GAY SEXUALITY IN A COLOURED COMMUNITY

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Psychology) at the University of Stellenbosch.

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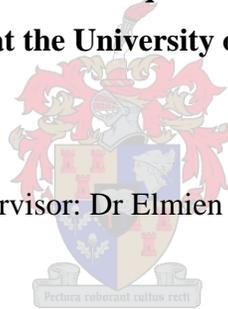
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STATEMENT

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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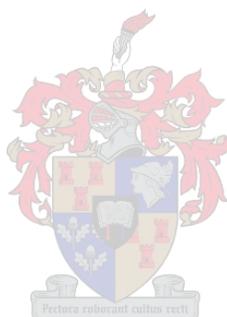
ABSTRACT

Same-sex sexuality research in the field of psychology has adopted various different perspectives during recent history. Often these perspectives have been limiting in how sexuality is understood, and in answering why different forms of expression manifest. The normative research approach is to comprehend sex and sexuality as a set of physical behaviours that ideally should be regulated through models of rational decision making. Also, much of same-sex research has placed an almost exclusive focus on the behaviours of white, middle-class men. International same-sex sexuality research places heavy emphasis on matters of sexual health, notably that of HIV. Furthermore, the research is strongly influenced by quantitative methods of capturing information. Limited studies have been conducted on African same-sex interactions. The work that has been done is clustered mainly around the field of historical, sociological and anthropological investigations. In South Africa, it is remarked that we have not yet begun to debate the complexities of differing 'sexual orientations', *both* in terms of how it relates to HIV, as well as how sexual orientation is understood amongst the many cultural and ethnic groups in the country. Also, sexuality in all its forms has historically been understood as a private matter, and was also highly regulated by the state apparatus, resulting in the extreme limitation of any kind of public sexual dialogue. Still, even in post-apartheid South Africa, sexuality remains contested.

This study attempted to address some of the many issues relating to sexuality research in South Africa and elsewhere. It was decided to collect information on same-sex sexuality by focusing on coloured[1] men from a rural district in the Western Cape. This target group was selected due to the immense lack of knowledge in the field of South African psychology regarding the constructions of sexuality of *both* same-sex practices *and* coloured men. The objective of the study was to gain an understanding of how sexuality is constructed and experienced in this specific community. This goal was reached by collecting qualitative data from in-depth, unstructured interviews. The qualitative results indicate a highly complex interplay between understandings of gender identity and sexuality. The respondents all identified as 'gay' men, connecting this with being feminine and "like a woman." A strong focus on a specific type of bodily representation was also noted. The sex act was read by me as an act of submission, with respondents placing great emphasis on behaviour, with little or no weight given to the

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[1] I am mindful of the controversial use of this term, and view it as a social construction. Laubscher (2003) states that the use of the term is misleading, given that coloured ethno-history is arranged around hybridity and creolisation, rather than its uni-dimensional application during apartheid. In its crudest form coloured can be understood as denoting a group of people who are neither white nor 'Native Africans', and denotes people of mixed parentage, European settlers, Khoi-San women, slaves and 'free black people' (Zegeye, 2001). I use the term, as it still holds great cultural meaning (Laubscher, 2003), and is used to a great degree by a group of people to denote a certain political history, and unique identity.

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emotional loading of the event. Sex just "happens", with participants constructing experiences that strongly suggest the importance of them being passive. This in turn lead to me interpreting narratives as suggesting continued exposure to sexual coercion. Meanings around oral and anal sex were also explored. The grounded theory method was used to analyse the qualitative data. The core category identified the need to be like a woman and to demonstrate extreme forms of femininity. I showed that specific communities of practice produce and hold the idea of equating gay with having to be feminine. Further, I argued that the idea of a passive female subjectivity strongly informs the participants' sexual decision making. I conclude by suggesting that a different way of being feminine is needed in order for these participants' to expand their sexuality.
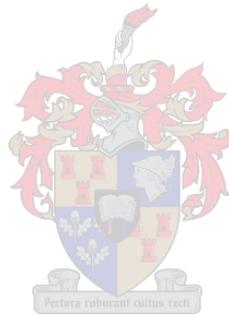
OPSOMMING

Navorsing oor selfde-seks seksualiteit in die sielkundeveld het in die onlangse geskiedenis verskeie verskillende perspektiewe geneem. Hierdie perspektiewe was dikwels beperkend ten opsigte van hoe seksualiteit begryp word en ook ten opsigte van die vermoë om 'n antwoord te verskaf oor hoekom verskillende vorme van uitdrukking manifesteer. Die normatiewe navorsingsbenadering is om seks en seksualiteit as 'n stel fisieke gedrag te verstaan wat ideal gesproke deur modelle van rasionele besluitneming gereguleer behoort te word. Heelwat navorsing oor selfde-seks seksualiteit het ook bykans eksklusiewe fokus op die gedrag van wit, middelklas mans geplaas. Internasionale navorsing oor selfde-seks seksualiteit plaas groot klem op kwessies oor seksuele gesondheid, veral MIV. Verder word die navorsing sterk beinvloed deur kwantitatiewe metodes waarmee inligting vasgelê word. 'n Beperkte aantal studies is al oor Afrikane gedoen ten opsigte van selfde-seks seksuele interaksies. Dit wat wel gedoen is, val hoofsaaklik in die geskiedkundige, sosiologiese en antropologiese fakgebiede. Daar word opgemerk dat die debat oor die ingewikkeldheid van verskillende 'seksuele oriëntasies' begin is nie: *sowel* ten opsigte van die verband met MIV, *as* hoe seksuele oriëntasie in die land se talle kulturele en etniese groepe verstaan word. Daarbenewens is alle vorme van seksualiteit in die verlede as 'n private aangeleentheid bestempel. Dit is ook sterk deur die staat gereguleer, wat veroorsaak het dat enige soort openbare dialoog oor seks streng beperk is. Self in die Suid-Afrika na apartheid is seksualiteit steeds omstrede.
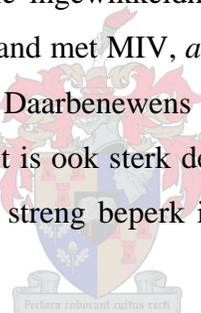
Hierdie studie het probeer om sommige van die talle kwessies ten opsigte van navorsing oor seksualiteit in Suid-Afrika en elders onder die loep te neem. Die besluit is geneem om inligting oor selfde-seks seksualiteit in te samel deur op kleurlingmans[1] van 'n plattelandse distrik in die Wes-Kaap te fokus. Hierdie teikengroep is gekies as gevolg van die onsaglike tekort aan kennis in die veld van die Suid-Afrikaanse sielkunde ten opsigte van die konstruksie van seksualiteit van *sowel* selfde-seks seksuele praktyke *as* kleurlingmans. Die doelwit van hierdie studie was om te verstaan hoe seksualiteit in hierdie spesifieke gemeenskap gekonstrueer word en ervaar word. Hierdie doelwit is bereik deur kwalitatiewe data deur middel van deurtastende, ongestruktureerde onderhoude in te samel. Die

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[1] Ek is bewus van die kontroversiële gebruik van hierdie term en beskou dit as 'n sosiale konstruksie. Volgens Laubscher (2003) is die gebruik van die term misleidend, omdat kleurling etno-geskiedenis volgens hibridiese karakter en kreolisering ingedeel word, eerder as die eendimensionele toepassing daarvan in apartheid. In sy grofste vorm kan die term kleurling verstaan word as die beskrywing van 'n groep mense wat nie wit of Afrika-inboorlinge is nie, en wat mense van gemengde afkoms, Europese setlaars, Khoi-San-vroue, slawe en "vry swart mense" insluit (Zegeye, 2001). Ek gebruik die term omdat dit steeds beduidende kulturele beteknis dra (Laubscher, 2003) en in groot mate deur 'n groep mense gebruik word om 'n sekere politieke geskiedenis en unieke indentiteit te beskryf.

kwalitatiewe resultate dui aan dat daar 'n hoogs ingewikkelde wisselwerking is tussen hoe gay identiteit en seksualiteit geinterpreteer word. Die respondente het hulself almal as 'gay' mans geidentifiseer en het dit in verband gebring met vroulikheid en om "soos 'n vrou" te wees. Daar is ook 'n sterk fokus op 'n spesifieke soort liggaamlike uitbeelding opgemerk. Na aanleiding van die inligting het ek die seksdaad geinterpreteer as 'n daad van onderwerping; die respondente het groot klem op gedrag geplaas met min of geen klem op die emosionele lading van die gebeurtenis nie. Seks "gebeur" maar net en die respondente het ervarings gedeel met 'n sterk sugestie van die belangrikheid daarvan dat hulle passief was. Na aanleiding hiervan het ek narratiewe geinterpreteer as "n sugestie van voordurende bloodstelling aan seksuel dwang. Die betekenis van orale en anale seks is ook ondersoek. Die gegrondeteorie-metode is gebruik om die kwalitatiewe data te analiseer. Die kernkategorie het die behoefte geidentifiseer om soos 'n vrou te wees en om ekstreme vorme van vroulikheid te laat blyk. Ek het getoon dat spesifieke "gemeenskappe-van-praktyk" die idee genereer en handhaaf dat gaywees noodwendig beteken dat die pebtrokke persoon vroulik moet wees. Verder is my argument dat die idee van 'n passiewe vroulike subjektiwiteit onderliggend is an die deelnemers se besluitneming ten opsigte van seksuele gedrag. Ek sluit af deur voor te stel dat 'n ander manier om vroulik te wees, nodig is sodat hierdie deelnemers hulle seksualiteit kan uitbrei.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION

1.   Introduction

Research into same-sex sexualities within the field of psychology has adopted various different perspectives during recent history (Beasley, 2005; Kitzinger, 1995). These perspectives have often been limiting in how sexuality is understood, and in answering why different sexual forms of expression manifest (Tiefer, 1995). The normative research approach to sex and sexuality is to comprehend it as a set of physical behaviours that ideally should be regulated through models of rational decision-making. Furthermore, same-sex sexuality research historically places an almost exclusive focus on the behaviours of white, middle-class men. It is only quite recently that more research has been conducted towards understanding the sex and sexuality of people who fall outside such parameters, such as black men and women.[2] However, the research on black men is still limited, especially in South Africa (Potgieter, 2003). These limitations have to be addressed for the following reasons.   Firstly, sexuality research should be viewed as a political matter, which functions through modes of regulatory power. Research has to engage with segments of the population that have been isolated by the mechanisms of regulatory power, such as black men involved in same-sex practices. This ought to be done in order for a voice to be given to people who are marginalised and silenced by systems of disciplinary regulation within society. This is a position that South African psychology is still struggling with. Secondly, it is important for psychology to move away from understanding sexual processes as merely an individualised matter, and rather begin to recognise it as a dynamic, tension-filled, socially constructed enterprise. Thirdly, it cannot be ignored that in South Africa matters pertaining to sex and sexuality are closely linked to the issue of sexual health, most noticeably that of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Therefore, research that addresses the topic of sexuality should ideally be able to contribute knowledge that could possibly assist in better understanding transmission patterns among different groups within the population (Crewe, 2002).

