indigenous Africans did not imbue sexuality with a moralistic emphasis on heterosexuality. Instead, sexuality was fluid and not closely linked to gender as individuals routinely had sexual intercourse with whomever they desired without it affecting their standing in the community. The implication is then that pre-colonial South

Africa was a sexually free country that was taught homophobia through the colonist bringing religion ashore (Msibi 57). This would then mean that the demonisation of same-sexuality and queerness was an imposition enforced during colonisation and then the apartheid period on all South Africans, including coloured people. This demonstrates that the coloured communities' negative, religiously driven opinion of homosexuality does not vastly deviate from mainstream South African discourse surrounding sexuality. South Africa has a liberal constitution that legally allows same-sex marriages, but various communities in the country still enact multiple articulations of homophobia, which are often driven by religious doctrine. I continue elaborating on the pervasiveness of religion in coloured communities by highlighting how religious ideologies played a significant role in the construction of shame narratives as they emerge in the participants discussion.

Shame

Shame forms a primary thread of narration in the participant's dialogues. This is visible in the previous paragraphs where participants often delayed the public claiming of their sexuality and gender identities. The participants conceal their queer identities due to the fear of disappointing and discrediting their families in the minds of the local community. Returning to Participant Six's narration: He is a gay identifying man who had previously chosen to attempt to fulfil the normative coloured 'man' script imposed on him by family and community socialisation. As stated above, the participant had succumbed to his socialisation and had chosen to follow the expectations prescribed to him. He had married a woman and had children. In the end, the participant could not continue living the fallacy that he was a heterosexual-coloured man and felt that the best course of action was to divorce his wife and attempt to reassess his life. He undertook this new direction in his life by recognising that he is, and always was, attracted to the same sex. He had found that fulfilling the normative script had not erased his truth: he was attracted to the same sex even though he knew that the revelation of his sexuality would bring shame and the threat of being disowned by his family. This example reflects the importance of the shame and banishment experienced socially and economically in coloured communities in response to 'deviant' identities. Salo states that accompanying the respectable mother as judge and jury of the communities' conceptualisation of personhood, there is another layer to the moral, social economy of these communities. This layer refers to how:

[t]hese township residents deepening sense of exclusion from the apparent abundance of resources in the post-apartheid present, have seen redoubling of their efforts to assert respectable personhood exclusively associated with heterosexuality. (Salo et al. 301)

This economic exclusion that Salo discusses above translates into a social death experienced by these community members, in a country where wealth distribution remains uneven. According to Salo, at the time of her research for her article, “Negotiating gender and personhood in the new South Africa” (2003), the unemployment rate of coloured communities was estimated to be fifty percent (350). Coupled with the meagre size of welfare grants, economic impoverishment remains a problem in these Cape Flats communities. To respond to the racial marginalisation that coloured communities experienced, emphasis was placed on unifying local coloured communities to combat displacement experienced because of the Group Areas Act (Salo et al. 305). These displaced families fostered a communal environment through social and economic assistance within the community to prevent members from falling prey to a social death caused by a financial (Salo et al. 309). Families would financially and physically aid one another during hardships. Families that have parents with jobs hold a relatively privileged position in a local context where funds are scarce. According to Salo et al., “[i]n the face of widespread economic need, those who have access to a steady income exercised enormous social and cultural power”, which is translated into an obligation to assist their and other households due to their relatively privileged position in the community (350). This obligation often manifests in aiding to buy groceries or looking after one another’s children. This aid is offered based on whether a family was judged to consist of morally respectable persons. If a person in the family is deemed to be dishonourable, the family is at risk of losing their respectable status in the community and is ineligible for receiving assistance from the community. Community members are apprehensive of being associated with the dishonoured family, “[f]or in doing so, they might threaten their own precious community survival networks” (Salo et al. 304). Coloured people appear to value being perceived as respectable within their communities, as this promotes surviving social death. Therefore, the narrative of bringing shame and dishonour to your family through being queer continues to be a threat to the subject as well as their family. Due to this practice, a positive, open queer community remains an improbability in a context where “[..], the cultural grammar of recuperative heterosexual personhood together with economic scarcity prevents the formation of a sustainable sexual minority in the township” (Salo et al. 306).

Homophobia equals gendered norms

The continued pervasion of homophobia in coloured communities is the natural aftermath of the forceful reassertion of heterosexuality which relies on gendered scripts. Participant Five, a transgender woman, foregrounds the harmful effects of the gender binary in coloured communities by expanding on her experience of how her gender presentation is judged in her local community:

They look you up and down because now they want to see where they can clock masculinity. Because we all obviously have feminine and masculine traits and people must get over that because it is very offensive when somebody like scans you almost like their brains just can't deal.

The participant asserts that the continued salience of stereotypical gender ideals present in her community is harmful to transgender people. This is due to their chosen identity being questioned, because of the ideal of gendered norms held within coloured communities. This is one example of the continued practice of homophobic rhetoric perpetuated and experienced by persons who practice queer gender identity and sexualities in coloured communities. Through maintaining these gendered ideas, homophobia is enacted on various embodiments of queerness in coloured communities. Sedgwick states that homophobia is the natural consequence of a patriarchal structured community, because procreation ensures furthering the group and maintains whatever claims to power the group holds (213). According to Solomon Ademiluka, patriarchy is translated to mean “the rule of the father” (339). This is used to refer to the role of the father as the head of his household and the authority that accompanies this position (Ademiluka 340). The term has been broadened to extend to the “[...] systematic organisation of male supremacy and female subordination on the basis of sex [...]” in the socialisation of various social groups globally (Ademiluka 340). The assertion that coloured communities, like other South African black communities, are patriarchal, takes on a nuanced distinction when Salo’s gendered respectability is added to the critical analysis of coloured groups (Gqola 113 and Salo, *Negotiating* 14). The mothers of coloured communities construct the narratives of femininity and masculinity while enforcing the normative script of homophobia. Salo relates that the older generational women judge young women’s morality,

therefore highlighting the ever-present matriarchal authority (*Respectable* 15). This is evident in Participant Four stating that her being a lesbian was an issue in her household because her sexuality reflected poorly on her mother's competency as a parent. She states that:

being a lesbian affected [her mother's] image at the end of the day because [her mother] took it as either [there] is something wrong with [the participant] ... or something was wrong with the way [her mother] parented her child.

The participant's morality is judged by her mother who states that her sexuality is "wrong". The assertion that the participant is "wrong" as a social and moral person is contextualised within a community where homosexuality, especially for women, is undesirable and threatens the participant's family's claim to respectability. An example of the participant's family's respectability being threatened is apparent through the participant's mother's belief that the participant's sexual 'deviance' reflects poorly on the parenting effectiveness of the mother.

Where coloured groups merge with normative discourses of patriarchy is that coloured women, although they enact authority of decreeing gendered norms, are ultimately serving as guardians of the patriarchy. These women enact their power in ways that continue to reinstall the men in their community into roles of power as they relegate femininity to roles of domesticity and 'wifely' duties (Salo, *Negotiating* 352). The men, in contrast, are not judged as harshly with respect to their social expectations. Coloured men's eligibility as marriage partners and fathers is linked to whether the man is related to a respectable household. The moral prestige held by the family the coloured man is raised in automatically grants the man moral capital. They are not required to be breadwinners but are expected to father children (Salo, *Negotiating* 352). To father a child is regarded as a requirement for an adolescent boy to transcend into manhood (Salo, *Respectable* 303). They are further expected to enact the supposed biological strengths of masculinity through displaying their physical prowess. This is done through consuming large quantities of alcohol in public spaces and harassing women who pass them (Salo, *Respectable* 303). This stark contrast of expectations for men and women reaffirms that, though these respectable mothers appear to hold authority over the judged morality of coloured persons, they favour reappointing men as the heads of their local community. Women resituate women in subordination to men, and this has a direct impact on the ways in which queerness is understood and tolerated.

The gendered scripts in coloured communities

I now continue elaborating on the gendered hierarchy present in the participants' communities. The ideals that position women in subordination to men in coloured communities are rooted in compulsory heterosexuality. In order to maintain compulsory heterosexuality in coloured communities, gendered scripts are prescribed for all of the community members. I provide Participant Seven's experience of gender conformity:

I am one of eleven kids, and it was mostly boys. So, I was always surrounded by all this, this boys and what boys needed to do and how boys are supposed to act so yeah, I sort of conformed, and I went with what was normal, uhm, I knew at a very young age that I was different.

As demonstrated in the excerpt above, participants' narratives often demonstrated the presence of a gender binary. I argue that the reinforcing of the historically affected creole nature of coloured identity is accomplished through the reiteration of prescriptive gender norms. As I analyse the gender discourses of coloured persons, I remain mindful of the historical influence of colonisation and apartheid that assisted in instilling the gender binary within the social consciousness of black communities through violent force. In the narrative of this forced gendered script, heterosexuality was one of many mechanisms deployed to maintain control over the oppressed populations of South Africa (Rabie & Lesch 726).

Stereotypical gender presentation was often present within the focus group dialogue as being utilised to either affirm or hide one's non-heterosexuality. Participant One, a transgender woman, stated that it was their fondness for dressing in tight clothing, always befriending females and acting "feminine" that led her mother to question her sexuality as a teen (16). Participant Four, a lesbian identifying woman, stated that her masculine appearance was always excused by family members because she enjoyed playing sports and therefore it was acceptable for her to present as masculine. She was labelled a "tomboy". The participant shares that at the time, the labelling as a heterosexual tomboy was considered preferable by her family to their daughter being a lesbian. This occurrence refers to one of the many exceptions of tolerance that coloured people hold towards gender. These slippages of the normative script will be further elaborated on below. In comparison, Participant One – a transgender woman – relayed that, in private, she enjoyed wearing what she describes as "masculine" clothing, but that the moment she ventures into public spaces – she provides the example of going to the mall – she is

compelled to hyper present as feminine to encourage the outward perception of her chosen gender identity and ensure that she is recognised as a woman (18).

I return to the exceptions that articulate the slippages of the assertion of gendered presentation in coloured communities by utilising the narrative of the *moffie*:

They don't believe that moffies [voice inclines to demonstrate disagreement] in their terms, is a moffie is a guy that wears girl clothes and walks up and down in the street. That is their image of a moffie. A lesbian is someone who dresses up like a man and wants to be a man. (Participant Two)

Above, Participant Two attempts to define what she believes coloured communities understand the term *moffie* to mean. The act of deviation from one's biological gender remains the primary focus. Interestingly, sexual practice is not referenced as part of the definition of moffie or lesbian above. Participant Six elaborates that the term is implemented to "diminish a typical straight guy who is being weak". The participant then states that the term is specific to coloured communities to refer to same-sex practising men but does not directly translate to mean gay. All these attempts to define what *moffie* refers to and how the term is repurposed within the community coincides with Swarr's definition of the term in which she states that "[w]ithin Afrikaans etymology, the term moffie may be derogatory or self-chosen identification and connotes an effeminate gay man" (87). Swarr compares the term to the isiXhosa term *iStabane* as both terms referring to same-sex practice and an intersex person. The term *moffie* is used as a blanket term for queer sexuality within coloured communities as female same-sex practising individuals are often referred to as *moffies* as well.

The notable characteristic of *moffies* as a sexual minority is that this identity articulation is often well accepted within coloured communities. This acceptance is credited to the fact that *moffies*' gender subversion does not threaten the normative gender binary of masculinity and femininity (Salo, *Respectable* 307). This is because *moffies* are often identified as deviating from their gender script early in adolescence and are commonly cross-dressing boys who choose to perform femininity. As *moffies* choose to enact femininity and follow the associated gendered norms by practising domesticity and having relationships with men, they continue to fulfil the gendered ideals of the community and are therefore tolerated even though they are biologically male. Swarr reaffirms this fragile tolerance stating that playing with gender – as *moffies* do – is accepted in social settings, but transgender identities continue to be oppressed by coloured communities (76). In the scenario of the *moffie*, gender and its precarious nature

is spotlighted. Its existence denotes that in coloured communities, gender identity is understood as not influencing one's sexual identity (Swarr 76).

In comparison, Salo states that queer women are forced to be more discreet as women deviating from gendered scripts are judged harsher than men (*Respectable* 307). This stems from the importance placed on women to fulfil reproductive and maternal expectations. Although coloured persons in my study continue to deny acceptance to feminine presenting lesbians, butch lesbians are more readily tolerated. This is due to the common practice of masculine presenting lesbians' participation in sports that bring possible positive capital and social attention to coloured communities. Salo states that "[s]port has historically provided 'tom-boy' lesbian women with a space for finding self-expression while blurring the boundaries between heterosexual and lesbian women", as it highlights that gender presentation does not always convey the person's sexuality (Salo, *Respectable* 307). In sports like soccer, agility and strength are promoted. The women playing the sport often choose to keep their hair short and wear less feminine clothing. Therefore, playing sport is one of the few social spaces where performances of femininity are not demanded of the coloured woman. Participant Four stated that as a lesbian woman, it was easier for her to enact her sexuality in the space of participating in sport without being directly identified as queer, because it was acceptable for her to dress as masculine in the context. She could therefore discreetly be a lesbian woman while not bringing shame to her family, as it was expected of her to present as butch to fulfil her sport requirements.

The transgender women participants identified that they were categorised as "different" early on in their childhood due to them presenting as more feminine. This presentation as female through mannerisms, specifically being what was defined as "soft" and preferring what is considered feminine games, led to community members pre-categorising the participant as not masculine enough. Therefore, the young boy is recategorized as gay or a *moffie* before they are mentally mature enough to understand and define their sexuality. In conjunction with elders of the community categorising a child's sexuality based on whether they enact stereotypical masculine or feminine traits, there is a practice of fear that community members deflect onto their children by attempting to shame their children out of enacting queerness. This stems from family fear. The families do not want their children to be recast as the 'lowest' members of their community and forego social assistance. This is practised through parents and guardians ensuring that children are aware that the social discourse of their community on queer identities is shame, ridicule, and difference. Participants shared that they were approached by parents who would try to reinforce gendered norms by ridiculing the participants' perceived deviant

behaviour through threatening the participant with being labelled a *moffie*. The term within this context is enforced as a threat and the connotations of calling a child a *moffie* are utilised as a deterrent by adults in the community. This has often proven to be ineffective, as Participant Six states: “It’s like they always called this child a *moffie* and now he is a *moffie* and now they don’t know how to react to the *moffie*-geid” (22). It appears that many of the participants identified with having been labelled a *moffie* used against them as a cautionary tool. These participants now reflect on this occurrence humorously as a threat that they reinvigorated with new meaning while being aware that they are considered undesirable members of their communities.