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[2] I am mindful that the use of racial categories in South African scholarship is controversial. I agree, however, with leading South African researchers (e.g. Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000) that the use of such categories in social research is important in that it serves to highlight the impact that apartheid had on specific groups of people. Here, the category 'black' refers to all South Africans disenfranchised under apartheid.

## 2.	Same-sex sexualities: international, African, and national contexts

International same-sex sexuality research places heavy emphasis on sexual health matters, notably that of HIV (Parker, et al., 2004). This is due to the fact that the bulk of same-sex research is conducted in developed countries, where men who have sex with men (MSM) carry the highest HIV infection burden, and presentation of symptoms related to Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) (Cochran, Sullivan & Mays, 2003). In an attempt to reverse this trend, significant resources are aimed at better understanding sexual behaviour and the antecedents that may lead to seroconversion and the psychological implications of a HIV-positive status (Adam, Shears & Schellenberg, 2000; Coxon & McManus, 2000; Crossley, 2004; Davidovich, de Wit & Stroebe, 2004). The focus on HIV and sexuality is important, given that international studies show an increase in MSM reporting high-risk behaviour (Calzavara, et al., 2002; Dukers, et al., 2002: Elford & Hart, 2003)

Same-sex sexuality research, although strongly influenced by quantitative methods of capturing information, also draws on qualitative, interpretive methods. This approach has its origins in social activism and emancipatory scholarship (Kitzinger & Coyle, 2002). Here there is an understanding that sex and sexuality should be seen as social phenomena that are subject to political and social control (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1994), and that the data obtained is of a rich, textual variety.   It relies on the narrative of participants to illuminate the topic under investigation. This form of research is growing in popularity (Parker, et al., 2004). This growth is due in great part to the expansion of feminist and queer theory, which articulates sex within a range of social and cultural spaces (Attwood, 2006). Research following this trend of capturing narrative is often not concerned so much with linking sexuality to HIV concerns, but rather engages with issues of critical psychology. This approach is often viewed with a degree of scepticism by more positivist orientated researchers and academics (Parker, et al., 2004).

A limited number of studies have been conducted on African same-sex interactions and identities and these cluster mainly around the field of historical, sociological and anthropological investigations (Aldrich, 2003; Murray & Roscoe, 1998). Such studies and commentary emphasise the need to acknowledge the stigmatising legacy of colonialism on issues pertaining to both sexuality studies in general, and same-sex sexuality studies in particular, on the African continent. This legacy manifests in sex research often being seen as some sinister form of population control, with its historical origins in the colonial pathologising of African sexualities. This has resulted in an expression of defensiveness among African governments, intellectuals and the populace when discussing sex research.   This

position is due in large to the non-critical acceptance of Western standards of sexual normality on the African continent (Schoepf, 1995).

Looking at South Africa, researchers such as Posel (2004) point out that as a nation, we have not yet begun to debate the complexities of differing 'sexual orientations', *both* in terms of how they relate to HIV, as well as how sexual orientation is understood amongst the many cultural and ethnic groups in this country (Crewe, 2002; Potgieter, 1997). Crewe (2002) remarks that the HI virus could very well act as the most powerful agent to instigate transformations in the social, political, economic and personal spheres in South Africa. Therefore, she calls for studies that directly address the diverse sexualities of men in this country, and how HIV raises a range of social, racial, and cultural issues. Studies must capture the complex permutations of sexual behaviour and meaning. No longer can rational behaviour models be employed to try and understand sexual behaviour, for this is nothing more than a "pedestrian" way of research (Crewe, 2002, p. 450).

South Africa needs to engage with issues related to sexuality, *besides* the reasons linked to HIV. Up until the end of apartheid, sexuality as a discourse was highly regulated by the state apparatus, resulting in the extreme limitation of any kind of public sexual dialogue. The end of apartheid has resulted in widespread sexual liberation, with 'sex talk' being integrally linked with the reconstitution of the country's political agenda (Posel, 2004). However, Posel (2004) points out that despite the dramatic changes to our sexual landscape in the post-apartheid era

> … [such] changes are neither wholesale nor uncontested. Issues of sexuality have an extraordinary prominence, but not in ways which indicate widespread comfort or acceptance of their profile or substance. Indeed, the anxieties, denials and stigmas which persist in the midst of new and unprecedented declarations of sexuality contribute directly to the new sites and intensities of the politicalisation of sexuality. (p. 54)

Thus, sexuality, despite its widespread 'coming out', remains a contested form of dialogue and behaviour. Many South Africans still struggle to engage in 'sex talk', with a younger generation being flooded with media images regarding sex and sexuality.

The South African constitution, which came into effect in 1996, has, as Posel (2004) says, "fundamentally subverted the idea of sex as a private matter, installing a profoundly different regime of

sexual regulation" (p. 55). The constitution, with relation to sexuality, is driven by the concept of sexual rights. Parker et al. (2004) point out that issues relating to sexual rights have become a key feature of sexuality research during the past couple of years, and are directly linked to the concept of human rights. A recent focal point is to engage with issues of sexuality that are linked to matters concerning civil society. This specific focus has its origins, in part, in culturally informed trends in sex research that elaborate on relations between sexuality and culture, how gender is socially constructed, as well as the dynamic history of sexual and gender identities. These discourses are shaped by the dramatic social changes of the 1960s and 1970s, and the growing feminist, gay and lesbian liberation movements. Sexual rights, originally viewed as a discourse to be extended to women as a codified method to award certain forms of protection, are now being claimed as a legitimate discourse that must be extended to celebrate sexual diversity and sexual pleasure (Parker, et al., 2004).

The South African constitution validates these sexual rights, and the constitutional court has ruled that same-sex marriage be promulgated. As of December 2006, same-sex marriage is legal, even if the execution thereof is sometimes problematic due to a prejudiced beaurocracy. Despite constitutional protection and the discourse of sexual rights, same-sex sexualities are under constant scrutiny from the public, due in large to the many religious and politically conservative groupings in this country. I argue, in line with the opinion of Carver (1998) that research should appreciate the political complexities of same-sex discourses and produce work that actively elevates people who partake in same-sex relations to the status of full citizenship, a process that even now, in this country with a highly progressive constitution, is fraught with struggle.

3.   A need for critical explorations of sexual citizenship

The concept of citizenship, and its meaning within a same-sex sexuality framework, raises some concerns that are open to debate. I am in agreement with Rahman (1998), who argues that currently legal equality will have little impact on the present social construction of sexuality which stigmatises non-heterosexuals. Jackson (1998) argues that as long as heterosexuality retains it position of social privilege, same-sex sexuality will always be a discourse of oppression, regulation and stigmatisation. The argument that problematises the pursuit of equality and sexual citizenship proposes that gay men and lesbian women who pursue goals of attaining this citizenship will have attained certain rights, yet still be subjected to subordination by the privileges of institutionalised heterosexuality.

I concur with the assertion that, should same-sex sexualities achieve legitimacy in terms of human rights, it still does not equate with the automatically rendered social privileges associated with the heterosexual fraternity. My proposal that same-sex sexuality research could assist in promoting social and sexual citizenship does not suggest collaboration with the current normative system of gender and sexual control. I would suggest that heterosexuality, despite its privileged position, is also being prevented from achieving a *different* form of sexual citizenship. I would like to briefly comment on this idea of *difference* in sexual citizenship, which I do not want to have confused with the idea of *liberation*. Edwards (1998; 2006), arguing from the position of gay politics, is of the opinion that *liberation* is problematic on both a theoretical and political level for it suggests essentialism and is linked to the concept of repression. Rather, what is seen as liberation should rather be understood in terms of an escape from oppression and subordination. This being so for *both* 'gay' and 'heterosexual' people.

It is argued that sexual orientation is biological, and thus immutable, this position in itself being problematic (Weeks, 2005). The position I am taking with a social constructionist framework is that such divisions, despite their *constructed* position of apparent biologically driven division, powerfully regulates even heterosexuality. Rather than viewing heterosexuality as a given ideal to achieve and maintain, and a discourse of living to be mimicked by people enjoying same-sex sexuality, it prevents people who conform to the constructed idea of heterosexuality to experience themselves as having available *different* sexual options. The goal should be to make the anatomical sex of the partner socially irrelevant. Therefore I would suggest that neither 'side' in the debate has achieved sexual citizenship; for heterosexuality (and homosexuality) says little about the diversity of sexual expressions we are all capable of (see chapter two for further elaboration on this concept).

Besides the idea of critically expanding the notion of citizenship, there must also be an engagement with the call of critical psychology. At a basic level, critical psychology must be understood as a way of politicising psychology and of critically engaging with the means of how knowledge, practice and subjectivity are produced by orthodox psychology (Hook, 2001). This position allows for certain critical psychological positions and methodologies to be implemented. Hook (2001) states that critical psychology should be reflexive regarding its use of discourse analysis, and stand clear of the trap that this form of analysis can merely end up being a tool for deconstruction. Instead, it must always strive towards enhancing theoretical sensibilities and generating new insights. Also, the critical approach should capture the "lived experience of everyday life" (p. 13), and encourage a participatory process of

people who are disadvantaged or oppressed, so as to generate new knowledge. Such a critical approach needs to be encouraged in South Africa, which still too often relies on a modernist, individualised, therapy-driven account of psychology (Van Vlaenderen, 2001).

4.   Limitations in sexuality research

The following sections will elaborate on the gaps that currently exist in sex research.

4.1   Sexual behaviour as the current focus of sex research

Stainton-Rogers and Stainton-Rogers (2001) point out that psychology differs in many ways from other disciplines in the social sciences in that many of its ideas and theories are taken directly from the natural sciences, biology in particular. Burr (1998, p. 32) states that

> …there is a common sense assumption (which may have no factual basis) that biological factors exert a powerful 'push' in particular directions, and that (weaker) environmental influences have a merely moderating effect. Biological influences are assumed to be deeper and stronger than societal forces, which are seen as more superficial. It is significant that the study of the biological sciences has often seemed more relevant to the education of psychology than has sociology.

This reliance on biology to explain a vast, complex range of human interactions is problematic. Sexuality came to be seen as something natural, with Ussher (1999) stating that:

> Within the annals of science, the subject of human sexuality has traditionally been studied within a narrow reductionist framework, in which sex is almost solely conceptualised as a physical behaviour or bodily response. … The gaze of psychologists who have entered the arena of sex research has historically been focused within a similarly narrow vein. The dictates of positivism and realism that still dominate our discipline mean that the experimental studies of biology, behaviour, or bodily response are deemed the most legitimate form of enquiry, with theoretical development being minimal or absent and research framed within a narrow hypothetical-deductive mould (p. 41).

This engagement with sex as something 'natural' has resulted in a neglected understanding of sexuality as a complex text and a script of the erotic (Simon, 1996). Research processes ought to denaturalise sex, and portray it as something socially constructed, with the origins of sexual desire being generated within social life. Despite new trends in sexuality research over the past few years that have disengaged themselves from positivist research, there must be an on-going rejection of causal models built upon the concept of sex as driven by natural instinct, in order to further develop conceptual tools that reflect shared collective and subjective individual experiences (Simon, 1996).

4.2   The neglect of theory in sex research

Weis (1998) documents a number of limitations facing sexuality research. Firstly, there is the tendency for sex research to be conducted from an a-theoretical standpoint. Effort is directed at documentation and generating correlative evidence, not at generating either theory from the research, or using theory to explain findings. Secondly, more effort is to be made to refine definitions and theoretical concepts, as well as building explanatory models. Thirdly, increased attention must be made towards recognising the social context within which sexuality is 'produced'. Finally, not enough attention is placed on understanding relations of power within sexual interactions. A perspective must be taken regarding the structural origins of sexual power, and how it becomes deployed, as "structural power dominates personal experience" (p. 106). The call to attend to such limitations is a complex one, as sexuality research often draws inspiration from interdisciplinary fields, often struggles to operationalise constructs, and is subject to how professional organisations (such as the American Psychological Association) foster and develop sexual theory. Also, little is known as to why the bulk of sex research *has* been a-theoretical, or why sex researchers select the theories that they do. Such questions need to be addressed in light of the continuous expansion of the discipline.

4.3   The neglect of psychological same-sex sexuality research

South Africa has experienced an upsurge in same-sex sexuality research. The focus however has been on such aspects as: the law, history, cultural geography and social anthropology (Reid & Walker, 2005). Very little attention has been directed at documenting same-sex experiences from a psychological perspective. The limited number of studies that have been compiled place near-exclusive emphasis on individual pathology and the need for corrective measures (Potgieter, 2003). Nel (2005) argues that a specific form of community psychology, in the form of the social action

model, is needed in South Africa to promote social change, and eradicate social injustice still experienced by people involved in same-sex relations. The model draws inspiration from human rights discourses, viewing socio-economic equality, political mobilisation and community control to be vital for positive psycho-social health. This model stipulates also that people are citizens "with legal rights which are sometimes infringed [upon] by the state or other powerful institutions. Where this happens people should stand together and demand to have their rights restored" (Terre Blanche et al., quoted in Nel, 2005, p. 283).

Considering the legacy of psychology in South Africa, in its co-operation with state systems to enforce apartheid and the apparent positive values in being heterosexual, research should alter course, and engage with these critical issues. The discipline cannot ignore the mammoth change that has taken place in the sexual landscape of South Africa since the end of apartheid. Furthermore, it must engage with the fact that vast numbers of people have emotional and/or sexual bonds with same-sex partners, whether long-term or transient. Psychology as a discipline in South Africa is in flux. It is now asked to engage with issues outside the individualised, therapeutic arena. In order for the discipline to contribute to the call of the constitution and create a climate that legitimises sexual citizenship for all, it must expand dramatically in its engagement with sexual matters – in all its many forms.

4.4   The neglect of black men in same-sex research

The psychological literature review (see chapter three) indicates that black men are rarely included in the studies that have been conducted, either from an international or national context. Beasley (2005) stresses the dearth of research engaging with the confluence of black masculinity and same-sex sexuality studies, which includes men in developing countries who are locked out of mainstream discourse. Potgieter (2005) points out that, at present, no in-depth South African academic investigation is underway of black people who have same-sex relations. Macleod (2004) remarks that between 1998 and 2003 only 3.7% of the studies published in the *South African Journal of Psychology* drew samples only from the country's coloured population.

The protection awarded to same-sex sexualities via the constitution, often only affects the lives of urbanised, middle-class to upper-class white men. Such constitutional protection and general economic prosperity continues to promote a form of individualism. In contrast, black South Africa, to a very large degree, is still trapped within a space called by President Mbeki, the 'second economy' (the 'first

economy', being the formal, measured economy). They do not enjoy the same privileges of economic and socio-political prosperity, and therefore experience a very different reality of same-sex sexualities. Psychological research, if wanting to answer the call of critical investigation, needs to position black men as a central component of the wider sexuality debate – both in terms of debunking Eurocentric misperceptions regarding black sexuality, and acknowledging their contribution towards expanding knowledge through their own stories.

4.5   The neglect of social context in research and theory

The social constructionist perspective asks that sexuality be understood as being constructed within specific social and subjective contexts. Different expressions of sexuality occur in the many varied forms of relationships, cultural, situational and role circumstances (Kelly & Kalichman, 1995), with different age cohorts expressing different sexual behaviour patterns (Dubé, 2000). Different forms of power relationships that take shape between people, such as their socio-political, psycho-social and economic position also dictate how sexuality is experienced (Foucault, 1997). These factors should indicate that it is problematic to try and understand sexuality as an all-encompassing social construct. The social construction of sexuality is context specific, depending on who occupies the context, and how discursive practices are expressed and experienced within such a context. Therefore, sexuality research, irrespective of the outcomes it wishes to achieve, needs to understand the importance of localising research (Wellings, Collumbien, Slaymaker, Singh, Hodges, Patel & Bajos, 2006). This results in the stories of specific communities being told, and of distinctive voices being captured.

5.   Conclusion

Sexuality research places considerable importance on conducting work that better helps to understand HIV transmission. Also, South Africa's continuing struggle with the epidemic cannot be ignored in sexuality studies. People who have contracted the virus have their citizenship questioned, if not through the state (debatable, given the government's current lacklustre roll-out of HIV medication), then through community ambivalence towards people who are HIV positive.

Independent from the issues related to HIV, is how same-sex practices are viewed by South African society. On a constitutional level, South Africans who identify themselves as gay enjoy full protection. This specific constitutional commitment however, is not shared by the majority of South Africans.

They struggle to understand, appreciate and contemplate a form of sexuality that resists the call toward heterosexual hegemony (Cock, 2005). Homophobic sentiments also permeate how government systems interact with South Africans who have same-sex relationships. Therefore, we are again faced with the issue of citizenship. The concept is unproblematic in terms of constitutional validity, yet contested to varying degrees by the populace – the people who make up the communities in which gay people and other same-sex sexuality groups live in.

Although acknowledging the importance of HIV research, this study is being conducted not to directly establish problematic sexual behaviour that can lead to contracting the virus. Rather, it is about understanding subjective ideas that people have about their sexuality. This study will collect stories of sexuality, by focusing on coloured men who have same-sex relations and who live in a semi-rural district of the Western Cape. The objective of the study is to explore constructions of sexuality of people who otherwise are locked out of mainstream dialogues due to poor economic standing, as well as 'race' and sexual orientation isolation. This research group has been selected due to the absence of sexuality research focusing on rural areas in the Western Cape, as well as coloured men involved in same-sex sex practices and/or relationships.

ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

The structure that this thesis will take is informed by the method of social constructionist grounded theory. Chapter two presents the theoretical departure point as well as defining key concepts and terms. Chapter three concerns a brief review of psychological literature pertaining to MSM sexuality. This literature review is aimed at merely setting the foundation in exploring literature in the MSM field. Chapter four addresses methodology. Chapter five contains the grounded theory analysis of the qualitative data. This chapter integrates research findings with an expanded literature review that directly addresses the categories identified through grounded theory analysis. It is here that the most significant works in relation to what is found in the grounded theory is analysed. (Charmaz, 2006). Chapter six concludes the thesis, by providing a summary of findings, a critical review of the study, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS AND TERMS

This chapter discusses social constructionism, which serves as a meta-theoretical backdrop for this study. The constructs of sex, sexuality, and same-sex sexuality will also be explained.

1.   Social constructionism

1.1   Social constructionism as a process of intellectual inquiry and reflection

Social constructionism should not be seen as a unitary theoretical framework, but rather as a cluster of alternative forms of investigation aimed at countering the empiricist movement (Durrheim, 1997; Gergen, 1997; Hosking & Morley, 2004). It shares the stage with post-modern traditions of lack of consensus and the rejection of causal models applied to human behaviour (Simon, 1996). This disengagement with traditional psychological thinking asks for a re-imagining of theoretical models, as concepts, categories and methods often depend more on political usefulness than their actual validity. Social constructionism is a challenger of such categorical thinking, which is grounded in thoughts of essentialism and the positivist-empiricist approach to traditional research (Durrheim, 1997). While it should be noted that even social constructionist research such as this study is empirical in the strict sense, there is a difference when compared to positivist models. This study views empiricism in terms of having obtained data through field work – the goal of this research. It is however not connected to the use of empiricism as equated with a positivist paradigm. Humans are products of social processes, and not of 'essences' that we can find inside the person, that are in some way removed from the social realm and are 'discoverable' through the application of naturalist principles. The perspective of constructionism should be understood as a process of intellectual inquiry and reflection that is largely concerned with studying how people describe, explain and in general account for the world in which they live (Gergen, 1985). How understanding is achieved between people, is a product of social artefacts and commodities moulded through historical and cultural interchanges among people. Descriptions and explanations of the world are not due to structural and genetic properties located within the individual. Instead, it is the outcome of "human coordination and action" (Gergen, 1997, p. 49).