Chapter Three above has presented a discursive reading of the experiences of queerness by the participants of a focus group discussion that I had conducted. The prominent presence of religion in the focus group discussants communities is presented as a prime contributory factor in the intolerance of deviant sexualities within the discussants’ communities. Religion was cited in the focus group discussion for influencing shame and fear narratives regarding non-heterosexuality. Shame narratives have real experienced consequences in focus group participants communities. A respectable person, and by extension a respectable household, is important in coloured communities, as respectability allows a person access to communal financial and social aid. I have highlighted the patriarchal framework underlying coloured communities and how a patriarchal society necessitates homophobia. I have queried the practice of an ambivalent attitude toward non-heterosexual practices within the discussants’ communities. Although these coloured communities continue to be apprehensive of queer sexualities, there appears to be a criterion of instances where deviations from the communities’ gendered script are partially accepted.

In Chapter Four below, I utilise the findings of the focus group to conduct a queer reading of Koopman’s (2019) and Daniels’ (2019) memoirs. I discuss themes of religion, shame, respectability, and the attitude of ambivalence toward queerness in the two memoirs. I use the memoirs as secondary sources to continue gathering knowledge about coloured communities’ ideas of queerness. ^[OBJ]

Chapter Four: Two memoirs join the conversation

In Chapter One, I stated that there is an increase in the production of literature that presents coloured histories and identities. I further noted that this increase in literature on coloured

experience did not translate to an increase in literary texts that focused on coloured-queerness. The texts that I identified as successfully expanding on the themes of coloured experiences are primarily presented in the genre of memoir. Essentially, memoirs serve to expand on the personal experiences of the author. Helan Bannan states that they are effective at foregrounding identity development (2). This often fosters connections between the author and readers through the sharing of personal narratives that facilitates the foregrounding and understanding of key cultural issues in a specific period (Bannan 2).

The literary texts that reflect this phenomenon which I have chosen to analyse are, as previously mentioned, Kelly-Eve Koopman's *Because I Couldn't Kill You* (2019) and Yusuf Daniel's *Living Coloured* (2019). In Chapter Three, I emphasised that memoirs are useful sources of contextual insights into a historical period or community as it is tied to the experiences of the author as an insider of these communities (Greenhalgh, Russell & Swinglehurst 443). I further stated that my research incorporates an Afrocentric framework's requirement of holistic data collection by fusing the contextualised, qualitative data of the focus group transcript as a primary text with the personal narratives of the memoir, in order to create a larger body of knowledge for discussion in this thesis. In this chapter, I use the focus group discussion analysis alongside a critical literary analysis of the two memoirs to provide a thorough encapsulation of the beliefs, ideas, and experiences of queer-colouredness in the communities I investigate. Through the textual analysis of the focus group interview, I revealed themes that are connected to queer-coloured experiences as they are disclosed by the focus group participants. One of these themes is that there is an uneven tolerance of minority sexual identities in these coloured communities. I theorise that this tolerance is influenced by historical factors that affected these communities during their formation. These influences include ideologies stemming from the creolised nature of colouredness as a social identity and how the historically oppressed categorisation of the group in South Africa has led to the formation of a positive communal ideology founded on respectable mother and gendered respectability. I now use the themes that the focus group yielded to facilitate a short analysis of the chosen memoirs, in an effort to further expand on the experiences of queerness within the selected coloured communities. The memoirs that are being analysed below are not overtly classified as queer texts: Koopman purposefully states that she did not aim to create a queer text, claiming that she is unworthy to write such a text since she considers herself a subpar advocate for queer persons due to her lack of participation in queer advocacy (136). She further states that "[she] write[s] a queer piece, while simultaneously hoping that [we] will see that this entire book, and possibly this entire

life of [hers], is, in fact, a queer piece” (37). Similarly, Daniels’ book is meant to capture the stories of his youth. The presence of minority sexuality is just one of many aspects that influenced his childhood.

In Chapter One, I provided an overview of the memoirs. I highlighted the impact Koopman’s academic background has on the writing and presentation of her experiences in her book. Koopman has a background in social activism and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Drama and English at Stellenbosch University. She writes her memoir retrospectively from the perspective of her present. I believe the author’s academic background is evident in the self-reflexivity she practices in the memoir. Daniels’ book, in contrast, is written in an informal, comedic register. His background as a *Facebook*-and-stand-up comedian is evident in the informal prose used throughout the narrative. The author writes from his adolescent perspective, attempting to capture the atmosphere and emotions of his youth. Koopman’s memoir reflects on the experiences of a coloured person who holds a minority sexual identity in her local community, while Daniels vehemently asserts his heterosexual masculinity throughout his book. Daniels makes it extremely clear to the reader that he is sexually attracted to the opposite sex through the numerous accounts of his youthful romantic conquests. Daniels’ book offers an insight that is lacking from the personal accounts emanating from the focus group discussion and Koopman’s memoir, as he writes as a naïve witness to, and not the subject of, sexual minority experience.

Before delving into the analyses, I outline again what this thesis means by the term ‘queer’. I do this to foreground that embodiments of queer identities extend beyond sexuality. The two memoirs do not only present queer sexuality as the sole experience of queerness within their narratives: the notion of mental illness as a deviation from the normative social ideal of wellness is also presented within the narratives of the memoirs as a queer positionality.

Connotation of queerness

The memoirs, as I have noted, provide insight into queer(ying) non-normative identities within coloured communities. This is possible as these scripts do not prioritise representations of minority sexualities: sexual identity is a sub-theme of the overarching storytelling of the authors’ lives. The narratives within both memoirs provide a reading of how various embodied

differences are reacted to in the authors' communities. Koopman implores that readers read her whole life as a queer text (37). I understand her usage of the term to refer to 'strange' and 'non-conforming', which is how I utilise the term 'queer' in this thesis. I support this claim by returning to Jagose's contention that queer studies are not limited to a particular sexual and gender identity and therefore is a theory that can be lent to various readings of identity constructions that do not align with communities' normative scripts around these identities (Jagose 2). Queerness is the categorisation of undesirable subjects within a community. It is the opposite of social desirability, which is determined by what a subject's community considers morally bad. This could be the contradicting of the practice of compulsory heterosexuality as well as being a part of a nuclear family. The criterion of desirability is aligned with the subjective socialisation of a community or group. This means that for any community, that which is considered desirable may differ, based on the ideologies of that community. The characteristic of this desirability becomes the coding that delineates what is considered the norm and will contrast all that deviates from this desired norm as a threat or as morally bad and therefore considered queer (Giffney 74).

Below, I detail the various queer identities present within the two memoirs. I identify three embodied experiences that deviate from the social norms of coloured communities: these are non-heterosexual sexuality, mental illness, and race. The two memoirs expand this thesis' current reading of queerness as it includes mental illness as an example of a queer embodiment in coloured communities. I elaborate in the section below on how mental illness is constructed as a queer experience in coloured communities. This serves to broaden my reading of queer identities in coloured communities, as mental illness moves beyond sexuality.

Differences of the minds

Koopman offers the following imploration of her readers when her memoir starts:

[...] [I]t is important to write over and over again about being all kinds of queer, all of the time, for every possible kind of different, for every single little experience of trauma and triumph. (Koopman 139-140)

I begin with the excerpt above taken from *Because I Couldn't Kill You* (2019) where the author asks readers to be mindful of the nuances of queer experiences. I believe that she refers more pointedly to the spectrum of sexualities that queerness denotes. I expand on what Koopman states above to not only include the various embodied experiences of queer sexualities, but also to include the various presentations of deviations from coloured communities' normative scripts. For instance, an example of non-conformity that is not based on sexual identity is present in Koopman's narration regarding mental health, particularly her individual struggles with mental health. Mary Amuyunzi-Nyamongo defines mental health as "[...] all diagnosable mental disorders, which are characterised by abnormalities in thinking, feelings or behaviours" (59). Koopman states that, "Surely [her] queerness is obviously implicit in the intersections of [her] politics, the same way brown and PTSD are of course messily wired into my DNA" (136, 137).

The coloured communities' ideas around mental illness revisits the idea of normal versus abnormal; the normative versus the queer as Koopman contrasts herself with persons with 'good' mental health in the chapter titled "Rainbow nation depression" (38- 60). The normal is represented through the author comparing how she handles situations and experiences compared to how she perceives others to deal with their stressors. Koopman states that "[e]very black woman, every brown woman [she] meets comes from a lineage like this, strong superhuman matriarchs who hold up the world" and yet, Koopman feels like she is the lesser woman, as she is incapable of doing the same as her grandmother and mother (52). This superhuman ideal is one that has been inscribed on black communities. I foreground this ideal present in Koopman's discussion of her and her father's failure at being mentally healthy. Sonia Meera, Idil Abdillahi, and Jennifer Poole in "An Introduction to Anti-Black Sanism" (2016), outlines how this idea of black persons' "supernatural" ability to deal with physical and mental stressors was enforced on these communities by the colonisers that oppressed them. The championing of this ideal provided an excuse for the further dehumanisation and subsequent othering of black communities (Meera et al. 27). Sanism, as referred to by Meera et. al.,

situates non-sanism as strange and other. When being sane refers to the way a person handles stressful events in their life, being able to work productively and “[...] to make a contribution to his or her community”, it is easy to conclude that poor mental health is situated as the undesirable opposite to sanism (Amuyunzu- Nyamongo 59).

The normalisation of the idealised ability to cope with stress and personal issues as a coloured person is evident in Koopman’s memoir. The author compares herself to her mother and grandmother who, in her perspective, cope better with their traumas and do not need to take time to rest (84). I argue that the uneasy tolerance that coloured communities enact on minority sexualities is comparative to the communities’ practices with persons with mental health struggles. According to Amuyunzi-Nyamongo, there is a social stigma associated with being suspected of having a mental illness, made worse by a confirmed medical diagnosis of mental illness (59). The adverse reaction to mental illness is often attributed to ignorance, religious reasoning, and communal normative prejudice (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo 59). I compare the silence regarding Koopman’s father’s mental decline outlined in the memoir with how lesbian and bisexual women are treated in coloured communities. In Chapter Three, I stated that in comparison to men who practice queer sexualities, queer female identities are forced to be more discreet (Salo, *Respectable* 307). I further elaborated that the rejection of female queer sexualities in coloured communities stems from the importance placed on women to fulfil reproductive and maternal expectations. The “[s]ocial stigma [surrounding mental illness] has meant that in much of Africa mental illness is a hidden issue equated to a silent epidemic” and is therefore not spoken about and rarely acknowledged (Amuyunza-Nyamongo 59). The cause for this practice of silence is related to the threat of social capital that these communities value in the absence of economic privilege. In the same vein that being sexually queer situates the entire family as ‘other’ and creates obstacles to the mentally ill individual receiving community assistance, mental illness situates the associated family of the sufferer in poor social standing. This is a contradictory practice within these struggling communities as it is argued that poor mental health is often associated with poverty (Amuyunzu-Nyamongo 59).

I utilise Daniels’ memoir as an example of how mental disability is perceived and treated by the ‘mentally healthy’ people within his community. The author provides us with his encounter with a seventeen-year-old called Ruthie who lives on his street in a chapter called “Don’t Mess with Ruthie” (19-21). We are made privy to the fact that Ruthie is mentally challenged. Daniels makes fun of Ruthie because of her mental condition and proceeds to tease her relentlessly for

her difference. He goes as far as calling the girl “mal” (20).²² This tale of hilarity was meant to provide readers with a laugh, as one day Ruthie gets her revenge on the young Daniels. During a game played in the street by Daniels and neighbouring friends, the author chases after a ball and falls into Ruthie’s front gate. It is at this instance that Ruthie seizes the opportunity presented to her, as Daniels is physically within reach. Ruthie grabs Daniels and proceeds to throttle him while yelling, “Wie is mal nou?”/ “Who is mad now?” (20). This action of violence displays how Daniels’ ridiculing had affected the teen. It also reasserts the dehumanisation of a person with mental illness within the author’s community and how mental illness is a vehicle of oppression (19). I read this in how the author never mentions that any person in his street reprimanded him for his incessant bullying of Ruthie. Ruthie’s “mental disadvantage” positions her in the community as a lesser member who is vulnerable to “[...] name-calling, dismissal and the practices that facilitate the erasure of [her] identity” (Meerai et al. 21).

I now continue reading the representations of queerness that are not tied to sexual identity within the memoirs by expanding on the idea that coloured identities are constructed as racially queer in South Africa. The essentialised racial construction is evident in the authors’ narrations and is similar to the narratives of the focus group participants. The presence of race in the narratives of the focus group reiterates the idea that socially, racial dialogue is prominent within South Africa and continues to influence how the various cultural communities position themselves within the country.

Racial queerness as the non-black or non-white South African

In the previous chapter, utilising the focus group discussion, I expanded on how colouredness is an example of racial queerness. I discussed how colouredness as a racial group stands in opposition to the puritan binary of ‘black’ and ‘white’ South Africans. This puritan script was utilised as a mechanism of control during apartheid. In post-apartheid, the racial categories birthed during apartheid continue to be implemented in the name of redress. The experience of not holding claim to white or black identity in South Africa is present in both memoirs. I provide examples of this below.

Koopman highlights the discursivity of blackness when she acknowledges that her father would refuse to be identified as coloured (3). The author does not provide a reason for her assertion

²² Translates to mean “crazy” or “mad” in English.

of her father's disdain for the identifier. Through the story, we are informed that he was a political activist during apartheid. I theorise that Koopman's father maintains Black Consciousness ideologies, which would shun 'coloured' as an identifier based on the instrumental negative use of the term to oppress and separate black South African communities during apartheid. Koopman – mirroring the rise of contemporary positive dialogue surrounding the term – identifies socially and culturally as coloured. She refers to herself and the local community she grew up in as coloured. Readers are made privy to the continued racist separatist ideals of Koopman's local community as she states that “[s]ome coloured families moving to Durbanville where they too are judged like they judge the black Africans moving into their homes” (vii). This quote works in two ways. It implies that the residents of Koopman's neighbourhood do not identify with or welcome the indigenous black relocators into their neighbourhood. This also emphasises the separation of her local community's members from white South Africans as they are the 'other' who are not welcomed into the white communities. I use this example to reaffirm the non-white and non-black situatedness of coloureds in the minds of South Africans.

Daniels spotlights his confusion at the fallacy of racial separation implemented by the apartheid state by appealing to physical differences. His narration is simplistic as he articulates his confusion from the vantage of his seven-year-old self. His commentary is contextualised during apartheid. He queries the ideological absurdity underpinning racism during an encounter with a white policeman. He had accompanied his extended family members on a beach day. The beach was designated for whites only. The family was told to leave as the beach was not meant to be used by persons who were not white. The author allows the reader into his inner thoughts stating that “[he was] thinking, ‘Mr policeman, but myself, Shameeg and Faud are then whiter than all seven of you cops and some of you look more like Boesmanne²³ than us’” (61). This foregrounds the variety of embodied physicality that coloured groups display. It also shows that coloured persons, as a creolised population, have physical attributes which are not homogenous. Their melanin concentration ranges from passing as white to different hues of black. It also highlights that a coloured person's physical appearance is as varied as any racial group in South Africa. This reaffirms the queerness of racism as a concept as a physical and cultural homogenous racial group does not exist.

²³ Bushmen.

A pure race does not exist. Innocently, the young narrator highlights the absurdity of the assertion of racial differences while also positioning the separatist policies of apartheid as queer. I believe this inherently situates the emergence of a third racial category as *strange*, as it is based on a false biological belief. The author writes about coloured and black communities' separation. This reaffirms that, though the formation of the community was due to negative, unfounded belief systems, it does not detract from the unifying effects the emergence of coloured socio-cultural communities has had, and continues to have, for its members. In Daniels' narration, to be coloured is neither black nor white.

Similar to the focus group discussants' narratives, the pervasion of the patriarchal framework in coloured communities becomes apparent within the two memoirs. Below, I discuss the narratives of homogenised masculinity within the authors' narratives, highlighting how gendered scripts are spotlighted in Koopman's and Daniels' memoirs through the deviations of masculinity.

How not to be a coloured man

Chapter Three expanded on the strange exercising of patriarchal ideologies in coloured communities. The dominant gender discourse of power hierarchies in South Africa is patriarchal. The adoption of patriarchy is nuanced in coloured communities due to the power held by the respectable mother. I utilised Salo's (2003) analysis of the emergence and reach of the respectable mother in comparison to normative patriarchal ideologies in my above analysis of the focus group discussion. I asserted that though the matriarchs of the coloured communities hold the presidency of what denotes respectability in coloured communities, their input often enforces the patriarchal script. I maintain that the power held by these mothers is queer, as the mothers often (but not always) prescribe who fulfils the patriarchal moral script of the community. I assert that the exercising of the patriarchal structure is a queer practice in coloured communities, and I provide examples from the memoirs below to substantiate this point.

The dominant social script of South Africa promoted by the European colonisers and the apartheid national government was the ideal of the nuclear family (Holtzman 45). Koopman's memoir provides an example of the deviation from the normative South African social script by spotlighting the contradiction that is the absence of a nuclear family. Koopman's memoir is

her mission to find the missing patriarch of her family. On this mission, what emerges are contradictory practices of gendered norms within the author's home, enacted by her grandparents. The author queer(ies) the patriarchal ideological underpinnings of her community, with Koopman's grandfather demonstrating a contrastive narrative of men subverting gendered norms in her household:

While conservative gender roles may seem concrete, whenever I am around them there are the glorious nuances that threaten the foundations of the heteronormative tradition.
(Koopman xi)

This excerpt demonstrates that the author is cognisant that her grandfather's behaviour stands in opposition to the dominant social construction of men in South Africa. The grandfather's familiarity with domesticity is foregrounded as strange as the head of the Koopman house. Readers are made aware of other queer nuances of the grandfather's ideals and behaviours which are highlighted through the grandfather's characteristic as a pious religious man who is against substance abuse and follows the word of the Christian God. This should imply that the grandfather vehemently opposes and condemns homosexuality in his home. This is contradicted when it is Koopman's grandfather who takes the first step at showing an attempt of acceptance towards his granddaughter when she comes out as queer (137). The grandfather steps forward to embrace his granddaughter while the grandmother requires more time to come to accept her granddaughter's chosen life path. This once again demonstrates the rule of the respectable mother: the grandmother questions why the author has chosen to be a lesbian. I believe this question stems from a place of fear for her granddaughter's well-being and future. The grandmother knows that Koopman being in a same-sex relationship is frowned upon in their community and can bring shame and ridicule to Koopman and the family. I believe that the grandmother's response stems from her responsibility as the matriarch of the family. The grandmother, in her role of matriarch reinforces the patriarchal matrix along the lines of sexuality. We once again see the parallel play of power in the Koopman's household as the grandmother does not simply agree with her husband on accepting their granddaughter's choice and maintains her scepticism and fear regarding the news. The grandparents never fully accept Koopman and Summer's relationship, addressing the author's partner as her friend (140). I believe they do this to lessen the shame and continue their specific (coloured) communities' practice of silence when handling deviations from what is considered the social norm. Returning to my assertion on mental illness, they do this to promote social capital based on the moral economy within their community.

All deviations from the social normative script that is prescribed through religious doctrine and country-wide socialisation are reacted to with fear and contempt, with the practice of silence enacted as protection (Amuyunzi-Nyamongo 59). Although narratives of shame and silence remain present and the reaction from the grandparents to their granddaughter's sexuality is tolerant at best, I am still convinced that the grandfather's acceptance of his granddaughter exemplifies a realisation of the contradictory patriarchal script in coloured communities.

I have highlighted the sexist narration by Daniels in *Living Coloured* at the start of this chapter. I find the author's tedious assertion of his masculinity and sexuality a thread continuously present in the narration of his memoir. I highlight this characteristic of the author to demonstrate Daniels' conforming to the gendered ideals of his community while he simultaneously subverts his hyper-masculine ideals in certain moments in the narrative. Many of the micro-narratives centre on the author's romantic conquests and childish, opportunistic attempts to touch the female body (23, 25, 44, 56, 69, 70, 73, 74, 75, 78, 82, 88, 89, 91, 92). The author objectifies women in his narration by claiming ownership of "his girls" and displaying entitlement to their attention throughout the memoir (88, 89). He does not react well to the rejection of his advances imposed on these women and commonly responds rudely and childishly (91). Although sexist ideals are overtly present in the memoir, there continues to be a subtle, nuanced portrayal of the deviation from gendered norms I refer to the chapter titled "Matric year at Oaklands High-Club Naughty" to exemplify a phenomenon of deviation from the strict gendered norms in the memoir (85-88).

In the author's final year of high school, he partakes in a gender bend²⁴ Miss Valentine competition, which is a beauty pageant (87). All the participants are boys who are dressed as female beauty pageant contestants. The publicly accepted occurrence of this pageant for entertainment purposes where boys cross-dress as girls should contradict the strict outward portrayal of gendered respectability. This is, however, not the case in the instance where an individual cross-dresses for entertainment purposes. Swarr states that drag performances in black and coloured communities were commonly performed in shebeens and formed a part of mainstream celebrations (74). In particular, the troop of minstrels who partake in the annual Coon Carnival often gives the honour of leading the parade to a *moffie* (Holtzman 150). This demonstrates that in instances where cross-dressing is used for entertainment purposes, it is acceptable due to the humour and entertainment it provides to the onlookers. This is because

²⁴ 'Gender-bend' refers to a person who dresses up or acts like the opposite gender.

the practice of dressing up in the opposite gender's clothing – in this context – is not reflective of the gender of the person.

Gender presentation and sexuality appear to be mutually exclusive in these coloured communities. I return to Daniels' story to exemplify the contradictions that are perceived in the narrative. There is a mystification that surrounds the narration of an author who continuously reasserts his compulsory heterosexuality while simultaneously desiring to be chosen as the winner of a beauty pageant where stereotyped feminine presentation and mannerisms would guarantee his success (87). The author states that he felt he looked better in his dress – which I interpret to mean that he considers himself more convincing at acting as a female – than his friend Eazy. He tells the readers this to explain why he felt vindicated about not being crowned Miss Valentine. He lost to Eazy, who had won on the technicality of outperforming him in dance. The author's tone narrating this memory indicates that this is a decision that continues to counter the author's opinion of his performance in the competition. Prior to the Miss Valentine competition, Daniels had portrayed himself as a ladies' man displaying extreme vanity while exemplifying features that made him desirable to the opposite sex. I find the occurrence of the Miss Valentine competition an oddity in this gendered script and an example of how, in this community where enacting strict gendered norms is considered desirable, there remains breaks of the status quo that are not only accepted, but encouraged by the local community.

Returning to queer sexualities

In the focus group discussion in Chapter Three, along with Chapter Two's background about queer sexuality in Africa, I have foregrounded queer sexualities as a dominant example of how difference is experienced by queer-coloureds, as well as how these persons are reacted to and treated by their local community. I have done this as there is an amplitude of queer studies research done on this topic, which makes queer sexualities a primary example of how undesirable identities within coloured communities are constructed. The theme of queer sexualities does form part of the narration of both memoirs to a slight degree, a discussion I turn to next.

In Koopman's memoir, queer sexuality is realised through the author's same-sex relationship with her girlfriend. The author provides readers with a wonderful glimpse into the normalcy of a same-sex relationship in "Home invasion" (28). The chapter covers the messy reality of a relationship that I interpret as working to normalise a lesbian love story. We read about the

couple's fights and reconciliation, which displays the strange mundanity of this supposed abnormal relationship. I note above that the author disclosing her relationship with her grandmother was not well received. The author's narration of her experiences as a lesbian in her family and her interactions within her community demonstrate that her experiences coincide with many of the focus group participants. Though Koopman acknowledges that her sexual identity is not welcomed by most of her local community, it is not met with physical violence which, she acknowledges, is a privilege (139). This continues to exemplify a script of tolerance toward queer sexualities in coloured communities, though the author states that there are "[...] quieter, more intimate violences" that continue to be enacted on sexually queer persons" (139). It is important to acknowledge that Koopman's memoir is the subjective experience of the author. I have not encountered stories of physical violence in response to queer sexuality in the focus group discussion or Koopman's memoir. However, this does not imply that violence is not experienced by queer-coloured individuals in Cape Town. I have only proven that tolerance toward minority sexuality is experienced by the individuals I investigate.

The theme of ambivalent tolerance of sexually queer persons is most evident in Daniels' memoir. On an annual camping trip to Manresa farm, we are introduced to Twiggy, an openly gay man. A *moffie*, whom Daniels refers to as "[his] sista from another mista", demonstrates the author's fondness of the man regardless of being aware of his relationship practices (78). Unlike the tale of Ruthie, who suffers from mental illness and is teased by the young author, Twiggy is claimed as a "lekka chommie"²⁵ and appears to be accepted and welcomed into the community's camping trip (78). Swarr states that gay men are well received in their local-coloured communities, but that this acceptance is not shared by the gangs who dominate these South African townships (85). This is supported within the memoir, as there is a fight which breaks out on day two of the camp. The fight involves Twiggy and a gangster from Kensington (79). We are not given the specifics of the fight: we are only told that the gangster who is beaten by Twiggy must have said something offensive that provoked him to attack the gangster (*Respectable* 79). Salo attributes the existence and activities of gangsterism in coloured communities as the process of select men "reclaiming their gendered agency in the local context" where the primary moral powers lay in the hands of adult women (*Negotiating* 351). This deviation from the moralistic capital script is the reclaiming of agency by these coloured men due to the deficit of economic domination. These men reassert their patriarchal positioning

²⁵ "Good friend."

within their community by delineating community borders and enforcing male domination through violence (Salo, *Negotiating* 351). Gang members physically display membership through the way they dress and are tattooed. These men also enact archetype patriarchal behavioural stereotypes which directly oppose the existence of homosexuality. The outcome of this subset group of men reinforces a narrative of homophobia that parallels the uneven acceptance enacted by coloured communities.

Therefore, to be queer is wrong in coloured communities

I have thus far identified three embodied experiences of queerness within the two memoirs that I am investigating. I have identified mental illness, sexual queerness, and racial queerness, as three separate but interconnected experiences of undesirability. There are commonalities between these different articulations of queerness that have risen from this investigation that coincide with my analysis of the focus group discussion. I once again foreground that the dominant discourses that underpin the practice of rejecting deviations from the heteronormative social scripts are the historically influenced ideologies of these communities, which are rooted in the religious teachings these communities adopted to foster their moral economy.

The presence of religion is overt in the narration of both memoirs. Although Daniels does not refer to religion as directly influencing how queerness is experienced and reacted to within his community, he does include the prevalence of religion within his narration, which spotlights how influential it is in the narration of his life. The presence of religion within the memoirs reiterates the contribution that it has to the construction of a person's identity and philosophical ideologies. In Daniels' memoir – although this is not overtly stated – I attribute the author's sexist, patriarchal characteristics as being influenced and rooted in patriarchal Islamic teachings. This is not overtly stated within the memoir and this assertion is rooted in my subjective experience. I do not claim that religion necessitates homophobia in contemporary South Africa. I acknowledge that the connectedness of religion and homophobia is a commonly held view by myself but may not be factual for all Islamic practicing individuals. Daniels' worldview, narrated from his memories as a child, appears to indicate that he is self-assured in his position as a man in his community. His continuous mission to copulate and his entitlement to women's bodies exemplify the compulsory heterosexuality I postulate to be common in coloured community ideologies that are rooted in archaic religious teachings. This patriarchal underpinning of religion is present in Koopman's grievances with her religion. The author self-

reflects that her struggle with faith is influenced by the strict anti-feminist and anti-queer ideologies of the church and that “[she] would partake more faithfully in communion if they taught us Christ was a woman, capable of carrying the world in her womb” (138). Religion is cited in Koopman’s story as the primary premise of the negative ideas of queer sexualities, as she is told, “You are a sin against God, how dare you do this and in front of elders,” and that “God hates fags” (143). Where Daniels’ socialisation and security in his positioning as a man are affirmed through religion, Koopman’s narration exemplifies how religion is often weaponised to further the oppression of women and queer persons in her community.