It is argued that objective accounts, as demonstrated through positivist research, are problematic in that they are embodied within theories of science that argue that proper human study requires the

individual to be seen as a "natural scientific object, which reacts in a mechanistic way to the environment … viewing mind and behaviour as a-historical and a-social phenomena" (Durrheim, 1997, p. 176). As Liebrucks (2001) says, positivist research is not accomplished by individual scientists who operate within a vacuum, but consists of a process of social negotiation, with science being embedded in society, and so reflecting many of the values of the given society. Social constructionism therefore challenges the idea of objective knowledge and suggests that psychology should stop its attempt to uncover laws that supposedly govern our experience and behaviour (Liebrucks, 2001, p. 363). As Durrheim (1997) states, the empiricist project in psychology has yet to produce a universally acceptable account of behaviour with empirical observations producing conflicting and contradictory 'truths'. Rather, constructionism argues for ambiguity and the continuous process of evolving rules that stipulate what counts as meaningful in our worlds (Gergen, 1985). Forms of truth do exist but it is "always perspectival interpretations, which can only emerge against the backdrop of socially shared understandings" (Durrheim, 1997, p. 177). Social constructionism directly rejects the need to understand the human being as individualistic, dualistic (internal vs. external world) and mechanistic, where meaning is generated from individual sensory experiences and internal cognitive functions (Durrheim, 1997). Rather, the social constructionist position stipulates that the reality of everyday life is shared, which is enabled through the use of language. Knowledge becomes institutionalised at a societal level, or within sub-groups. This results in multiple spheres of meaning being socially generated through language by specific groups, and transmitted and modified across time (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). Language provides us with tools to organise daily life, and make meaningful interpretations of our surroundings. Language is not a "map of interior impulses – but outgrowths of specific modes of life, rituals of exchange, relations of control and domination" (Gergen, 1997, p. 53). As Bayer (1998) says, social constructionism is about making meaning, which is a participatory process that produces psychological subjects and their subjectivities. Due to the emphasis placed on negotiating lived meaning, it draws on language as the historical and cultural agent in fashioning the psychological subject.

This use of language is understood as a means of creating discourse, discourse being the many ways in which meaning is transmitted through culture - not only in speech and writing, but also through communication, which is non-verbal, pictorial and artistic. These different streams of discourse become organised around symbolic material. It is such organisation that makes it possible for us to create a sense of human community and identity (Parker, 2002). Deconstructing discourse in this era of story-telling creates the 'narrative turn' in many areas of social science research (Plummer, 1995). Bayer (1998) echoes this when she says that

social constructionism displaced psychology's penchant for a generic subject with the promise of a more interesting and lively psychological subject, one who would be construed as more fully in and of the world, and given the amenabilities of discourse, one who could presumably issue in new possibilities for self and social life, personal and political emancipation (p. 3).

The brief overview above indicates that social constructionism is not only concerned with providing a critical reflection on traditional empirical psychology, but that it creates a sense of endless possibilities. Possibilities for unprecedented change and re-discovery, grounded in the collective sharing of language, and the power it assumes through the affective qualities found in words. These words find meaning in the telling of stories, which act as a critical means through which people make themselves intelligible inside the social world (Gergen, 1997).

1.2   Subjectivity

This theoretical approach places emphasis on how relationships, and hence, subjectivity, structures a contextualised understanding of reality through language. This opposes positivist approaches that claim that subjectivity is a contaminant to objective readings, and that objectivity is attainable. Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn and Walkerdine (1998) understand subjectivity as referring to

…individuality and self-awareness – the condition of being a subject – but (we) understand in this usage that subjects are dynamic and multiple, always positioned in relation to particular discourses and produced by these – the condition of being subject (p. 3).

Subjectivity then is concerned with who and what we are. Sexuality can therefore be seen as a product of our subjectivity merging with the society (Weeks, 2003). With social constructionism promoting the discourse of anti-essentialism, subjectivity is not concerned with a rigid, static understanding of self, but rather focused on processes of fluidity, change, exploration and multiplicity; all dependent upon social setting, power relations and historical trends. This idea of subjectivity is important in that this study's theoretical insights are built upon my shared experiences and relationships with the research participants, by trying to understand stories from inside the experience, that my theory is an interpretation, which is also a product of my viewpoints (Charmaz, 2006).

1.3   Context

Operating parallel to subjectivity is the notion of context. Social context informs how subjectivity is understood, experienced, and expressed. Subjectivity then is the product of context formed by interactional processes between actors. Context is produced through structure and stability in the conception and understanding of the world, creating and maintaining solidarity among those who share it (Markus & Plaut, 2001). Even though we have a strong sense of an enclosed, private and self contained world inside our heads, this internal space could more accurately be described as a line drawn momentarily and arbitrarily around pieces of the public world (Wetherell & Maybin, as quoted in Lesch, 2000). Human sexuality, it is argued by this thesis, is influenced by social context. This means that people's sexuality must not be understood as being independent, separate and self-contained. It takes shape through practices and meanings that are organised according to historical time, culture, gender and class (Kelly & Kalichman, 1995). Applying this idea of context to my study is to acknowledge that the geographical, social and economic location of the participants, and how masculinity and femininity within this community is understood, shapes the sexuality constructions of the men who participated in this study.

1.4   Meaning

The concept of *construction* in social constructionism, equates to making meaning. Meaning is not an externalised reality; rather, it is a product of specific types of subjective interactions. Experiences are made meaningful through specific beliefs and socio-cultural practices. People create themselves as they make sense of their contextual world, which becomes loaded with meaning, a form of interpretation, which they attach to it (Wortham, 1996).

1.5   Social constructionism as critical psychology

Social construction constitutes a form of critical psychology, by adhering to the position of historical and cultural specificity, and in its challenge of taken-for-granted knowledge (Burr, 1998). A critical psychological orientation is characterised by studying the arrangements of society, paying careful attention to the deployment of power and how this translates into power inequalities (O'Sullivan, 2000). It is, as Sampson (2000, p. 2) notes, "cognisant of the necessity for 'psychology' to be a genuinely historical and socio-cultural discipline – that is, to see the socio-cultural and historical as intrinsic to the psychological." Critical psychology strives towards emancipating those who are marginalised by the economic, political, and cultural forces of society

and through such emancipation being able to create "new visions and alternative futures" (Gergen, 1999, p.64). As a way of thinking, it is aligned with the causes of people of colour, as well as gay people (Sampson, 2000). Gergen (1999) comments on how language can act as a tool to promote oppression and injustice. By exploring discourse, it should always be asked: "who gains, who is hurt, who is silenced, what traditions are sustained, and which are undermined?" (p.63)

Furthermore, critical psychology is also a way of attempting to understand how traditional psychological thinking and theoretical models can continue to displace the political, mask it, and reject it as a legitimate force of profound influence in how communities and societies construct their psychological world (O'Sullivan, 2000; Malone, 2000). Psychology must be seen as something that is "profoundly political, profoundly involved in the reproduction and extension of relations of power and control" (Hook, 2004, p.13). There must be an active engagement in establishing processes that participate in commenting on broader forms of power, which might also exist outside the spheres of psychology. Analysis should include socio-political factors and, by doing so, preventing psychological reductionism that favours purely psychological terms of reference that are concerned only with intra-psychic processes. Such processes, through their use, ignore the political, economic, racial and cultural nexus (Hook, 2004).

Parker (2002) in his analysis of critical psychology and social constructionism says:

> Social constructionism has been invaluable to the development of critical psychology, and it invites us to reflect on the way each and every psychological experience we have is constituted in forms of discourse and practice rather than given and to be taken for granted. It leads us to interpret the complexity of human life and ask how it has come to be the way it is, rather than adopting assumptions that are relayed through common sense and that then feel as if they must be true.

2.   A critical perspective on social constructionism

As Lesch (2000) mentions, it is difficult to generate a coherent critique of social constructionism, as different critics interpret social constructionism in different ways, creating a level of theoretical tension. The following section will look at the advantages as well as the disadvantages of using social constructionist meta-theory.

2.1   Disadvantages of social constructionism

Liebrucks (2001) point out that critics of social constructionism argue that the movement proposes an uncomfortable relativism, with almost everything being equally valid. Also being experienced is a scientific backlash that could undermine this form of post-modern thinking (Parker, 2002). Gergen (1985; 1997) and Liebrucks (2001) point out that this is not the case. Gergen (1985) does not object to the use of empiricist methodology, only that it should be seen as a product of specific historical processes shaped through discursive practices of language that merely state that certain concepts, when fitted together, as in Wittgenstein's game theory, indicate a certain socially shared meaning. This leads the empiricist to ask whether social constructionism can then try to make certain truth claims for itself? Gergen (1997) argues that the social constructionist would state that constructionism is itself a social construct. Making a commitment to a premise – be it empirical, rational or phenomenological – cannot in itself contribute to discovering the truth of a premise. For an empiricist to believe in truth, does not render the analytic proof true. Empirical truth is a claim, namely that, through the acceptance of a set of propositions that by virtue of their particular arrangement and juxtapositioning of words, create a certain meaning.

Burr (1998) is also concerned with the fact that constructionism seems to ignore the body as a source of discourse interpretation, placing too much emphasis on language alone. The corporeal body must be understood as a prime site of power relations, with the body being a powerful instrument of social control. With the capacity of the body to express social processes being silenced, personal experience becomes marginalised. Therefore Burr (1998) argues that some degree of personal 'voice' should be given back to the author, who must be given some notion of choice and agency.

Parker (2002) argues that the progressive potential of the post-modern movement has run its course, in that it runs the risk of now adopting either optimistic naïve relativism (relativism, a-moralism, collectivism), or that it could suffer from a pessimistic disappointed embrace of the different visions it incites (scientism, fundamentalism, individualism). There is constant argumentation between traditional and critical viewpoints, in that as soon as critical discourses have relativised psychology and rendered it unscientific, the position of critique is lambasted in a never ending sequence of deferred meanings. This process of constant ambiguity through discourse analysis triggers a process of scientism, which is viewed as an internal backlash against the post-modern relativists. It is argued that, for example, stories used to explain racism are now used to warrant it. The emergence of European Neo-Nazi movements were *once* explained as a product of increased

insecurity, a breakdown of paternal authority, and diminishing social mobility due to economic factors. *Now* these arguments are used to licence racist attitudes and attacks. Therefore a return to the safety of empirical research could be strengthened because of a perceived understanding that social constructionism and other forms of post-modern interpretation make no moral or ethical claims regarding the subject being studied, as it is all only historically positioned discourse.