The close reading of the memoirs respectively highlights the ambivalence that the authors communities hold towards queer sexualities. I believe that the memoirs provide examples of the authors communities negative rhetoric toward queer sexualities. Once again, it was evident that the negative ideals held by the authors of the two memoirs were rooted in the religious teachings of the church. The memoirs have broadened this thesis’ focus on queerness beyond sexuality through providing qualitative data on mental illness and race within its narratives. Lastly, the memoirs reiterated the gendered binary as socially held ideological norm in the authors’ communities. Unlike the focus group discussion’s transcript, the memoirs highlighted the prevalence of heteronormative gender within the authors’ communities by displaying moments of gender deviance. It is through foregrounding the occurrences of gender deviance within the narratives of the memoirs that the reader is made aware that these gender scripts exist within the social imagination of the authors’ communities.

In the conclusion of this thesis, I briefly consider the main findings of this research, that are focused on ideas of queerness in the investigated communities. I elaborate on how this research could be improved in the future by increasing the sample size and conducting more focus group discussions.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This thesis has produced a critical reading of my focus group transcript and two memoirs: *Because I Couldn't Kill You* by Kelly-Eve Koopman (2019) and *Living Coloured* by Yusuf Daniels (2019). This thesis is a case study that has gathered subjective ideas and experiences of different embodiments of queer-coloured lives in Elsies River, Belhar and Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town, South Africa. The experimental approach of this thesis is inspired by the idea of queerness. I blur the boundaries of English Studies and Social Anthropology purposely while conducting a rigorous reading of the focus group subjects' experiences of queer-colouredness. I position the focus group transcript as a creative form of life writing that I compare to the traditional genre of memoir. Like the memoirs, it is the recall of memories that constructs the focus group participants' stories. The focus group discussion is an active, unedited form of documenting the experiences of individuals while the memoirs offer reflective and edited experiences. I believe that both the memoirs and the focus group discussion transcript in combination have the potential to provide valuable insights into the subjective experiences of queer-colouredness.

A rise in coloured positivism is evident from the focus group participants, as well as the two memoir authors who openly identify as coloured. This positivism is, however, situated within a cultural separation between coloured culture and black culture in South Africa. I acknowledge that African queer studies has previously unified all non-white queer experiences under the unifying term 'black' and that this is a remnant of politically motivated practice exercised in identity studies to uphold Black Consciousness ideology. I believe that there is harm imposed on minority cultural communities through the continued indirect erasure that occurs when scholarship on racial and cultural identities continues to homogenise these communities' experiences under an umbrella term. South Africa is a multicultural country and the nuances of the lived experiences of these cultural groups cannot be encapsulated without taking a contextualised and subjective approach to the reading of the group's - and the individuals who make up this group's - experiences.

In the narratives I have queer(ied), there are experiences of an ambivalent attitude toward non-heterosexual practices, with a demonstration of tolerance towards same-sex practices. Violence was not enacted towards persons who practised queer sexualities, but verbal harassment was identified as common. Although I identified apprehension of queer sexualities in the narratives of the focus group participants and memoir authors, there are instances where deviations from

the normative gendered script are partially accepted. The focus group discussion and the memoir reaffirmed the background literature review, which states that the *moffie* is a gender and sexual deviation that is readily accepted and often welcomed in coloured communities.

I identify the prominent presence of religion in the focus group discussion and memoirs as a prime contributory factor in the intolerance of what is understood as ‘deviant sexualities’. Religion was cited in the focus group discussion and the memoirs for inducing shame and fear regarding non-heterosexuality. Coloured communities have historically been socially and economically impoverished. To overcome the lack of social and economic capital in South Africa, these communities have relied on community unification for the most economically affected members of their community. This aid is contingent on a family’s respectable status in their local community, which is affected by all members of a family. A sexually queer person is at risk of bringing shame and tarnishing the respectable status of their family and is therefore not desirable.

The notion of desirability in coloured communities has been utilised in this thesis to broaden the reading of embodied queerness. ‘Queer’ denotes all embodied deviations from the dominant social script: this does not only include sexuality, but all social practices considered strange and undesirable in the community. I utilised the two memoirs to further my reading of different articulations of queerness in the thesis. In both these memoirs, I identified mental illness as an example of queerness. In both texts, mental illness was reacted to as undesirable and strange in their local communities. The harassment and dehumanisation of a person considered mentally ill were comparable to how queer sexuality is treated within my local community. Once again, an uneven tolerance was enacted as a person suffering from mental illness was accepted within their local community, but nevertheless treated as ‘other’.

I read coloured identity as a queer racial identity in South Africa. This stance ‘is formulated in opposition to the racial puritan script that the Apartheid state government utilised to oppress non-white racial groups in South Africa. In a social context where ‘pure’ races are considered the social norm, to be coloured was to be the bastardised third queer group that did not fit into the racial binary of the country. In Chapter Three, the reading of the focus group discussion transcript highlighted that if being categorised as black or white racially is considered the norm in South Africa, then the existence of coloured communities is queer.

What has emerged from my reading of the focus group transcript and the two memoirs, is that South African communities’ ideas regarding gender and sexuality remain firmly rooted in

South Africa's violent oppressive history. The different cultural communities' experiences of queerness have evolved and are directly influenced by the evolution South Africa has undergone. I speculate that there is an ambivalent-tolerant attitude regarding queer sexualities in the identified coloured communities. I state this because certain embodied deviations from gendered norms and heterosexuality – *moffies* – are acceptable within these communities. However, same-sex relationships remain undesirable and therefore queer-coloured experiences are often negative. This idea is rooted in religious teachings and respectability discourses dominant in coloured communities. Although the experiences of undesirability of same-sex relationships and other embodied manifestations of queerness present in the focus group discussion and memoirs are not vastly different from mainstream South African ideas, there are unique experiential examples of colouredness represented in the narratives that may be useful for future researchers.

This thesis has been limited to a small case study due to the constraints of a Masters thesis. In future, I would encourage more focus group discussions to be conducted with bigger groups consisting of participants with different embodied representations of queerness. This thesis has presented narratives from same-sex practising individuals, and transgender persons, and has also discussed mental illness. In future, I suggest including narratives from different sexually queer-identifying individuals within coloured communities who are not represented in this thesis. This should be done to further the idea that sexuality in South Africa is more than the binary of heterosexuality and same-sex practising individuals. I reassert that queerness does not solely denote sexuality, but is productive for numerous discussions in identity and cultural studies that focus on embodied differences within South Africa. There needs to be more focus group discussions conducted with participants from different communities to continue the project of representing the experiences of queerness in South Africa. The continuation of this project would spotlight the different dominant social scripts working towards de-homogenising queerness and blackness. The inclusion and active participation of community subjects in their narratives would make queer studies accessible to the communities discussed, and this will aid in accomplishing the project of normalising and ensuring that the representation of different embodied experiences of queerness in South Africa is realised.

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Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Transcript

06-12-2021

Call lasted for 01:32:04

Discussion was held over *Zoom* meeting and consent to record was given prior to commencement of the session.

There was a total of six participants excluding the interviewer.

Participants are referred to by their provided participation numbers throughout the discussion.

When the discussion commenced, after having introduced the schedule and goals for the focus group verbal permission to record the session by the participants had been granted, the discussion had to be halted due to participant 4 being unavailable.

Participant Three was late joining the call and the group encouraged talk to commence without the missing participant.

00:19:11

- 1 **Moderator:** Okay...For formal purposes I will start with saying welcome. Welcome
- 2 all. Thank you all for giving me a second opportunity after the first discussions
- 3 recording mishap. I hope that this round can be just as fruitful as our first one. Maybe
- 4 we will discover new things crop up now that we have had some time to think about
- 5 it. We don't know. One thing with *Zoom*. I'm pretty sure *Zoom* meetings have a time 6
- limit. So, keeping that in mind. Unlike with *WhatsApp* call. There is definitely a time 7
- limit with *Zoom* meetings. I think it is very much 40 minutes if I am not mistaken. 8
- Secondly *Zoom* doesn't do very well with multiple people talking at once. I notice it 9
- gets very glitchy. SO...definitely if you want to... give each other like a second to
- 10 respond and then it will actually pick up.
- 11 SO yeah. So, focus group discussion today is the same as the last time, which is on
- 12 community ideas of queerness, specifically in the coloured communities. We're
- 13 looking at northern suburbs. SO, we are looking at if we can highlight social cultural
- 14 factors. And what; by that I mean, what we think influences your communities' ideas.
- 15 Which could be language, culture, religion. Like do we feel. like in your communities,
- 16 like there is a distinct difference of how the experience of being part of the LGBTQ+

17 community²⁶ is within the broader residential communities. So yeah...Uhm. Also, if
18 you remember correctly, can you guys could please do the participant thing again
19 which is who's answering. So that would be great. Okay. All good.

20 **Participant One:** I forgot.

21 **Moderator:** Your participation? You're one.

[Group laughter]

22 **Participant Five:** Asseblief vir lady cat eye. Kan iemand net vir lady cat eye iets, a
23 tays of iets²⁷.

24 **Moderator:** Okay, uhm, okay. So, starting off again my first question to the group is
25 what does it mean to you to identify as coloured. That's obviously on the bases of
26 answering, do you identify as coloured firstly and then what does it mean to identify
27 as that.

28 Anyone can go.

29 **Participant Five:** Okay uhm I'm Participant Five. Ons almal kyk dan nou²⁸ who's
30 going first. Anyways. Uhm, yes, I do identify as coloured because there is no other,
31 there's no other. That's the closest to me. There's no other race that I can fall into of.
32 I'm clearly not white and I am clearly not black. However, I do take the attributes of
33 both, and I mix it up into a stew en dan²⁹ this is what you get. A Mabel³⁰.

00:05:57

34 **Participant One:** Yeah uhm, yeah, I'm coloured too. I love being a coloured. Uhm. I
35 come from an Afrikaans family so. Well, a coloured family, Afrikaans. I'm the
36 English person of, I'm the white of the coloured and uhm ja³¹. Later I got an accent, I
37 don't have an accent I got a pure coloured white accent. So, but obviously you can
38 hear that ek is baie³² coloured. But in English I am [inaudible]and yeah it doesn't, for
39 me it won't it doesn't. It take(s) me. Uhm. but say If someone is international, they
40 will say you black and stuff. I will say no dear, Ek is mixed. Please, there's white,

²⁶ The LGBTQ+ community here is used interchangeably with the term queer. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, transgender and Queer community. The addition of the plus represents that the available term for sexual identity continues to expand.

²⁷ "Please for lady cat eye"- participant 5 referring to participant 1's makeup.

²⁸ "We are all looking now"- referring to the silence that preceded deciding who should answer first.

²⁹ "and then"

³⁰ I am not sure if I heard correctly, however I have yet to find an explanation for this term in any source material that defines Gayle terms.

³¹ "...yes".

³² "... that I am very..."

41 coloured and black. I am the one in the middle. I'm black, I am white and black mixed
42 to make a coloured, so leave me a coloured, I'm a coloured and I love and am proud
43 to be a coloured.

[Group Cross talk]

00: 07:55

44 **Participant Seven:** Okay well I definitely identify as coloured. Uhm... and then
45 growing up it was sort of learnt that this coloured mixed between black and white
46 people created this coloured but obviously as I got older, I learnt realise that it is a lot
47 more than that and deeper than that. Uhm, having a father that came from the
48 Northern Cape and who spoke primarily Afrikaans and then marrying a mother who
49 was from the Southern suburbs and spoke English and sort of had that diversity from
50 the beginning already. And then also having the roots of my colouredness in always
51 having an aunt or uncle who lived somewhere previously and were sort of moved
52 from that area during the Group Areas Act. Uhm, so for me it was always came from
53 sort of this whole group of these diverse, multicultural people combined into this what
54 we call now as coloured. And yeah, proudly so because I feel like in this last five to
55 ten years this coloured culture is sort of started taking a step forward and is more seen
56 and recognised now and ja we sort of have our identity respected and seen as a proper
57 culture. Yeah. That's on me [kisses teeth].

(silence)

00:09:08

58 **Participant 5:** Uhm can I just ask, can I just also add to your, actually at least
59 comment on that. You know like the last 5 years like coloured culture really came to
60 the forefront, right? But then I also question like, did it really or are we just, are we
61 just being coons³³. Like is it just like, are we just being caricatures of what coloureds
62 are or what they perceive colouredness to be. Is that our culture?

63 **Participant 7:** Well, let's see the fact that these are the types of questions you have
64 means that the discussion has already been tabled and I think that that is important. It
65 is important for us as coloured people to be having these discussions and these kinds
66 of questions are absolutely the right questions we should be asking. So, I might not be

³³ The term 'coon' is usually associated with troop members of the Cape carnival parade held annually at New Year's eve in the CBD of Cape Town (see Battersby, J. Coon Carnival). There is also a negative association with the term entrenched in a history of reducing people of colour to entertainers and is the possible association the participant is making above.

67 able to answer your question directly participant 5 but I mean I take from what I
68 experience, and I sort of identify as that and that's what I sort of take my space in. So,
69 for me that would be *my* identification as coloured culture. But I do hear what you are
70 saying about this whole cultural expropriation, thing because yeah because it's been
71 sold its been marketed its... We are its target market that they have now made this
72 culture and they are selling it to us. It is happening, I do agree.

73 Participant 5: Like always, I always think about. Like Die Antwoord³⁴ for instance.
74 Their whole gansta feel. That to me is always very like uhhh do I like it. Do I not like
75 it? I like the Antwoord but I am always like mmmm is that suspicious.

[Group cross talk]

76 **Participant Six:** That's a big aspect of what is being sold and we as coloured people
77 are identified as just that. And it is not true.

[Group voicing agreement]

[Group cross talk]

00:11:00

78 **Participant One:** And look at Four Corners³⁵, and they (are) showing the world that
79 the coloureds are that evil and that dangerous in all the places around here. But I just
80 love watching four corners. Participant 4 you are next hunny.

[00:11:23]

81 **Participant Four:** Hi guys, I hope you guys can hear me. I'm on the streets here.
82 Uhm okay. So, I identify as a coloured, uhm, but growing up I won't lie there was a
83 bit of- felt like I never felt in place. Uhm my mom is half coloured and half white
84 because of her dad did migrate uhm...no my great grand pa was white. No, sorry, my
85 great-no, obviously my great grandpa was white, but my grandpa was white as well.
86 So, for me, being a light of complexion coloured, never felt in, so, and I went to a- a-a
87 white school in high school. So, when I was in high school, I never felt in because I
88 was too coloured for them, and then when I was with my coloured friends growing up
89 in my area, I was again too white for them because light of complexion and too
90 sturvy³⁶ [group cross talk "te sturvy"]. I had the accent you know what I mean. So, I

³⁴ Die Antwoord refers to an alternative South African hip hop group consisting of three members. Their aesthetic revolves around 'Zef' culture which is a South African counter cultural movement. Their music commonly involves a lot of cuss words and images of gangster culture.

³⁵ Four Corners is a 2013 crime/drama film. The film depicts an aspect of life that accompanies living on the Cape Flats.

³⁶ "sturvy" refers to being stuck up or conceited. Often utilised by Cape coloureds.

91 always felt like, you know, never in place, but others than that I'm a coloured. I am a
 92 proud coloured. but there are times like you guys mentioned where the reputation for
 93 coloured is always that rofness³⁷. And then I'm like am I a coloured? And then I am
 94 proud to say that I am technically white as well. You know? So, so yeah. Sometimes
 95 it can be confusing. Or not confusing, it gets hard to choose, or feel where you fit in.

96 **Participant Six:** But you know Participant 4 sometimes its lekka³⁸ to tap into that
 97 rofness every now and again.

98 **Participant Four:** It does. It does. Don't get me wrong. Don't get me wrong. I used
 99 to use that-

100 **Participant One:** -you need to. It is a survival mechanism.

101 **Participant Four:** No, it is a survival mechanism. I used to do it all the time- [group
 102 cross talk] Like I always used to use that in high school. So, Like I remember when
 103 there was a white girl stepping up to me and I didn't like it, then I'm like hos, my bru
 104 what you dallaing³⁹. What (are) you doing? And then my friends step back and my
 105 coloured friends (are) like bra⁴⁰ you not even that like that, what (are) you trying. I'm
 106 like; they don't know, they don't know. So sometimes it does play to your advantage
 107 though.

108 **Participant Five:** Yeah, it's like a tone. It is not necessarily what you say. It's a tone
 109 thing.

110 **Participant Four:** Yes, most definitely.

111 **Participant Five:** It's very cool. It's very powerful also.

00:14: 18

112 **Participant One:** Well like Participant 4 said. uhm, yeah you must have a tone. I
 113 have a lovely tone to my vice. I know you heard it last week. [laughs] I'm not gonna
 114 let you guys hear it again. No, no. [Deepens voice] Its ma salut julle.⁴¹ [group
 115 laughter] [normalises voice] So yeah you must have...[inaudible]

[Group Cross talk]

116 **Participant Five:** Participant 8 identifies as Caucasian

117 **Moderator:** Oh?

³⁷ "roughness"

³⁸ "nice"

³⁹ "doing"

⁴⁰ "brother", derivative of Afrikaans word for brother "broer"

⁴¹ "salut" used as a greeting.

118 **Participant Eight:** Caucasian, from the house of caucasity. Of coconitos. Uh yeah
 119 like I've always identified as coloured but there is also a level of colouredness that
 120 makes me uncomfortable. To some extent and I feel like that is the coloured that gets
 121 portrayed everywhere as the blueprint for being coloured. When that necessarily isn't
 122 the thing. Like, yeah, I'm very diverse in that sense in that I can hop in-between, but I
 123 can't go to the extreme of coloured. Like I can be the extreme of white, but I can't go
 124 to the extreme of being the colour of what I technically am. And I feel like that always
 125 cause(s) getting me into situations where like Participant Four said before is like
 126 (I have) gone to a white school where my skin colour isn't enough, but I have the
 127 accent, is right. Where am I? And then coming home to a family of three brothers and
 128 a sister and they've all been in Afrikaans classes, and I am the only E1⁴² and
 129 automatically I am the outcast there because now I am too sturvy for my own
 130 community or my own family. So, I do identify as coloured but purely by the racial
 131 term and what I've been brought up as.

00:16:25

132 **Moderator:** Okay. You guys have already touched on the aspects of what I feel
 133 encompasses the study a lot of- by identifying as coloured basically... noticing the
 134 mixture of it I want to say that would you guys say that there is... it kinda sounds like
 135 you already touched on it ...but like there is a distinction, especially like I said before
 136 in our previous- in academics they are trying to put colouredness under blackness and
 137 as we touched on the whole appropriation of the culture. Uhm. I would like to say
 138 moving into history, everyone kind of developed differently and would you then say
 139 that there is a distinct difference because of our history of developing separately,
 140 because of developing differently because of group areas act and separation. Would
 141 you say that there is a culture, a cultural difference between white's, black's,
 142 colouredness? Would you be able to identify things? Is there a particular tradition to
 143 things you can consider colouredness? Would you consider certain languages with
 144 being coloured? Would you consider... Like those type of aspects. If any of you guys
 145 want to jump in on there. Do you think there is anything that makes colouredness
 146 distinct, and the reason you would rather want to define yourself as coloured instead
 148 of black or white?

⁴² "English 1", this is the class categorisations utilised in South African schools. Schools divide the classes into English and Afrikaans classes, and this is represented through whether you are in an 'E' or 'A' class. The one is simply to show that there are multiple English classes.

00:17:54

149 **Participant Five:** I also found that like ... hi its Five again, I also found that people
 150 are generally very judgemental. Like I feel like this has come from a culture of
 151 oppression and we haven't quite bridged the gap between are we oppressed and are
 152 we not oppressed. And we haven't done that. So as a queer body in a social
 153 environment. I think queer people have the perfect balance of the whiteness and the
 154 blackness... because we can, we. [Participant Five showing non-verbal agreement]
 155 Does that make sense. Because I think that makes sense in my mind. That's how I
 156 feel.

157 **Participant Six:** But I think also touching on what 5 is mentioning now is that as a
 158 coloured community, we have also been deprived of- [bad connection]

[Zoom time limit extended]

[Group cross talk surrounding connectivity issues with Participant Six]

00:20:30

159 **Participant Six:** Okay maybe just to summarise what I was saying is that, as a
 160 coloured community

[Cross talk regarding unmuted participant disturbance]

161 What I was saying was, that we've been deprived of equal opportunity as a coloured
 162 community. To that, it has created a blueprint what currently for what currently has,
 163 so like that is why there is a slums⁴³, that is why there is this extreme of
 164 colouredness, because we almost been forced into that. Uh. Compared to pre-
 165 apartheid or apartheid⁴⁴ time or pre-democratic South Africa, it was the white people
 166 get all the opportunities and then it's flipped to a point the black people get all the
 167 opportunities. So, the coloured people are technically still in the same space that they
 168 were. Just slightly in a worse space-

169 **Participant Five:** Just, we just have different accents now. We just speak more white
 170 cause we know that get the uh.

171 **Participant Six:** Yes, yes. Yeah, and it also a thing in the coloured community to fake
 172 until you make it. When you get your first job and it's a very white corporate job. You

⁴³ This is another term for Ghetto. It is more commonly used informally in South Africa. Colloquially in 'coloured' communities it refers to the rougher areas in the neighbourhood.

⁴⁴ Apartheid refers to a system of legislation that implemented separative policies that oppressed non-whites and kept non-white and white persons in South Africa separate. Took place between the 1940's and 1994.

173 fake it because you need to be on that level, and you need to get there. So yeah, that's
174 it.

00:21:46

175 **Participant Four:** I agree. I can vouch for that personally. Uhm. My work phone and
176 my current voice is two different things. My own friends sometimes don't even realise
177 when they call to the work, and I answer the phone. Its, it's something that you, I
178 don't know it's like you just- it's like, it's like how a kid learns how to walk. It just
179 comes naturally, and I feel like that('s) a thing that happens with the coloureds. You
180 just naturally blend in. And I think that it's something that subconsciously we have
181 been taught that to survive. Because we don't fit in with the white people. We don't
182 fit in with the black people. So, it's just something we had to do to-so sometimes I
183 feel like we are coloured by default. But over the years it just became. You know. It's
184 like if someone tells you for 10 years that the sky is red you are going to believe that
185 the sky is red. It's something that we just came to believe. We are coloured and now
186 it's no changing back.

00:22:53

187 **Participant Seven:** Uhm. I think for me personally I have never identified myself in
188 any of the coloured culture or black roots even though pre-apartheid we were all
189 grouped into this one group of black people. Uhm, but it's definitely the case now.
190 Like I was saying earlier, where coloureds has taken up their space as coloured
191 people. So, there's definitely this differentiation between black, coloured and white.
192 And then what we as coloured people do; we always have to take it a step further. So,
193 you always have like the gham⁴⁵ coloureds, and the struvy coloured. or there were
194 now different groups in the coloured community. [multiple participants display non-
195 verbal agreement] But what I definitely found was because white people identified
196 more of their whiteness with me because of how I spoke and the language I spoke.
197 Because in the coloured community also it was about who was Afrikaans speaking
198 and who was English speaking. I mean at school there was always this Afrikaans class
199 thing and English class thing. So, these are all things that we did and broke down even
200 further. So, as I was saying. Being treated better by white people made me
201 approach people who identified with the whiteness in me by how I spoke and
202 how I spoke and those kinds of things. But there definitely is a big difference

⁴⁵ A word to describe someone that acts out in a uncivilised manner, or refer to lower class person.

203 between a white person, a coloured person and a black person. So, I myself
204 struggled to find any sorta ...in any of their traditions and heritages. So ja.

205 **Moderator:** Uhm. Hi participant 2. Welcome. You can jump in if you'd like to.

00:24:39

[Participant Two asks to be given some time to attend to family duties]

206 **Participant One:** Okay then me again. I am fully coloured. proudly coloured but the
207 English version of me is way [inaudible]. Participant Four said about the phone, I can
208 speak. I speak normal but I sound on a phone call. That's why I don't want to go to a
209 call centre at all. Because they say I sound [inaudible]. Because they say I sound too
210 high for them, or something like that. And yeah, but I'm speaking normal. I speak
211 normal and they tell me that. And when I speak to other people outside and then, it's
212 almost like there's another tone to my voice, not a sexual tone, but like an other kind
213 of tone that I have that just naturally comes out. Buut when it comes to gangsters and
214 bad boys and then, there's another tone to my voice there's a coloured version.
215 [deepens voice] Naai man staan stil jy. Jy gaan vir my se nie⁴⁶. Jy gaan vir my se
216 nie. [normalises voice] That one. But uhm okay. This is my natural voice ne. this one
217 that I am speaking. But the other one, is how do you, you know when you hit puberty,
218 then your voice breaks. Daai one het in gebas⁴⁷. That one is broken inside. So, I uh I.
219 My feminine voice does not allow that one to come out. So. Because I'm all feminine
220 darling I am all feminine. But its fine. Females, everybody I speak to, it's just normal
221 voice, they say I speak English. White high-class English but I don't, for me I don't
222 speak high class English. Just normal English. So, they will say I sound like a white
223 person on the phone. That is why call centres are not for me. Ek ma bly ma by die 224
coloured ways⁴⁸.

00:27:00

225 **Participant Four:** I feel like. I feel like coloureds are at different levels. Like it's like,
226 so, just different things if you scoop somewhere (you are) gonna feel (that you may
227)get jelly a bit. It's just different things. So, it just depends how you scoop into the
228 trifle it's what you going to get. It just is so.

229 **Mod:** I'm loving Participant Four's analogies today. It's just great.

[Participant Four outcries of agreement] [group cross talk]

⁴⁶ "No man, stand still you" "You are not going to tell me"

⁴⁷ "That one broke in"

⁴⁸ "I will continue to use the coloured ways"

230 **Participant One:** It's the rainbow nation coloured trifle.

231 **Moderator:** Okay so, for curiosity purposes, (be)cause I feel I would like to hear your
232 definitions. If you were to explain to someone else what a coloured is essentially, how
233 would you guys explain that. Seeing as it is all over the show. Do you guys have a
234 specific definition that you would prefer giving.

235 **Participant Five:** Coloured is I feel-

236 **Participant Six:** A frikidal

237 **Participant Five:** NO, [inaudible]

238 **Moderator:** Anyone want to give it a shot? Just, how would you define it to someone
239 who doesn't know what it is to be coloured. Like someone from overseas. if you were
240 going to define colouredness to them, how would you define it?

241 **Participant Seven:** So, I sort of define it as a multicultural ethnic group native to
242 South Africa who has like ancestry ...not only within SA but outside SA. That's
243 usually how.

244 **Moderator:** Okay. Very to the point. Anyone else have any ideas of how they would
245 define it.

[Group cross talk on clarifying the question]

246 **Participant Five:** Black adjacent.

247 **Moderator:** Black adjacent?

248 **Participant Five:** Yes!

249 **Moderator:** Interesting, okay.

250 **Participant Five:** Yes, we are black, but a lot of us were ...it's a rape. The oppressors
251 raped us. Like you know what I mean. Like our people and our ancestors and our
252 ancestors' ancestors. That's why coloured hair texture is such a big deal till this day.
253 Because the finer your hair is the more, uhm...

254 **Participant Six:** Superior you are.

255 **Participant Five:** Yes. Almost like the more superior you are. And I always found it
256 to be the dumbest thing ever. Because white people also have frizzy textured hair.

257 **Moderator:** I just have a quick thingy on that, because I have also heard that before
258 about the rape origin story but what about those that don't have any black ancestry.
259 (Be)cause I have met quite a few people that identify as-

260 **Participant Five:** -Everybody has (black ancestry). Life began here.

261 **Moderator:** I'm just saying. There are some that I know that I know that mainly
262 have, let's say, Asian, island ancestry and there the slave ancestry that isn't

263 indigenous ancestry. [verbal agreement from participant five and six and non-verbal
264 agreement from the rest of the group]. But they still identify as coloured. Would we
265 then say that they wouldn't have claim? Or would you then say that? Just a side note
266 on that.