Gergen (1997) though is quick to point out the fallacies embedded in such argumentation. First, social constructionism has engaged in the deconstruction of traditional views of science and the process of knowledge production. This has served to undermine scientific authority, and asked for a re-evaluation of moral and ethical concerns, which empiricism has so strongly discredited as a source of bias. Second, it is argued that the promotion of a single value, moral idea or social good, when interpreted to its end conclusion, would disregard alternatives, resulting in the destruction of social patterns supported by these alternatives. Therefore, who is to establish the hierarchy of moral codes? Who decides which moral departure point is the appropriate one? And what implications would this hold? Third, social constructionism does indeed call for a deep ethical commitment in human well-being, social harmony, reduction in conflict, and acceptance of people who differ. The very act of asking critical questions disrupts power relations that could be damaging. It gives space to people who are marginalised through political or social structures to let their voices be heard. It asks directly, who is silenced, and why are they silenced? Who controls the space of speech, and what informs how that space is controlled? Such questions engage directly with issues of morality, and in no way suggest a laissez-faire approach to question of ethical conduct.

2.2 Advantages of social constructionism

Social constructionism is playing an ever-increasing role in the study of sexuality (Longmore, 1998; Simon, 1996; Tiefer, 1995; Weeks, 2003; Weis, 1998). Tiefer (1995) argues that the medicalisation of sexuality is problematic in that it introduces practices of authority and control over processes that were not previously considered medical. For the medicalisation process to occur, a particular behaviour must be divided into 'good' ("healthy") or 'bad' ("sick"), and must be relatable to norms of biological functioning, which says that the body dictates action, experience and meaning. This decreases the diversity of sexuality, and the processes by which social context and sexuality intersect. Medicalisation relates directly with Foucault's (1991) concept of discipline and bodily control, and therefore achieves top-down communication, dictating to a large degree discourses of pathology or normality, as is captured by such systems as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders* (*DSM*). Social constructionism allows for the study of sexuality to depart from

the reductionism favoured by such positivist ventures, and asks for sexuality to be seen as diverse, multi-layered, complex and dynamic. Sexuality must be seen as (1) emerging within relationships and situations, which happens according to the expectations of the participants; (2) must be seen as a process not to be controlled, but to be constructed through a vast array of discourses; (3) is available to satisfy needs for affection, protection, and gender-affirmation; and (4) is something qualitatively different between children and adults (Tiefer, 1995).

3.   Implications of a social constructionist framework for this study

3.1   Human sexuality as social construction

Human sexuality studied at the constructionist level, obviously asks for interpretation to take place on the level of post-modernity (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998; Plummer, 2003; Simon, 1996; Weeks, 2003). The modernisation of sex called for the naturalisation of sex, with the sexual being subjected to the perspective of the natural sciences and the need for taxonomies, structures and mechanisms that could reflect this (Simon, 1996). This lead to practices of oppression (as in the case of homosexuality), where the "multiple meanings of all sexualities were dissolved into global identities that obscured more than they revealed, beyond the social responses they often legitimated" (p.21).

The emergence of social constructionist and post-modern thinking, which calls for the destabilisation of positivism due to the lack of consensus and failure of the modernist project, asks for sexuality to be radically re-interpreted. Sexuality cannot be understood within a framework of naturalism, which views the sexual as a-historical and reduces it merely to behaviour, orgasm and reproduction (Simon, 1996). Rather, the social construction of sexuality is seen as a product of particular socio-historical contexts (Foucault, 1997), with the related experiences being produced, transformed and modified within ever-changing sexual discourses.

Sexuality then is facilitated and organised around economic, religious, political, familial and social conditions (Weeks, 2003). Sexual desire should not be seen as desire that is purely free-floating, as it is always grounded within wider material and cultural forces, requiring sexuality never to be studied outside the realm of the social (Plummer, 2003). Sexuality should be understood as being about words, images, ritual and fantasy, as well as being about the body, with sexuality seen as a "source of pain as much as pleasure, anxiety as much as affirmation, identity crisis as much as stability of self" (Weeks, 1985, p.3). Erotic possibilities are never just spontaneous expression, but

manifested through puzzling transformations that are always organised through a highly complex arena of beliefs, concepts and social activities that are always being modified by an ever-changing history. "The origins of sexual desire can only be found in a social life and its variable presence in the lives of specific individuals is predominantly dependent upon their experiences in social life" (Simon, 1996, p.31). Social life acts as a conduit for multiple cultural configurations that have direct impact on ways of sexual expression that should not be seen as *a priori* but produced by an intricate web of institutional forces, beliefs, habits, practices and ideologies (Weeks, 2003).

3.2   Historical context of same-sex sexuality studies

Historical context has played a significant role in how concepts of sexuality have been applied over the years, influenced by their use in different countries, at different times, with different levels of adherence to religious principles (Davidson, 2001).

3.2.1   Moral and medical discourses

Historical reference material indicates a combination of medical, philosophical and moralistic influences (inspired by religious beliefs) relating to sex appearing in popular literature, starting in the mid-1600s. In 1870 the first modern conception of "the homosexual" appears in medical literature, its use being to diagnose contrary sexual instincts, and pathologising same-sex sexual expression (Davidson, 2001). Sexuality needed to be seen purely as a mechanism to promote childbearing. The emergence of the Victorian era set the stage for sexual repression and self-control, with the very nature of all forms of relationships falling under close scrutiny (Westheimer & Lopater, 2002). As the nineteenth century drew to a close, a puritanical legacy was left in its wake. This was a heavy heritage sexual expression received from Christianity – the sex sin (Foucault, 2001). This time also saw the medical establishment fully engaged with the idea of sexual 'perversions', and how to regulate and/or cure people who showed sexual behaviour that fell outside the strict, accepted range of normality (Davidson, 2001). It is during this time that the psychiatrist, von Kraft-Ebing published his *Psychopathia Sexualis* in 1886, with Havelock Ellis publishing his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* in 1900, both milestones in the scientific study of sexuality. A strong focus was placed on exploring manifestations of sexual pathology, notably that of homosexuality. Von Kraft-Ebing was also the first person to provide a clinical description of masochism, as well as describing a number of fetishes and inanimate objects used in masturbatory rituals and intercourse (Westheimer & Lopater, 2002). The nineteenth century came to a close with

people fearful of sexual excitement, and the medical establishment focused on finding a cure for 'lust' (Parker & Gagnon, as quoted in Lesch, 2000).

3.2.2   Psychoanalysis and homosexuality

Until quite recently, Dean and Lane (2001) remark, psychoanalysis and homosexuality has enjoyed a hostile relationship. The American Psychiatric Association (which had, and still has, strong links with psychoanalysis), removed homosexuality from the *DSM* in 1973, but the pathologising view remains to a considerable degree. American, post-Freudian psychoanalysts, starting in the mid-1940s, espoused a strong resentment towards homosexuality, resulting in this position infiltrating most areas of cultural life. Though as Robinson (2001) argues, this anti-homosexual post-Freudian position was taken due to misreading and manipulating Freud's opinion on the matter of same-sex desire, due to inspiration offered by conservative political dogma.

Freud argued that homosexuality was a part of everybody's sexual constitution, and that it therefore, in itself, should not be viewed as a problem. In his influential work, *Three Essays on Sexuality*, Freud remarks that *all* people are capable of making a homosexual object choice, and have already done so on an unconscious level. It is argued though in some quarters that homosexuality is a pathological manifestation, in that the sexual outcome achieved is contrary to what Freud said should be normal psychosexual development; achieving the heterosexual ideal upon resolving the oedipal conflict. Robinson (2001) however points out that Freud had an ambivalent relationship with the concept of normality. In his work, *Civilisation and its Discontents*, Freud protests against the libidinal sacrifice that people must make in order to achieve 'normal' adult-appropriate sexuality. This suggests that Freud should be read as a critic of normalisation, which queer theorists have indeed done. Freud (2004) says:

> As regards the sexually mature individual, the object choice of an object is restricted to the opposite sex, and most extra-genital satisfactions are forbidden as perversions. The requirement, demonstrated in these prohibitions, that there shall be a single kind of sexual life for everyone, disregards the dissimilarities, whether innate or acquired, in the sexual constitution of human beings; it cuts off a fair number of them from sexual enjoyment, and so becomes the source of serious injustice (p. 52).

3.2.3   Critical new discourses

Contemporary sexuality studies has its foundations in the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, shares some space with 'second wave' feminism of that time, and draws quite strongly on Marxist-inspired radicalism (a focus on power, economic and cultural structures) (Beasley. 2005).   The social movements (e.g. women's rights, gay rights), combined with the emergence of post-modern thought during this period, started to reject the assumptions about sexuality that were prevalent at the time: that sex was a powerful natural drive; that the individual shaped his or her sexuality, and was created without societal influence; there were natural differences between males and females; and that sex research should be used for educational purposes.

Models of homosexual assimilation (assimilation into full citizenship), started to be seen as being ineffective during the 1970s, even though it still takes on the public face of same-sex politics. Emerging was a call for gay liberation, which called for a sexual revolution and a rebellion against socially sanctioned attacks on the homosexual community. Rather, this liberation moved towards creating a space of sexual freedom for all of mankind. It was a fight to eradicate a romanticised, marital, male penetrative structure of desire, which was seen as a prescriptive and damaging norm of sexuality.

However, by the 1980s, the gay/lesbian coalition, which was pioneering this move toward a true polymorphous sexuality, was becoming unstable. With the separation of the gay/lesbian coalition, a move towards identity politics emerged, with each side declaring its own interests. The appearance however of gay identity politics (as a consequence of the ruptured coalition) was short-lived, as the apparent homogeneity of identity became threatened. This increasing fragmentation saw social constructionism take on a more prominent function in the sexuality studies frame.

Social constructionism directly challenged the notion of sexual identity, arguing that it is a product of certain historical processes, and nothing more. Social constructionism did not, however, try to completely disrupt the idea of sexual orientation identities but merely argued the rejection of essentialist tendencies (Beasley, 2005).

The 1990s saw the emergence of yet another paradigm within which sexuality studies can be understood, namely that of queer theory. This position became seen as a rallying cry for new and innovative ways of thinking and theorising. It called for a (re)conceptualisation of sexuality, which viewed sexual power to be embodied in different levels of social life, which becomes entrenched

through binary divides and boundaries. It asked for the problematisation of sexual and gender categories, and also of identities in general. The conceptual dualisms of male/female gender understandings are outmoded. Instead, focus should be on gender as performance, as parody and subversive acts. It rallied around the idea of anti-assimilationist politics and subverting mainstream gay politics. It subscribes to the notion of 'co-sexual' politics, within which men and women participate as equals (Stein & Plummer, 1994).

3.3   Sexuality and power

It should be acknowledged that power is a defining feature in all modes of interaction (Foucault, 1991). Foucault discusses in *Discipline and Punish* (1991) how the body is subjected to the different modes of discipline, a way of achieving constant subjugation and control. Imposed on the body, strict powers are used to manipulate and analyse. The medicalisation of sexuality created the categorisations of acceptable vs. non-acceptable sexual behaviour. Homosexual behaviour, seen as a 'desire from within the individual' was viewed with the utmost suspicion in that it did not lead to procreation, and was later infused with a range of psychoanalytic opinions of pathology. Such a discourse of medicalisation leads to an attempt of creating utmost control of the homosexual body. The promotion of subjugation and discipline attempts to remove the need for same-sex sexual contact, and to endorse 'normative' heterosexuality.

Even though same-sex sexual behaviour is no longer viewed as pathological, the powerful historical context which shaped dialogue around homosexual behaviour still perpetuates a need for regulation at both institutional levels that govern society, as well as at the level of general society (see Ellis & Kitzinger, 2002). With an understanding that such dialogues are multi-directional, institutional levels (for example: legislative government) and professional bodies (for example: The American Psychological Association) communicate acceptable standards in a top-down fashion, with society also dictating through different forms of public opinion and/or religious mores those values which they find important, and cherish.

Due to the still pervasive negative sentiment directed at any need for same-sex sexuality, men who engage in same-sex practices, or who identify as gay, are marginalised figures in a world that still attaches great importance to heterosexual coupling. Therefore, any study addressing same-sex activities and gay identities must be fully aware how power structures attempt to incapacitate such actors, and to remove them from public discourse. As power is always a relational dialogue (Foucault, 1997), it must be understood that marginalised actors re-deploy power as an opposing

force, in an attempt at claiming legitimate space within both public discourse and geographical space. Such re-deployment can be seen in: sexual practices announcing liberation, opposition to patriarchal family values, and a demonstration of same-sex sexualities through the codes of clothing, body, and language. There is often a claiming of geographical space, establishing political movements, and creating same-sex cultures through art, literature and cinema.

A social constructionist research project must always attempt to understand where in society the subject of study is located. How is it influenced by modes of discipline and control? What is the dialogue of power between the subject of study and wider social world, and how does this influence the narrative being told?

3.4   Social constructionism, language and sexuality

It has been discussed that language plays a central role in understanding 'individuality' and society as a social construct. With social constructionism placing language firmly at centre stage it allocates it a highly constructive role whereas traditional psychology viewed language merely as a tool with which people would communicate private ideas and states to others in a passive and unproblematic manner (Burr, 1998). Gergen (1999) states that we are all practitioners in the creation of cultural life, and that the meaning of our world is created through the way in which words are used. Such usage reflects Wittgenstein's 'game-theory of words', as explained in his *Philosophical Investigations* (quoted in Gergen, 1999). Even though words are social constructs, in that they carry no essentialist meaning, to understand them within a context they must conform to specific patterns of placement (within the game) to demonstrate specific meaning, with the use of a word outside the game (interaction) being played, carrying no sensible meaning. Furthermore, the use of language is linked with relations of power in that the concepts and constructions that are built through language bear the hallmark of the structural and power relations in our society (Burr, 1998).

Cameron and Kulick (2003) ask: what expectations are fostered through the study of language and sexuality? Such an investigation would include the usage of specialised languages (slang) used in different sexual subcultures, and/or whether gay people have an identifiable style of speaking. Within this domain of sexuality, language shapes the culturally recognisable and conventionalised ways of doing things, and also of defining and signifying what is being done when we perform sex and sexuality. "The language we have access to in a particular time and place for representing sex and sexuality exerts a significant influence on what we take to be possible, what we take to be 'normal' and what we take to be desirable" (p.12).

A distinction is also made between three kinds of sexual language. First, is the spoken vernacular that is used and accepted in certain circles of society, yet viewed as improper in other circles. Second, there is the terminology used by professional people, which can often be misleading to lay persons. Third, there are the "agreed-upon words and phrases that are often studiously vague and non-sexual in their primary senses, and are capable of being used with a minimum of embarrassment; yet are frequently misleading in their implications and liable to confuse though on sexual matters" (Bailey, quoted in Gecas & Libby, 1976, p. 35). Accordingly then, Gecas and Libby (1976) state that gender, social class, as well as other social and personal characteristics influence the language used to express sex and sexuality. This is due to people inhabiting different positions in the social structure, resulting in differences in exposure and experiences in sexual relations.

3.5   Defining sex, sexuality and same-sex sexuality

A literature overview demonstrates the difficulty in framing the construct of sex and sexuality. Commonly, the word, sex, is used to refer to a person's biological gender, as is defined by the person's genital structure. It is also used to explain genital contact between two (or more) people, in order to achieve orgasm (Westheimer, & Lopater, 2002). Masters, Johnson and Kolodny (as quoted in Lesch, 2000), draw a distinction between sex acts, which include masturbation, kissing and sexual intercourse; and sexual behaviours, which include sexual acts, but also such behavioural aspects like flirting, dressing sexily, reading pornography, and dating. Beasley (2005) understands sexuality to be a *critical* analysis of the existing organisation and social meaning of sexuality and sexual identities, rather than it being a mere descriptive explanation of performing sex. The focus is directed upon sexual object choice and desire, rather than upon gender. It is about appreciating the historical and social organisation of the erotic (Weeks, 2003). Sexuality is not a function or drive of energy that must be discharged.

> Instead we must learn to see that sexuality is something which society produces in complex ways. It is a result of diverse social practices that give meaning to human activities, of social definitions and self-definitions, of struggles between those who have power to define and regulate, and those who resist. Sexuality is not a given, it is a product of negotiation, struggle and human agency (Weeks, 2003, p. 19).

Sexuality then, is not a detached 'desire' driven by biological impulse, but rather, is always grounded in wider material and cultural forces. There cannot be an essential 'sexuality' that can be

understood as strictly biological, which is cut off from the social (Plummer, 2003). The social components that impact on the construction of sexuality are captured by the following broad areas: kinship and family systems, economic and social organisation, social regulation, political interventions, as well as the development of 'cultures of resistance' (Weeks, 2003).

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the following shall apply. *Sexual behaviour* will refer to specific sexual acts (such as oral-sex). *Sexual intercourse* will refer to penis-anus penetration. Lastly, the concept of *sexuality* should be understood as a subjective experience (embodied and psychological), which is associated with sexual arousal. This arousal though is always context-bound and historically informed, and reliant on processes of emotion, inter-personal dialogues, fantasy and behaviour that help shape the many meanings and experiences of sex.

Within public discourse, words such as gay, homosexual, bi-sexual sexual orientation and same-sex sexuality are often used as if they are assimilated within an essentialist understanding. Homosexuality is presented to the public as a biological variation to the normative position of heterosexuality. These words suggest stability, and that sexual expression between people is dependent upon the category they subscribe to. It says that a man who understands himself to be heterosexual cannot also enjoy sexual relations with other men. Likewise, a gay man cannot enjoy sexual relations with women. The perceived divide suggests a core identity, an understanding of self that is rooted firmly within the discourse of essentialism. Being gay requires an understanding at an early age that a developmental trajectory will be followed which is different from that of the majority, namely heterosexual people, and that romantic and sexual attraction will be expressed towards members of the same sex, with no sexual and romantic feelings towards members of the opposite sex. Transgression of the sexual orientation boundary position is viewed with scepticism. The person who demonstrates sexual fluidity between the different orientations is understood to be either confused in terms of their sexual identity role, or to be gravitating towards their actual, inherent sexual orientation, which has been suppressed and denied until such point as they start to experiment sexually.

It has been argued here that the wording used to define sexual orientation (itself, just a word), must be seen as a product of specific medical, psychological, and political outcomes. As Davidson (2001) says "we are prisoners of the historical space of nineteenth-century psychiatry" (p. 86). Therefore, the use of words such as gay or homosexual must be read, specifically in this context, as a product only of certain socio-cultural and historical processes, and of nothing more. Kitzinger (1995) states that the homosexual, as a type of being does not exist, but is rather a product of a type

of heterosexual masculinity that predicates a constricted form of gender and sexual normality. Personally, I prefer the term *same-sex sexuality*, as it moves beyond words such as gay, or homosexual. It is also far less cold, clinical and behavioural than the often used term MSM, which I do not like, as it removes a rich psychological component from the description. Same-sex sexuality however has the ability of creating a problematic interpretation: 'same sex' is not always viewed as same-sex, and it is not always sexual. Also, certain sexual acts are linked to specific types of relationships, for example when is anal penetration about sex or about power? Many same-sex genital activities in South America are strongly influenced by that continent's *machismo* culture. Is a man, who is penetrating another man anally, engaged in same-sex sexuality, or same-sex domination (Rupp, 2001)? Rupp (2001) asks these questions, not because she thinks the term is flawed, but because it allows us to raise important questions regarding global patterns of desire and love between genitally-similar bodies, and as "we pursue our specific research projects, we would do well to remember that we need to consider carefully the ways that love, desire, and relationships are structured by differences or similarities, and the meaning of sex acts in their historical contexts (pp. 301-302).

4.   Conclusion

This brief overview reveals the complexities and paradoxes embedded within sexuality research (complexities I do not even attempt to solve, just add to!), and how to imagine our psycho-sexual world. In terms of sex research, until quite recently sex was often understood in a narrow, cognitive-behaviourist sense. Much of the research was conducted by people not schooled in the discipline of psychology (such as Kinsey, Masters and Johnson). Psychologists are relative newcomers to the arena of sexuality studies. Also, the bulk of research was conducted focusing on middle-class white men, with slanted gay theories produced from gay clinical populations. Critical gay theories are asking for a process of emancipation to take place, due to the medical and psychological legacy of classification and marginalisation.

The following chapter reviews the psychological literature available on same-sex sexuality. The review will analyse the various strands of behavioural and critical work available, and what assumptions can be made from the work done.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDIES OF MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

This chapter will be providing an overview of current research trends within the field of same-sex sexuality studies.

1.   Focus on Human Immunodeficiency Virus and same-sex behaviour

The majority of research that attempts to better understand the sexual practices between MSM appears to enjoy a strong quantitative, logical-positivistic following, is closely associated with HIV prevention efforts, and is spearheaded by the United States and other developed nations (Taga, 2005). Significant resources are aimed at better understanding sexual behaviour and the antecedents that may lead to seroconversion and the psychological implications of a HIV-positive status (e.g. Adam *et al.*, 2000; Coxon & McManus, 2000; Crossley, 2004; Crawford *et al*., 2003; Davidovich, de Wit & Stroebe, 2004). The importance of studies attempting to understand the interlock between behaviour and HI virus exposure is emphasised by international findings that show an increase in MSM reporting high-risk sexual behaviour during the last few years (Elford & Hart, 2003; Calzavara *et al*., 2002; Dukers *et al*., 2002). Findings also show that the success of highly active anti-retroviral therapy (HAART) has altered perceptions of sexual risk, contributing to increases in high-risk sexual behaviour amongst MSM (Crawford *et al*., 2003).