267 **Participant Six:** Ye. Like specifically even that. Like my heritage is more Malaysian
268 than what it is going towards black and white. Uhm. So, I feel like that's, that's why
269 in the previous session that we had. I am so far removed from the term of white that I
270 am technically solely a coloured. So, I can't even have the conversation of being a
271 mixed-race person, because I am not. That's why it's also difficult to explain to
272 someone that from overseas that I'm, it's difficult to almost say what coloured is in
273 the context of black and white because that is the only thing what people technically
274 know coloured as. That it's a mixture of a black person and white person

[intermission, checking in on possible sleeping participant]

[group cross talk]

00:31:55

275 **Moderator:** I think we can move on from there. Thank you so much.

[group cross talk]

276 Sorry did anyone want to say something?

277 **Moderator:** Anyways moving on to questions of queerness, I just want you guys to
278 each- for no better way to put it- say your sexual identity if you're wanting to, if not
279 that is perfectly okay and define what being queer or identifying as part of the queer
280 or LGBTQ+ community means to you. So again, anyone can go first

[silence]

281 **Moderator:** Hello?

282 **Participant One:** Now I'm saying can you say that part again

283 **Moderator:** Oh no I was just saying that we are moving on to the queer questions. So,
284 I'm asking everyone in the room to be able to say their sexual identity if they want to.
285 Uhm and then obviously what it means to them to define themselves as part of the 286
queer/LGBT+ community.

00:34:26

287 **Participant One:** Oh. Well, I identify as a transgender. But. Yes, I identify as a 288
transgender. I will not say she-male⁴⁹. No, I'll say transgender this time.

[group cross talk]

00:34:45

289 **Participant Six:** So, I'll go. Soo, I identify as gay. It something that only been quite
290 recent for me to be comfortable to say that I am gay. Purely because of my upbringing
291 and the life that I have lived as a straight man in my past. Uhm. It is a lot easier now
292 to identify as gay. But it is also still treading quite lightly in that. Because now
293 currently in the society that we are we can't openly just do that because you are going
294 to be gay bashed. Or some homophobic slur is going to come your way. Uhm. And
295 also growing up I always had to walk into the room with family and being said oojh
296 jinne⁵⁰ here the moffie is coming in. So, it is something that you as a gay person and
297 specifically as a coloured gay person will have to deal with and overcome over a
298 period of time. I don't think that you can automatically step out and forget that you
299 had to suppress that you were gay before. Uh, yeah. That's me.

300 **Moderator:** Just before we move on can you maybe elaborate why you felt like you
301 had to suppress. Like what were those factors of why you had to suppress.

302 **Participant Six:** Uhm. Family. Family values. Religion. Just being perceived as
303 lesser, Like I always been the one that wanted people, and not being liked wasn't an
304 option for me. And I knew for a fact that if I fall into the trap of confirming that I am
305 a moffie or that I am gay. I am going to be disliked [disconnected] that was not 306
something I could handle [disconnected].

[group Cross talk about the disconnection].

00:37:51

307 **Participant Four:** So. I think I will just go on what he said [group cross talk] okay.
308 So, I can agree with what he just said. For me confirming that you are gay you some
309 sort of like sort of ashamed towards it. For me I only came out as gay at the age of
310 twenty because for the last growing up in high school it was a bad thing to be. You
311 were judged. You know what I mean. Sometimes you get harassed, so it, it's like do I
312 just want a comfortable life or am I going to take that risk. So, for me, for me like it
313 depends also with who I am. Will define am I today a lesbian or am I pansexual?

⁴⁹ She-male generally refers to a person that has both male and female genitalia and presentation and is commonly used derogatorily.

⁵⁰ "oh no", a dramatic expression of exasperation.

314 Sometimes. You know your crowd. There are times when straight men would come
 315 up to me. Like dude can't you see I'm like clearly not your type. Are you sill⁵¹. Like
 316 bra. But there are (were) time(s) where my safety is at at... and im like okay ahh yes
 317 I'm into boys just to be like for the safetyness about it [bodily demonstrates 'girly'
 318 gestures]. Normally I'm the gayest person you'll know. There are no two ways about
 319 it. So, it depends on what day you are getting me.

00:39:30

320 **Moderator:** Uhm, before moving on for me can you, participant 4, I just want to call
 321 back to our first meeting where you identified as butch lesbian⁵². Is that your
 322 preferred identification, if so why? Does it matter that you need to define yourself as a
 323 specific lesbian...?

324 **Participant Four:** NO! It('s), no like I. It just define(s) in what crowd I am. There
 325 are days. I was confused a lot. There were times I used to dress very girly and wear
 326 makeup but now I am just comfortable being me and that is in men's clothes. But, I
 327 don't. if people want to call me a Butch lesbian. If they want to call me a stud⁵³. It's
 328 your thing I don't care. It's your thing. Labels don't define me. To fit in a group, I'll
 329 be like okay I'm a stud you know or I'm that or whatever. So, it basically doesn't
 330 matter to me. It's just [inaudible].

331 **Participant Five:** I also, I also feel like. I'm sorry to be so aggressive about my
 332 segway. But I also feel as though I personally, I've always been soft (makes hand
 333 gesture) I've always been that person neh. So, when I'm in public and I don't want to
 334 be bothered. I keep my head down. I know exactly where I need to go. I don't do
 335 malls because there is(are) too many people. Dis te veel, dis te veel⁵⁴. I don't do malls
 336 very often; I know where I am going, and I don't want to make eye contact with
 337 anyone. Because that's opening. Because then they start question. They look you up
 338 and down because now they want to see where they can clock masculinity. Because
 339 we all obviously have feminine and masculine traits and people must get over that
 340 because it is very offensive when somebody like scans you almost like their brains
 341 can't just deal. So, it's a problem sometime(s) but that is why I don't interact. I do not

⁵¹ Refers to a prankster. Are you pulling a prank? Or could mean are you silly? Not meaning what you are saying.

⁵² A Butch lesbian refers to a lesbian the presents themselves as having more masculine attributes. This can be conveyed through dress and mannerisms.

⁵³ A masculine presenting lesbian. Like the above.

⁵⁴ "it is too much, it is too much"

342 interact. And if I do, I am very upfront about It like listen here jy weet waar brandt
 343 dit⁵⁵. Let's not make a scene about it and that's that. But I am not always switched on.
 344 Like I'm not always uuhm lady Die⁵⁶. There are times where I also wanna (want to
 345 be) be just like a butch lesbian [laughs]. Like there are times where I just want to wear
 346 comfortable clothes because cause being feminine sometimes is very uncomfortable.

00:42:25

347 **Participant Four:** For me I think it is also about society because society is used to sir
 348 and ma'am. Male and female. But now all of a sudden there is a lot of diversity and,
 349 so sometimes especially with the mask and then I am called sir, and I would laugh it
 350 off and then some people would realise oh no its not. then I'm just like it doesn't
 351 matter. But because society again is forming you into that box, where it is sir or
 352 ma'am. And people do get confused on what to call me.

353 **Participant Five:** Okay but also remember you are saying society but if you just take
 354 a step back. We are society. Fun fact. Like we blame society for a lot of things, but we
 355 are actually society as well. And that is something that we, like we need to, we need
 356 to disrupt the system. We need to break down those barriers, we need to assert
 357 ourselves also. And say this is how I want to be known and this is how I want to be
 358 perceived and that's that.

359 **Participant Four:** I agree 100% 100 %, but like the one thing that I also learned is
 360 that things change. One day, today I feel like I want to be addressed as sir but then
 361 tomorrow again. Its again noo. I feel like. So, I think we just need to accept people as
 362 they are. People make it too complicated, that's just how I feel. Like vandag se ek ek
 363 is man dan is ek a man⁵⁷. As ek more n vrou wil wees... dan is ek a vrou⁵⁸. So ja.

364 **Participant Four:** Jys a shape shifter

365 **Participant Seven:** Do you know a lot of these complications come from within our
 366 own community as well ne.

367 **Participant Four:** Most definitely. Most definitely.

00:44:30

368 **Participant Five:** Like take Participant Seven here. He's always been masculine.
 369 He's always been like the prototype of what a bra is.

⁵⁵ "...you know where it burns", it means that you know what is going on.

⁵⁶ I assume we are referring to Princess Dianna here, but I have not found any true definition yet. Contextually, the participant is referring to the femininity and how they are not always enacting the extreme of femininity.

⁵⁷ "like, if I say today that I am a man, then I am a man"

⁵⁸ "if tomorrow I want to be a woman...then I am a woman"

370 **Participant Six:** masc for masc⁵⁹.

371 **Participant Seven:** Oh no its 2021 we don't do mask for masc anymore hey its 2021

372 **Participant Seven:** Ja so uh I identify as guy. It also took me quite a long time to get
 373 (to) that point where I openly admitted that I was a gay man. There was even a time I
 374 identified as bisexual for some time. I think I met participant five where I was still
 375 identifying as a straight man on the gay scene. Uhm so I had a lot of sort of... yeah I
 376 grew up in a very, very, very staunch catholic family. I am one of eleven kids, and it
 377 was mostly boys. So, I was always surrounded by all this, this boys. And what boys
 378 needed to do and how boys are supposed to act so yeah, I sort of just conformed and I
 379 went with what was very normal uhm, I knew at a very young age that I was different.
 380 I think I was seven years old when I realised that there was something different about
 381 me, but I didn't know what it was. Uhm. Grew up in a family where this sex thing
 382 wasn't something that we spoke about. It wasn't taboo but, there was nothing sort of
 383 sexual about it at that age. And growing up it was normal. I just knew there was just
 384 something about me, but I didn't know what it was. Uhm it was just then when I got
 385 to high school and one of the teachers called me out of class. [Participant Five
 386 interjects with "that's what it was"] He called me out of class, and he was like look
 387 here if anyone bullies you let me know. And I wondered and was like what are you
 388 talking about. And that sort of where the door was opened and from there I sort of
 389 discovered what it was that I actually was harbouring inside and things. So, I started
 390 sort of acting on these feeling much later in my life. I think I was about twenty. And
 391 went through the motions started getting to know people even at some point dated
 392 people. All my sibling knew but just wasn't my parent. They are staunch catholic
 393 parents they didn't know. Until I think I was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight
 394 when I eventually told them, and I was like; look this is what's up and since then it
 395 has actually been quite interesting. It does feel like I have this weight lifted off of me
 396 and I think it's like participant 5 mentioned, I'm more of like the masc butch sort of
 397 gays out there. I'm trying to be a little more gay these days. So, but uhm. I think I got
 398 a bit more easier.

399 **Participant Five:** You're still a sister girl. [Inaudible]

[laughter]

⁵⁹ This term is utilised on gay men dating applications and refers to straight passing men that refuse to interact with men that are not straight passing. To be "masc" means to be masculine acting.

400 **Participant Six:** Yeah, I think I had it a little easier than some of the other brothers
 401 and sisters in our community, (be)cause i wasn't the one who was ridiculed in public.
 402 Or pointed at and things like that. There's a lot of shame in that for me, but I mean it's
 403 not my shame. Its other people's shame. But yeah, that's me.

0047:27

[Group cross talk and connectivity issues]

404 **Moderator:** Okay uhm. Participant One? Would you like to try again?

405 **Participant Four:** Can I try? My nieces are busy now. They are watching Netflix.
 406 So, I'm a lesbian. Uhm. I am at the point in life where I literally don't care what
 407 society says. I usually did also because my mother was very, how do you say strict.
 408 She was New Apostolic. And she was very strict on your sexuality, and whatever you
 409 did as her children, you couldn't do it because at the end of the day it would affect her
 410 image. So, being a lesbian affected her image at the end of the day because she took
 411 it as that way as there is either something wrong with you, uhm you either. Parenting,
 412 the way you parent your child was something wrong with your child. So that's how
 413 your child ends up gay. My mother, I'm sorry to say that my mother is a homophobic,
 414 she hates gay people. She doesn't see the reason why you should be gay...as her
 415 children. But she sees it with other children. So, she wouldn't mind if someone else
 416 was gay but not her children. So due to the experiences with my mother I came to the
 417 point where I don't care what society says. Uhm. Cause at the end of the day as it was
 418 said in the group everybody has their own opinions when it comes to society and how
 419 society handles your sexuality. So, at the end of the day there is nothing you can do.
 420 Everybody is going to have an opinion at the end of the day. So, ja.

421 **Moderator:** Okay. participant 1 you want to get in again before we move on.

00:29:56

422 **Participant One:** Mmmm. Okay. Ja. Well, I was, I was also. at the age of seven, it
 423 seems like number seven is the lucky number to realise things in your life. And uhm.
 424 But as time went on. You know the denial stage came in. and uhm but the ways and
 425 everything was there when you were younger but then the denial kicked in. Primary
 426 school: kicked in I was just around girls. Never boys. Never guys. Never playing,
 427 playing soccer. Never with the soccer boys or anything just with the girls and what
 428 not. Highschool came, kind of denied it but my friends could see in the way I am. The
 429 talking the actions and stuff like that. Ja. Actually, came out when I was sixteen

430 because my mom, she asked me nou wat was jy nou eitlik⁶⁰. Because she could see I
 431 like tight clothes and stuff like that. So ja, I told her I was bisexual. But ja. Then my
 432 sisters then boyfriend now husband. His sister and I kinda. Idk. She said we were
 433 dating I don't think we were dating. I just think we were kinda just close friend you
 434 know. I don't know. I think a few a days later, like two days yeah, the new week
 435 because it was on a Friday I came and said no I'm gay because I'm into guys only.
 436 Then uhm ja, but very feminine. A very feminine gay one. But ja. As time goes on,
 437 time goes on. I started not liking my body because I always wanted to be a female. So
 438 put it in my mind that I am a female. I started looking at my body every day and
 439 saying you are a female. Well, I would have started long time ago with my hormones,
 440 my hormone therapy treatment uhm but I didn't, last year eventually, I am now
 441 twenty something. Uhm. Last year, so I started with my hormones and well. I am, Ja
 442 now my boobs are growing and I'm kinda liking the way that I am now...but I just
 443 want them bigger. But now the outside world uhm. Yeah, they look at me like five or
 444 three times. Ja they look at my facial. And they will look at my ID. The name
 445 do(does) not clash with the face. Because ja. I got a, I got a (an) 11 letter name. he is a
 446 fighter. But uhm ja I don't like his name. I mean I don't like that name. but ja other
 447 than that is...no. I am good. I like my baggy clothes too. My boyish clothes my
 448 tracksuits and stuff like that. Like when I am in the house and when I go the, the shop
 449 and stuff, I will have my tracksuit and boyish kinda clothes. No makeup on. To the
 450 mall honey, I wear my face. My face must be on, and my female clothes must be on.
 451 And I don't care, you can look at me any which way. You can judge me from a
 452 distance. But ...if you come close to me and like speak to me you will really know the
 453 real me. How I am and what I am, and I don't lie about my identity. Like this
 454 afternoon, I know I am speaking a lot but forgiveness me. But yeh like this afternoon
 455 these girls, they were yeah African. And they couldn't believe that I am a transgender.
 456 That I am, ja you can say male because well my beard is growing again. So uhm I
 457 took the mask off, and they could see that this here, the beard is coming. And they
 458 still didn't believe me so I had to say [deepens voice] [quotes a xhosa phrase I am
 459 unfamiliar with] and I had to make my voice thicker just for them to like realise okay
 460 this is a guy. But still. Some people they are openminded, others are just you know
 461 small minded. Small peas. They don't understand what's going on. Their beliefs are

⁶⁰ "... now what are you actually"

462 back in the day. They don't believe in what we believe now. Back in the day it was
 463 our Sodom and Gamora⁶¹. Now? Well. Well now we are living. We are living Sodom
 464 and Gamora. We are living. Look around you communities are filled with LGBT. We
 465 all come together on pride on February and march. We come together and we have a
 466 ball of a time. Well, they just need to accept the fact that we are here to stay, and we
 467 are not going anywhere, and don't tell me about hell because I will drag you with me.
 468 And I thank you.