Increased focus is being placed on understanding the sexual behaviour and HIV transmission patterns within specific public spaces used by MSM to seek out sexual partners. The literature indicates that men who identify as gay are still at elevated risk of becoming HIV-positive compared to their heterosexual counterparts in the developed world (Martin, Pryce & Leeper, 2005). Contributing to this elevated risk level is the knowledge that many gay men as well as MSM visit public sex environments (PSEs), such as public bathrooms or parks, or public sex venues (PSVs), such as bathhouses (Frankis & Flowers, 2005; Parsons & Halkitis, 2002; Somlai, Kalichman & Bagnall, 2001). These environments lend themselves towards cognitive processes that impede sexual risk reduction strategies (Bancroft *et al*., 2003; Martin, *et al.*, 2005). Considering the increases in HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections (Fox, *et al*., 2001), understanding should be generated about the sexual dynamics that are at play in public sex environments. It must be established how safe-sex messages can be

optimally conveyed within commercial sex environments where alcohol and other substance use occurs, and which impact on the sexual scripting taking place and so decrease the threshold for safe-sex activity (Parsons *et al*., 2004; Vicioso, Parsons, Nanin, Purcell & Woods, 2005).

Also, PSEs are sites often visited by MSM who do not identify as gay, and so feel immune to possible HIV infection. Suarez and Kauth (2001) highlight the importance of understanding that sexual identity does not predict sexual behaviour. At times men who identify themselves as gay might have female partners, and men who identify as heterosexual might have male partners. Such non-gay identified men who do have same-sex partners are not easily accessible in terms of promoting MSM (which too often ignores non-gay identified MSM) safe-sex practices and so carry increased risk of HIV transmission or infection due to cognitive disengagement with the risks of MSM sexual behaviour (Frankis & Flowers, 2005). The impact of alcohol and substance use on sexual decision-making outside of the PSE locale is also receiving attention (Deren, *et al*., 2001; Myers, *et al*., 2004).

The concept of sexual compulsivity (also called sexual addiction or compulsive sexual behaviour) is lately receiving some attention within the MSM research environment (Bancroft & Vukadinovic, 2004). It is incorporated mainly into HIV prevention efforts (Kalichman, Weinhardt, DiFonzo, Austin & Luke, 2002) and can be understood "as sexual behaviour that is in some way, out of control" (Bancroft, & Vukadinovic, 2004, p.225). Chaney and Dew (2003) state that:

> Symptoms of sexual addiction include, loss of control, negative consequences experienced as a result of sexual behaviour, increasing amounts of sexual activity needed to maintain sexual satisfaction, mood changes experienced around sexual activity, denial, and impaired daily functioning (p. 259).

Understanding the consequences of sexual compulsivity within the MSM field, and its contribution to HIV transmission is important, given that levels of risky sex remain high amongst MSM populations (Halkitis, Zade, Shrem & Marmor, 2004; Levina, Dantas, Fishbein, Haeften & Montano, 2001). Findings also show that a significant proportion of MSM who receive a HIV-positive diagnosis will continue to engage in unsafe sexual behaviour, thereby increasing risk of re-infection, and transmitting the virus to others (Reece, 2003).

A growing area in the field of MSM sexual compulsivity studies is that of sexual addiction and on-line, chat-room experiences (Dew & Chaney, 2005; Chaney & Dew, 2003; Kalichman, Cherry, Cain, Pope, Kalichman, 2005). Chaney and Chang (2005) comment that MSM are increasingly experimenting with the Internet as a space to express their sexuality. They remark that for many MSM the Internet has replaced traditional meeting grounds, such as gay bars. This is of little surprise, given the continuing and rapid evolution of the Internet. Cooper, Delmonico and Burg (2000) report on findings, which show that gay men were more likely to visit the Internet to pursue sexually related needs than their heterosexual counterparts. These authors argue that this is because gay men become a normalised population online, which is contrary to their offline marginalised status. Of note is the observation that MSM who pick up other men in chat rooms will be more likely to engage in high-risk sexual activity, such as unprotected anal intercourse, than non-chat room visitors (Benostch, as quoted in Chaney and Chang, 2005).

Chaney and Dew (2003) conducted a grounded theory investigation into the online sexual experiences of sexually compulsive MSM. Briefly, their study showed that the compulsive nature of being online resulted in participants not feeling able to stop being online and they would experience withdrawal and anxiety when offline. Also there was a strong sense of denial that this type of behaviour could have any significant effect on themselves or their significant others. Moreover, the participants would report transient increases in self-esteem, mood and self-worth. In addition, it was found that participants would often dissociate mentally and emotionally while engaged in online activities or when meeting up for 'real-life' sex. Finally, such activities were also driven by a need to socially connect and to experience a sense of belonging.

The studies related to sexual compulsivity tend to be empirical without engaging in debate regarding the consequences of applying a label such as 'compulsivity'. They ignore the social and political reasons and ramifications for such a concept, and firmly anchor the manifestation of such behaviour with the individual, rather than trying to understand environmental triggers for such behaviour. This is problematic considering that it locks MSM into a continuous cycle of being sexually pathologised.

Another current MSM and HIV concern requiring more attention is how HIV transmission is mediated by how people self-label (Hart, Wolitski, Purcell, Gomez & Halkitis, 2003). Those who prefer receptive (self-label as 'bottom') anal sex, for example, are more likely to be HIV-positive than those who penetrate (self-label as 'top') (Hart, *et al*., 2003), with unprotected receptive anal sex being far

more risky in terms of seroconversion than insertive unprotected anal sex (Suarez & Kauth, 2001). Research shows: men who prefer to penetrate in anal sex are less likely than their receptive partners to identify as gay, tend to experience higher levels of depression and internalised homophobia, and are more likely to have had sex with a woman in the three months preceding the same-sex sexual encounter. HIV-positive men, who prefer insertive anal sex, carry a greater risk for transmitting HIV than receptive HIV-positive men are (Hart, *et al*., 2003).

Research related to self-labelling and sexual behaviour must be read as culture-specific manifestations. Western sexual norms allow more fluidity for an individual to engage in *both* insertive and receptive anal sex, this being dependent upon sexual setting, mood, partner preference, and enactment of a mutually agreed upon sexual script. Other cultural groupings are more role-specific, i.e. one practices either *only* insertive or *only* receptive sex, but not both (Hart *et al*., 2003). Such sexual practices are visible in Latin American MSM activities, where a strong *machismo* culture has created more noticeable power distortions between MSM. Rigid sexual scripts are performed, where masculinity is highly valued and displayed. This is achieved by being the insertive partner only. The result is sex-role constancy, in which the practice of role reversal and the extension of the sexual repertoire are limited. Those men who engage in penetrative sex very often also do not identify with the label gay (e.g. Carrillo, 1999; Parker & Caceres, 1999). Here, the word holds a different meaning in the *machismo* culture where MSM sex is structured around a rigid dominant/submissive dichotomy, with a gay identity being seen as contradicting the position of male dominance (Nesvig, 2001; Suarez & Kauth, 2001).

Also beginning to be investigated is the risk of HIV exposure amongst men who are in same-sex relationships. HIV infection amongst partnered men has become a health concern that needs to be addressed (Davidovich, *et al*., 2004) because unprotected anal intercourse occurs frequently among partnered men. Researchers focus on factors such as self-efficacy, maintenance of *salutogenic* sexual behaviours, sexual history and level of emotional intimacy, and how it influences sexual health management within the relationship (Crawford *et al*., 2003; Halkitis, Wilton, Parsons & Hoff, 2004; Levina *et al*., 2001). Also receiving attention is how to improve the sexual agency of MSM who are not in a relationship, and how to enable them to manage the complexities of sexual expectations more effectively (Davidovich *et al*., 2004).

Parker, Khan and Aggleton (1998) identify the troubling nature of MSM research in developing countries. They show that because HIV in the developing world is seen as a 'heterosexual' infection, MSM are "conspicuously absent" (p. 330) from HIV infection concerns. Choi, McFarland and Kihara (2004) report that research attention in countries such as China, India, Vietnam and Indonesia is directed at HIV transmission through injection drug users and commercial sex workers, but that far less attention is given to MSM. In the "rare instances where studies have been done" (p. v) the data does tend to show high prevalence of HIV among MSM in Asia. It is also of concern that most countries in Asia and the Pacific do not include MSM in their ongoing HIV surveillance efforts (Choi et al., 2004). Taga (2005) also remarks that Asian masculinity research in all its varied forms is small in quantity and relatively unknown, compared to Western studies on the subject. Even in Japan, where masculinity studies is experiencing a surge, gay research is limited and gay men are still "derided in everyday life" (Taga, p. 136, 2005).

Nonetheless, Parker et al. (1998) appear to be more optimistic regarding the work done in Latin American countries regarding MSM behaviour and identities, stating that there is a "particularly rich and well-developed literature concerning varying forms of homosexual and bisexual behaviour" (p. 332). Such trends within Latin American same-sex research will be explored further in section 1.7.

2.   Limitations of positivist research
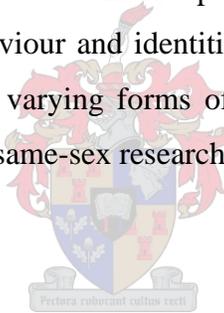
MSM quantitative research, which has strong support, has a number of limitations. These are: an underestimation in the difficulty that people experience in following risk-reduction strategies, too much emphasis placed on issues of compliance and relapse, using concepts that are built around the faulty notion that humans are to be viewed as rational sexual agents with limited attention being paid to the many psychological, responsive, cultural, affective-arousal, and situational influences that encompass and form the context for human sexual behaviour (Kelly & Kalichman, 1995). There is an over-reliance on looking at the individual as the unit of analysis, resulting in the political, social, and ideological contexts being ignored. Current research highlights the necessity for sexuality research to explore the sexualities of people who fall outside the dominant middle-class culture, for it is these population groups about whose sexuality and sexual culture we know the least (Adam *et al*., 2000: Jones & Christopher, 2003).