00:55:23

469 **Moderator:** Okay. Great so. Right, uhm so moving forward just again to build off of
 470 Participant Two' story is kind of resonates and was kind of the founding of this study
 471 because I also grew up with a New Apostolic family that was also very homophobic,
 472 and my community surrounding was very much anti everything that wasn't church
 473 and Christian. And there was a girl and there was a boy and if you wore any sort of
 474 masculine clothing then they will make fun of you. But as we proved in the previous
 475 chat is that the moment you prove anyone right in something, it is no longer a joke. It
 476 is serious and they don't take it very well. So, this whole thing of society and bringing
 477 it back to the community what I would like to pinpoint is, is this idea of how your
 478 community interacts with queerness. So, from my personal biased experience I know
 479 that I only grew up knowing the term , or knowing, wow guys sorry, knowing the term
 480 moffie⁶² and it was either you were straight or you were a moffie. Basically. there was
 481 no in-between. It was only getting university that I learnt of the spectrum and that
 482 identity was a lot more complicated, but I knew in my lil (little) community, my neck
 483 of the woods it was you were either gay or straight. So, can any of you guys give me
 484 any insights into how you feel your community or feel like where you grew up in
 485 dealt with queerness. Like what their ideas were surrounding it. Did they know there
 486 was more to it, did they speak about? Was it violent outrages, was it just okay? Was
 487 there acceptance. So, anything down that lane is very welcome because I want to
 488 know more than just my experience of what it was like in my community, I want to
 489 know from other people their experiences because your community experience
 490 influences how you identify. So, for instance how we keep talk about girly-ness and

⁶¹ Sodom and Gamora refer to a city that exists within the Bible. The city was known for being a place where immoral and sinful acts occurred in excess until God destroyed the city. It is often a reference utilised by religious persons to refer to a place that they deem to house many immoral persons.

⁶² "n. (Afr.) 1. gay man 2. effeminate gay man - generally with pejorative connotations" (Cage 82).

491 masculinity and how dressing a certain way. I believe that comes from the community
 492 you grow up in. So, for instance the idea of looking more feminine. You are still
 493 feminine whether you're wearing "boy clothes" [physical performance of inverted
 494 commas]. I truly don't believe that's a thing. But that is definitely a community idea.
 495 So, yea. If you guys have anything to share on that. How you feel your community
 496 dealt with anything deviant.

00:58:05

497 **Participant Two:** Community basically. I lived in Bonteheuwel since I was about
 498 seventeen. My community and my street as well, they very small minded. For them its
 499 either jys a moffie of jy is, you're going through a phase. If you (are) lesbian, you
 500 labelled as going through a phase, it is nothing else. With me when I came out it was
 501 an issue with people saying, now why there is so much (many) girls coming to your
 502 house? When are you going to get a boyfriend? Uhm, why you dressing that way.
 503 Hoekom lyk jy soe⁶³. Ek gaan jou ma se. Jy loop met meire⁶⁴. Sulke goetes⁶⁵. So that
 504 was the issue in my street basically. My community. They are very small minded
 505 when it comes to gay people. Uhm, they don't believe that you get successful gay
 506 people. They don't believe that "moffies" [voice inclines to demonstrate
 507 disagreement] in their terms, is a moffie is a guy that wears girl clothes and walks up
 508 and down in the street. That is their image of a moffie. A lesbian is someone that
 509 dresses up like a man and wants to be a man. In their eyes. So that's how my
 510 community is. There is no way to change it, you can try to, it doesn't work. You can
 511 even try to explain to them they still don't understand. Cause at the end of the day
 512 they still think that I am going through a phase. Like legit. I am married for the three
 513 years.

514 **Participant Five:** Even after you got married?

515 **Participant Two:** I'm! Girl! I'm still going through a phase. My marriage is a phase.
 516 Like literally my aunty told me. When I came out, she told me. That uhm I'm just
 517 going through a phase it will blow over. Like when I moved in with my girlfriend,
 518 they told my mommy; no don't worry she will come back. It's just a phase. When I
 519 got married, they said; she won't be happy. It's just a phase.

520 **Participant Six:** DENIAL.

⁶³ "why do you look like that?"

⁶⁴ "I am going to tell your mom." "You are walking with girls"

⁶⁵ "such things"

521 **Participant Two:** Denial still today.

01:00:11

522 **Participant Five:** I feel like, the phase thing. Like how can your whole life be a phase
523 man. That's my thing. Like I am fine with being called a moffie. Like I am fine with
524 that. But it depends on who calls me a moffie. That's what it is. I am very fine with it.
525 Like if another queer person call me moffie, I'm fine with come here moffie ooh ohh
526 oh[enacts excitement]. But if it's a straight person. Taatia Thomas⁶⁶. Chop. Ons chop
527 vir jou⁶⁷.

528 **Participant Six:** I think maybe touching on uhm just community and different spaces
529 allows different things. And, transitioning from the one like Belhar which was very
530 much heteronormative-

531 **Participant Five:** Homophobic

532 **Participant Six:** And there was male and there was female. And then...I think. I think
533 everyone understands that in a coloured community or a heteronormative community
534 the female was always seen as weaker but the moffie, you are weaker than that. And
535 uhm, and I – growing up and being on school the moffie was always used as a term to
536 diminish a typical straight guy who was being weak.

537 **Participant Five:** Mmm. Don't be a moffie.

538 **Participant Six:** Yeah, then you will be labelled as that. Because it was set that a
539 moffie is weak. A moffie is not meant to be, like you are not doing the right thing.

540 **Participant Five:** Mm. an abomination

541 **Participant Six:** Is ja. It's almost like sets the tone that you are lesser of a person.

542 **Participant Five:** I think that is also why, why it is so important to claim back the
543 word moffie. I think like the more... can claim it back it will empower-

544 **Participant Six:** -but it also comes with the thing of education and knowledge and
545 getting into a space where people see gays and lesbians and the rest of the community
546 to be out there. Because it is exposure. As much as they feel; like we are
547 indoctrinating kids like making it uncomfortable. It is that breaking the system
548 because they are [inaudible, disconnected] what I perceive as a drag queen as
549 someone performing as female when in actual fact that is not what it is. Uhm, being

⁶⁶ "crazy Thomas". Once again have not found an official definition for Thomas.

⁶⁷ "we chop you". This could refer to the physical act of chopping someone with your hand or cutting the person off.

550 gay is something I would associate as being a moffie because that is not what the
551 coloured community knows the term to be.

01:02:51

552 **Participant Five:** Can I just. You just brought up something really important. So, like
553 the Salieg family. Like my family the Salieg family used to bring in strangers.
554 Produce strangers that is also like masc-y and shallow. When they introduce me, they
555 always say. Like they also used to say there's moffie. And then it changed to hy's
556 gay. Because now they taking, when they see your comfortable in your moffie-geid
557 and you like owning it then it's like, oh no you just bridged. You just cross over the
558 line you are now gay. And now that I am trans they don't know what to label me as.
559 Like they are confused. They don't understand it and I'm okay with that. I don't
560 understand it. Most of my family still calls me Anwa but am I really going to waste
561 my time or energy to change it and, since I been saying it, [softens voice to almost a
562 whisper] say that's not my name. and I don't want to be called that. [Normalises
563 voice] Like am I going to waste my time or am I going to just be like ag you know
564 what, fuck you.

01:04:05

565 **Participant Six:** Yeah, and also touching on the thing of it's a joke until its real and
566 then it's not a joke anymore and then you get thrown with the bible and the Quran, 567
because as a child it was always joked that I was a moffie. It was always joked that I
568 was gay. It was always joked that I was going to be the one to bring home a guy. But
569 the moment it happened people started dropping like flies around me because it was
570 too real. Because now automatically once they start accepting it, it means that they
571 condone, technically, who I am and what I am. Uhm, not that I need that as a person
572 but now it puts them on the back foot. And like oh the joke that I made ten years ago
573 has now come to light.

574 **Participant Five:** It's like they always called this child a moffie and now he is a
575 moffie and now they don't know how to react to the moffie-geid. And now they are
576 confused. And now they, they back spacing, freezing now and tensing up, but yeah

01:05:02

577 **Participant Seven:** Yeah, I think my experience is very similar to [Participant] Six in
578 terms of the moffie term was always used to lesser. To like you are now lesser than a
579 man you were weaker than a woman like he says. But it was also a term that was used
580 maliciously to hurt. Like you were saying earlier, when you walked into a room then

581 people would say here the moffie come. It was used as a term and to sort of get.
 582 Because that's sort of, that's what I experienced a lot of my life as well. But as
 583 Participant Five was saying is that when you take ownership of it you take away the
 584 power, so you take away the power from them. So, using the word now means
 585 nothing. And that comes with acceptance and all of those things but, Also, you get to
 586 a point where you just don't care anymore, you don't care about people's opinions
 587 and what they say and ja you sort of just live.

588 **Participant Five:** It's still. It doesn't, it doesn't disrepute that it still hurts to a certain
 589 extent. But you do, you do learn to navigate around it.

590 **Participant Two:** I think we learnt how to deal with it better man. The family, how
 591 people treat us. So, in the past we maybe would cry like; oh no this one called me a
 592 lesbian, or this one said I'm this and that. But now ne you're like eff you. So, it
 593 doesn't matter at the e-

594 **Participant Five:** -Where is the lie. Where is-

595 **Participant Six:** -One thing I wish. One thing I wish I had in school is the confidence
 596 I have now within myself. Because I feel like if I just believed a little bit more in
 597 myself, like a few years ago, that term moffie would not have affected me as much as
 598 it did. Because it did. Like there is no way I can say that it didn't affect me. And it
 599 didn't cause me to question certain things. Whereas now I feel like with
 600 understanding myself and accepting it now makes it easier for me to deal with that
 601 term. But I don't get people calling me a moffie anymore because I'm so comfortable
 602 in being gay that they can't use that term on me. Because I feel like people only use it
 603 on someone who is uncertain, or someone who has not come out and claimed their
 604 space. Uhm, whereas I feel like now currently at school it's still being used but it is
 605 being used because the boys are a little more effeminate and he himself hasn't found
 606 his place. In society or where he specifically is.

[group cross talk]

01:07:58

607 **Participant Two:** Yeah, I can. I can concur with everyone's, what they are saying.
 608 Like the community where I grew up, it was the same. Like, if you were a lesbian,
 609 because that is all they knew. Lesbian. and then you were straight. That's it. The
 610 same. So, if you were called a lesbian then they would pick (on) you and you know.
 611 And boys would target you. So, I would be like no, I'm not just to cover myself. And
 612 then growing up in a catholic home. And coming from a catholic home my mom went

613 to church every Sunday, going to Sunday school and being confirmed in church it's
614 like the bible say if you gay, you are gonna(going) to go to hell you know what I
615 mean. I was, I always, I always felt, I was that type of person that would say that I
616 would rather say that I was having sex when I was sixteen to rather say I'm a gay. I'm
617 a lesbian. To refuse. You know what I mean. That, that was such a bad thing growing
618 up. So, it was for me just to realise but it has niks met ander mense te doen nie⁶⁸. Like
619 if. Its who I am if I'm not hurting anyone else, so let me love who I want to love. And,
620 and I only made peace of that it. If you wanna believe in God then you believe in
621 God, if you don't? That's still up to me or whoever. So, it basically just came to the
622 confidence of having to grow out of that stereotype of what the community said. So, I
623 was like. Cause I only came out at the age of twenty. So it was that. My whole, acting
624 in a way just to fit in.

01:10:03

625 **Participant Six:** Mm. also just to touch on what Participant Four saying now is that I
626 found to on school to resonate with the lesbian girl. Even though at school we didn't
627 come out or we didn't know we were but, me as a very (feminine) and her as very
628 masculine we were a very good match when we were together [inaudible connection
static].

629 **Participant Five:** julle kan mekaar vediedag⁶⁹.

630 **Participant Six:** Yes, like we always had. Like this is one of the things I speak on
631 media that we always found that peace within each other that made me continue on in
632 school. Like I would always [poor connectivity,inaudible] because she wanted to do
633 it but it wasn't something that was big on with me but then play skipping rope
634 because I wanted to do it. And I feel like that created that safe space and made it easy
635 for us to almost navigate the different biases that people had.

636 **Participant Five:** And we are still doing it.

637 **Participant Four:** I feel like that for me it was basically trying to fit in. I think that is
638 why I played sports so much. Like I played WP hockey and cricket and so, there it
639 was like okay, so, anything but to be a lesbian... I was just the sport kid and then they,
640 and that masculinity side of me could have been that she's just a sport girl you know
641 what I mean.

⁶⁸ "... it has nothing to do with other people".

⁶⁹ "You can defend each other"

642 **Participants Five, Six, Seven:** Mm yes, the tomboy
 643 **Participant Four:** Yes, the tomboy yes you know when she finishes with high school
 644 you know, she's going to be all girly. And then when my high school people saw me
 645 all the sudden on *Facebook* and *Instagram*, they are like woah. That's like you know.
 646 Like they don't even recognise me when I get them in the mall sometime. Then I
 647 know they know me, but they don't recognise me because they thought. You know.

01:12:17

648 **Participant One:** They thought that you were going to be the person in their minds
 649 would have been.

650 **Participant Four:** Ja.

651 **Participant One:** But no one can see your future.

[laughs] [Group cross talk]

652 **Participant One:** Na I. I grew up mos in Beacon valley ha-ha. But there, I didn't
 653 really get picked on because I was kind you know. Well. I could pick and choose
 654 which group I wanna be in which gang. Kinda gang.

655 **Participant Five:** Choose one. By all means choose one.

[Group laughter]

656 **Participant One:** I could have been with the guys but then, well the girl like me
 657 more. But the guys hahaaa ja ek sit vir hulle in die oe in⁷⁰. Dit mos soe gewees⁷¹
 658 because you a male, and you are more feminine you a moffie you are putting the guys
 659 in the eyes. And well, it's the same the other way around too. If you were a lesbian,
 660 you putting the females, it was the same. I just know I was told jy sit die manne in die
 661 oe. Well growing up I was in a group, kinda uhm, called the playgirls. And girl,
 662 troublemaker, I was the first one to run away. I made trouble but the first girl. But ja.
 663 But where I grew up the community, they knew since I was small, they knew. They
 664 could see because I played with the girls, I played poppe husie⁷². I played with the
 665 girls but dan is ek die ma⁷³. Yeah, and then I used to what do you call it? This tea pot,
 666 party thingy majiggy. So used to play games back but more on the feminine side so
 667 they could see that I was already so. As I was growing up the gangsterism came more
 668 and uhm this wangsters wanna be wangster. Well, they had no chance because the

⁷⁰ "...yes, I put them in the eyes", this means that the participant embarrassed them.

⁷¹ "It used to be like that"

⁷² "Doll house"

⁷³ "...then I am the mom".

669 gangsters that was there before them sal vir hulle in ge doen het⁷⁴ because if they were
670 to touch ... and I was very much close friends with the drug lord's wife.

[Group laughter]

671 **Participant One:** I was mama mongrel⁷⁵ number two.

672 [Group cross talk]: you were the drug lords second wife. You were the first lady.

673 **Participant One:** Of course darling, ma nancy president wasie daar nie⁷⁶. And will
674 never be there too. Mm ja well but now I moved to Athlone because I was actually
675 told to you don't belong here. Moved to Athlone not because I was told you don't
676 belong here, well that the gangster that told me. Hulle almal is pubba⁷⁷.

677 **Participant Five:** He saw your potential.

678 **Participant One:** Mm yeah well now my potential kinda, kinda ran away and now I
679 can't grab hold of it. It's like I don't wanna grab hold. It's like a bietjie you know. I
680 need to level up but I'm keeping my level just there, I don't want to be more than
681 someone else. I don't wanna be back to where I was, but well we all human. We have
682 to keep It just there. level up. Uhm ja but. the com. Ja. Like I said, the community
683 where I was didn't really, really not accept me, they accepted me, and they were very
684 much protective over me. So, I couldn't walk alone because in the morning I used go
685 very early to work or college or something and then I would always find two or three
686 guys there taking me halfway. That was how it was back in the day but now I am
687 here. Well, I'm indoor, I'm closed up. I keep myself indoors. And yeah, that's me in a
688 very long nutshell. I apologise.

[cross talk]

01:17:04

689 **Moderator:** Okay so to close off I decided I would like to ask your opinions on this
690 since everyone is giving their experiences. If you were to rate your experiences in
691 your community as coloured person as a queer coloured person versus what you have
692 seen in the news. Or (be)cause I mean all of you guys are. I remember in the previous
693 conversation you said you said that you identify as part of the LGBT community first.
694 So, I'm sure everyone's had interactions with people outside of their communities.
695 Uhm whenever we talk about society, we always use, we talk about. Well, I know for

⁷⁴ "... would have done them in"

⁷⁵ "mongrel" refers to being of mixed heritages whereas "mongrel" means mixed heritages. The participant is either referring to her mixed racial status, or perceived stupidity.

⁷⁶ "... but nancy president was not there". "Nancy" translates to no.

⁷⁷ "They are all pubba", this refers to an idiot that talks shit/nonsense.

696 me, I use the white standard of gayness a lot of the times more than anything [group
697 vocalising agreement]. Which is a weird thing I noticed but where would you place
698 the coloured community in terms of tolerance and acceptance when you compare It to
699 other communities? Other racial communities?

700 **Participant Six:** On a scale of? ten?

701 **Moderator:** I guess yeah, on a scale of ten, do you think we're...

702 **Participant Four:** ten, ten is the peak?

703 **Moderator:** ten is very supportive and one is. Ten is the max of acceptance and one is
704 the least.

[cross talk debating the scale]

705 **Participant Six:** It depends on the person and the age group [Participant Five
706 vocalises agreement]. Because if its anybody that is stuck in their way, because they
707 say that once you turn forty or fifty and you have your own mind set there's no way
708 you going to be able to be educated or even open to conversing about changes or other
709 people. So, I, I am saying four or five out of ten purely because there's still a lot of
710 education that needs to happen. There is, is still a lot of people in the coloured
711 community that aren't open to being educated and open to accepting to that their
712 opinion is not what the world is. That's their opinion.

713 **Participant Five:** Jy's a four or five. Okay, I'll be six or seven. But that is obviously
714 my opinion. And I think it's because I have never been attacked. I have never felt
715 attacked, I always walked with vigour [Acts out vigour]. So uhm and I always owned
716 it [inaudible input from participant 1] haha basically what she said. So, I never had it
717 really bad. With the whole transition even, it was never really bad. And I think it's
718 because I'm so... I'm so cute [over emphasised high-pitched voice].

719 **Participant Six:** And confident.

720 **Participant Five:** Ek flirt. I flirt with straight people.

721 **Participant Seven:** You know for me; I actually also say a five. I think it's still very
722 prevalent where it's one of those things where you can be gay, but you must be gay
723 behind closed doors. And don't let the neighbours see, don't let people see, I think it's
724 still very much-

725 **Participant Six:** -hate the sin not the sinner.

726 **Participant Seven:** That's why I hate that, you sound like my mother. I hate it. Yeh, I
727 think a five, definitely a five for me.

01:20:31

728 **Participant Four:** For me, I can say the same. Like, in my community in where I
 729 grew up it was very family orientated, so like they all knew that that's the tomboy
 730 Deedee and I'm still the same person so for me they are still the same and it has not
 731 changed. So small and they only know one thing and they don't see a lot of things so,
 732 it's hard for them to accept if they never saw or heard of things like that. So, there's a
 733 lot of growth and things like that can happen there.

734 **Participant Six:** So... is that a five?

735 **Participant Four:** Ja, I-I-I, I'm leaning more to a five. A five, negative five

736 **Participant One:** Can, can I say five and five and a half.

737 **Moderator:** Five, Five and a half. Because?

738 **Participant One:** I think I am just very optimistic

739 **Participant Six:** Mr positive.

740 **Participant Five:** Maybe.

741 **Participant One:** As, said there's a lot of learning to do. Teaching [disconnected]
 742 [cross talk about Participant One connectivity] okay I'm, I'll be five. Because there's
 743 two things. For a child. Some children they understand quickly. Like the teenagers
 744 they understand more than the adults do. How the LGBT. Because some of them have
 745 friends from school and hulle praat mos⁷⁸. And the adults, shame, they need to. They
 746 still need to get into that mindset. I don't know if you can teach them, I don't know if
 747 they will learn from the LGBT. Like say now if the moderator or Participant Four or
 748 julle wat daarso sit, if they, they have like a, even pride enough to open people's
 749 mindsets. I don't think pride is enough. But ja. I don't know.

750 **Moderator:** I am just going to fill participant 2 in on the question so she can answer.
 751 So, the question is if you were to rate coloured community acceptance on queerness
 752 from one to ten, with ten being very accepting with one being least accepting where
 753 would you place?

754 **Participant Three:** I would place it as a four.

755 **Moderator:** A four?

756 **Participant Three:** I have very little spirit. Very little hope for my community.
 757 [laughs] I'm sorry but I don't think. People always think that you a lesbian and say
 758 that you are a bad influence, and I don't think it will never change. Uhm, only if you.

⁷⁸ "they talk"

759 So mense altyd se⁷⁹ you will only understand something if you have a certain family
 760 member that is gay, or if you have knowledge of what gayness is or what queer is but
 761 if (you) don't then at the end of the day. Some people will never change, so you can't.
 762 I will always give it a 4. I don't believe people- people don't change easily when it
 763 come(s) to if you don't know something or you're too proud or you're too in denial.
 764 People won't understand it, or people won't want to understand it at the end of the
 765 day.

01:24:58

766 **Participant Six:** And what makes it more difficult for the coloured community is that
 767 they are still in the oppressive space that we spoke about before. And that makes it
 768 even more difficult to accept anything outside of what they know [Participant Five
 769 vocalising agreement] and what their little clique has made them believe. Because that
 770 is what they hold onto, like there is so little in the coloured community to be proud of
 771 that people hold onto the biblical stories and they hold onto those things because it's
 772 something that has been coming all their life.

773 **Participant Five:** Also, side bar. Uhm, you say they hold onto that and it's because...
 774 for a lot of people, we coloured people don't really know where we are from. You
 775 know what I mean, we don't follow where our great oupa grootjie and grootjies come
 776 from. We don't do that. And we also like a lot of secrets. Coloured people love
 777 secrets. So, for me- O-M-G that's such a beautiful point. I just went blank now
 778 because I got excited [group laughter]. It's important to hold onto something from
 779 your community but it shouldn't necessary determine how you live your present, if
 780 that makes sense [group agreement vocalised and physicalised] or how you want to
 781 live, live your future. That was a good point!

782 **Moderator:** Yeah, love it.

783 **Participant Five:** Thank you

01:26:28

784 **Moderator:** Okay, well I think we are done here.

785 **Participant Five:** Ohh maar daars a gees⁸⁰ in the coloured community! ooohhh they
 786 don't want to. Hulle willie hulle willie⁸¹. They don't want to see you win. That is our
 787 biggest problem. We all do it.

⁷⁹ "As people always say"

⁸⁰ "Oh, but there is a spirit."

⁸¹ "They don't, they don't."

788 **Participant Three:** That is very sad. Actually.

789 **Moderator:** That is very sad, yeah.

790 **Participant Five:** It is, because we are so beautiful and colourful and look at all the
791 different textures and different faces and the different like, we have so much swag and
792 it gets lost in the [inaudible] of coloured people are uit tande,⁸² goud in di bek⁸³ ,
793 unsuccessful. Woon by hulle ouers⁸⁴ [participants nodding heads in agreement]. It
794 takes away, it takes a lot of the greatness away.

795 **Participant Four:** And it puts a lot of pressure as well.

796 **Participant Five:** Yes, because you want to fight-

797 **Participant Four:** And it makes you scared to fail. It makes you scared to fail. Jyt jy
798 nou net soe gehou maar kyk nou waars jy alweer⁸⁵.

[Cross talk of group agreement]

799 **Participant Three:** It's sad. It's sad because my sister-in-law boyfriend he's
800 Portuguese. When he met me the first time, he asked me. So, what type of coloured
801 are you? And I was like excuse me. Why don't you drink beer? Where's your out
802 teeth. Clubbing. I was like who the fok are you sitting with at weekends. Every
803 coloured is labelled as the label coloured. Because he literally asked me why don't
804 you drink black label why you drinking red wine. Coloured people don't do that.

805 **Participant Five:** Yes, but why don't you drink black label. It's the beer of
806 champions.

807 **Participant Six:** Just drink it in a glass.

808 **Participant Five:** From a straw if you must.

809 **Participant Three:** I'm all posh so you must drink your red wine. But when you are
810 with your people you can ma drink your black label, but he is like that.

811 **Moderator:** I think what we forget is that with every community even though there is
812 going to be the stereotype there is going to be variety ["mm's of agreement vocalised
813 by some participants]. And it's not just coloured community. It is every community,
814 but I don't know why, with my experience or all of your experiences has been so
815 staunch in the sense that it has to be that depiction of it. Because coloured people are
816 very talented and because they are multicultural there's so much that we add to it and

⁸² "... out teeth"

⁸³ "..., gold in the mouth"

⁸⁴ "Live with their parents"

⁸⁵ "You just kept yourself like that and now look at where you are again"

817 yet we try to ignore that [vocalised agreement from group]. And as you said, you get
 818 negative replies. Like with me doing my study I was told why you speaking English?
 819 This isn't England. And I was like, you know.

[cross talk of disagreement and surprise by group]

820 **Participant Three:** What.

821 **Participant Six:** I'm sorry!

822 **Participant Three:** What language should you speak?

823 **Participant Six:** But also. Also, the coloured community dynamic is a very weird
 824 dynamic. They are circus animals to that extent. It's that. If you about an elephant at a
 825 circus it has been chained to stand in a certain way and. The elephant legs for days on
 826 end purely so that it doesn't move when the chain is taken off. And the majority of the
 827 coloured community is still in that space. They are too scared to [connectivity issues
 828 on participants end] move away from what they have trained to know and trained to
 829 see. And that is why most of the out teeth front kids are coming from a space my
 830 friend did it, my father's friend did it. My friend's friend did it. And that is why I am
 831 doing it. It's just a repetitive thing that will continuously be there because people are
 832 not uplifted and made comfortable

833 **Participant Five:** Are you crying? Wil jy huil?

834 **Participant Six:** So n bietjie vir⁸⁶ my community. no, because it's just that thing that
 835 people are not being uplifted to know that they are better. And they can get better.
 836 Uhm. That the world is bigger than their little Belhar, or Elsies river or like whatever.
 837 Like it doesn't just contain that. There is more things happening out there.

838 **Moderator:** Mm definitely.

839 **Participant Six:** But'll gotta go.

840 **Moderator:** It's good. It's done. This was just a side bar. I loved it though. It was
 841 beautiful [group laughter and cheers]. Okay guys. Thank you so much guys for
 842 giving me this other opportunity.

[Group cross talk and farewells]

End

⁸⁶ "So a little for..."