3.	Interpretative traditions in same-sex sexuality research

MSM sexuality research, although heavily influenced by quantitative methods of capturing information, also draws on qualitative, interpretive methods. This is a research tradition that is prominent in Europe as well as Latin America. Contemporary gay research in Britain and mainland Europe has its origins in social activism and emancipatory scholarship (Kitzinger & Coyle, 2002). These activist and emancipatory processes were pioneered by a relatively small band of psychologists (e.g. Clarke, Coyle, Flowers, Gough, Hart, Kitzinger, Markowe, Milton, Taylor, & Wilkinson) who all appear to have been operating within a school of critical reflection and social consciousness and striving towards emancipatory goals for gay lesbian and MSM people. According to Kitzinger and Coyle (2002) however, there is still a lack of mainstream exposure to "gay" issues in psychological training in Britain, due to the fact that the World Health Organisation removed homosexuality as a disorder from its diagnostic system, the *International Classification of Diseases* manual (the diagnostic system used in Britain and Europe for psychological disorder coding), only in 1993, compared to the American *DSM* removing homosexuality as a disorder in 1973. Also, the British Psychological Society officially launched its Lesbian and Gay Psychology Section only at the end of 1998, compared to the American Psychological Association creating their equivalent section, division 44, already in 1984 (Kitzinger & Coyle, 2002).

Despite Britain creating an official gay division only quite recently, British psychologists are engaging in and pioneering psychosocial research that is of relevance to their specific context. Current research foci include: understanding lesbian and gay identity construction, how to build emotionally healthy lesbian and gay relationships, tracking of lifespan development, the experience of difference for lesbian and gay people at various stages of life, and the process of being a lesbian or gay parent   In addition, emphasis is placed on understanding sexual orientations as social phenomena that are subject to political and social controls (Wilkinson, & Kitzinger, 1994) and the impact of narrative in the description of fluid sexual identities (Kitzinger, Coyle, Wilkinson & Milton, 1998). However, Kitzinger and Coyle (2002) comment that not enough work on the social construction of sexuality is being conducted in Europe, and that this field of investigation must be expanded.

In Latin America, the emergence of same-sex sexuality studies runs parallel to that of women's studies, with the 1970s seeing a discourse come into being that was structured around feminist militancy (which found expression through the process of "transforming personal troubles into public issues")

(Mills, quoted in Jackson, 1998), working-class women's movements, and an ideological conflict between the liberal democracy of countries such as the United States and Latin American political struggles (Caulfield, 2001). The homosexual liberation in Latin America was made possible largely due to the actions calling for social change made by leftwing student movements and the discourses around feminist militancy. Countries such as Brazil and Argentina were ruled by military dictatorship, which only increased the cohesion between social revolutionaries and gay liberation movements. The strict form of sexual repression called for by the state, heavily influenced by Catholic doctrine, became a form of political oppression, and was directly challenged by these diverse anti-establishment movements (Lopez-Vicuna, 2004; Nesvig, 2001). Gutmann and Vigoya (2005) remark that the sharp critique levelled at North American functionalism by the end of the 1980s created a new research space where attention was directed at questions of daily life, emotions and feelings, and gender relations.

Such narratives of gay political liberation are infused within the larger social context seen in Latin America. Social research actively engages with this social context. There is a strong focus on understanding family history and the patriarchal family and how these micro-social processes impact, and are affected by, larger societal processes. Also, social history and how it is influenced by European colonialist discourses is studied. Theories of post-modernism and modes of representation, as espoused by Foucault and his understandings of power and control, influence thoughts on how cultural history is to be interpreted. It is argued that such historical interpretations are important when studying the processes through which state institutions discharge social and political power, and how this contributes in co-constructing gender and sexuality (Caulfield, 2001). The manner in which the state discharges social power is directly linked to paradigms of socialism and Marxism, highly influential political positions in Latin American socio-historical processes.

Nesvig (2001) comments on how the historical trajectory of homosexuality in all its permutations in Latin America is an observation of the nature of sexual relations, issues relating to reproduction, marriage, and family; all of which are central mechanisms in the production of social values. The modes of expression in homosexual relations follows a model built upon an ideology structured around rigid assumptions of patriarchy and male domination. The historical position of a highly masculine culture that maintains sexual control over women has been co-opted into the discourses relating to same-sex expression and identities where relations of power are in general very unequal, assuming a dominant/submissive and rigid male/female dichotomous position. For example, those men who practice insertive sex are seen as having agency and power, because penetration is equated to

dominance and masculine honour. Receptive men are seen as passive, partaking in an act of male disenfranchisement and helplessness (Nesvig, 2001). This is in contrast to Western notions of MSM sex, which allows for a far more fluid expression and role-change in penetrative and receptive sexual behaviour.

Research, such as that by Klein (1999), reflects a social constructionist trend by conducting research on gay communities and the discourse of sexual politics in Brazil. It is done with the implicit understanding that sexuality and identity formation processes occur within a socio-political nexus and that, gay community narratives must be collected in order to understand tensions and power dynamics embedded within transformatory processes of Brazilian homosexualities. Terto (1999) reports on how HIV-positive homosexual men in Brazil generate conceptions of group cohesion, and how they share a common experience that distinguishes them from other people. Also of note is how social and political factors play out in establishing this group identity. Carrillo (1999) investigates how rapid social change, due to modernisation in Mexico, has altered perceptions of male homosexuality. The author comments on the tensions that exist in sexual identity formation processes in a society that is deeply divided along ideological and political persuasions, with traditional values of gender and sexuality in conflict with Western imports of post-modern identities and sexual fluidity. Finally, Caceres and Rosasco (1999) investigate how differing MSM groups in Lima, Peru engage with the complexities of sexual negotiation, sexual identity, emotional attachment and AIDS-related concerns. This is done in order to better understand sexual risk-taking, and to debate the processes required to develop community organisation, MSM group cohesion and citizenship awareness.

The international research overview depicts a situation where considerable effort is placed on MSM sexual behaviour research in developed countries where both a quantitative and qualitative epistemology is used. European research appears to place more emphasis on understanding the social complexities of MSM behaviour (Coyle and Wilkinson, 2002), along with Latin America (Lopez-Vicuna, 2004). A problematic picture though is sketched for the rest of the world, such as in the Asia-Pacific region.

4.   Same-sex sexual behaviour: African research

4.1   Critical review

A limited number of studies have been conducted on African same-sex interactions and cluster mainly around the field of historical and colonial studies (Aldrich, 2003), as well as some anthropological investigations. Parker, et al., (1998) suggest that the under-reporting of homosexual behaviour in Africa is due to it being highly stigmatised. Sub-Saharan Africa has seen the most extensive level of MSM denial, both by researchers and governments. The edited book by Murray and Roscoe (1998), *Boy-wives and Female-husbands: studies of African homosexualities,* is a notable, fairly recent example of MSM documentation. This book comments on how the vastness and size of the African continent helped shape multiplicity of cultures and social forms and has translated into a diversity of same-sex patterns. The authors provide perspectives on how regional location impacts on same-sex relationships and ways of sexual expression.

Not surprisingly then, very few articles on African MSM could be found. An electronic academic database search (Ebsco, Psychinfo, SA-e publications) produced only two articles probing contemporary same-sex issues in Africa (this does not suggest these are the *only* two articles – rather that my search parameters could only find these two). The search was not confined only to psychology research, but to any field (social science or other) that addresses MSM work. Key words were: gay, homosexual, MSM, HIV, sex, sexuality, men, masculinity. The first study found looked at the impact of stigma, violence and HIV vulnerability amongst MSM people in Dakar, Senegal (Niang *et al*., 2003). The second one investigated whether "gay" men and women in Botswana received adequate health-care (Ehlers, Zuyderduin & Oosthuizen, 2001).

Authors focussing on African sexualities emphasise the need to acknowledge the legacy of colonialism on issues of sexuality in Africa. Murray and Roscoe (1998), for example, write about how early European travellers to Africa entered a world of gender and sexual constructions vastly different from their own. Limited documentation indicates that Africa enjoyed a relatively high degree of sexual education as well as regulation during pre-colonial and early colonial times. There was recognition of the power as well as the centrality of sexuality in shaping the human experience. Colonialism, though, stigmatised African sexuality, with constructions of the super-potent African man and the wild women becoming the sexual 'Other' to European puritism. This discourse is still embedded today in

biomedical accounts, as well as daily political dialogues, such as when looking at the impact of Aids in Africa (Stillwagon, 2003). Colonial influences brought with it a Calvinist sexual morality, which easily translated into sexual guilt and viewing all sexual activity not meant for reproduction as sinful. This also resulted in driving same-sex relationships underground. Today sex research is often seen as some portentous form of population control, with its historical origins in the colonial pathologising of African sexualities. This has resulted in the expression of defensiveness among African governments, intellectuals and the populace when discussing sex research (Stillwagon, 2003).

The small number of sexuality studies that have been conducted in Africa falls into a series of methodological traps, also seen in much of the sex research conducted in Western countries. There tends to be a narrow focus on the individual and a strong adherence to rational decision-making models. Also, Weiss (1998) argues that most sexuality research has been conducted from an a-theoretical position, and that stronger theoretical positions on sexuality should be developed. There is also a tendency to disregard socio-political, historical and economic forces that influence the micro-social constructions of sexuality within different settings and communities. The application of Western models of behavioural analysis produces highly skewed and racially biased knowledge of African sexualities (Stillwagon, 2003). Schoepf (1995) argues that this type of approach follows a path of political convenience. African social science research appears firmly embedded within the overriding mandate of state policies and politics and has not yet achieved a distinct autonomous voice. It is a discipline that capitulates too often to Western methodologies (Zeleza, 2002).

5.   Same-sex sexual behaviour: South African research

5.1   Critical review

While international research on MSM matters and sexuality in general has grown with remarkable speed during the past fifteen years with many social scientists embracing the possibilities offered by the numerous post-modern expressions of sexuality within a globalised sexual culture (Altman, 2004; Plummer, 2003), South Africa lags far behind. A keyword search (gay, homosexual, sexual orientation, identity, men, sex, South Africa) of academic databases Ebsco, PsychInfo and BiblioLine (South African Studies) from 1970 until present reveals that the bulk of South African research is at thesis and dissertation level. A limited number of studies have been published in peer reviewed academic journals. Methodologically, the samples are small and follow a positivist approach. A model

of psychoanalytic pathology features quite prominently in the earlier research conducted with gay participants. More recent work though, is focused on understanding the identity development of gay men, and some attention is being directed at understanding gay from a post-modern orientation.

Potgieter (2003) is critical of the kind of gay research that is being conducted. She remarks that the severe lack of research is due to this country's specific socio-historical context. A conservative Christian paradigm has to a large degree dictated that gay men, lesbian women and all other people who enjoy same-sex practices should be understood as some type of deviant. Efforts were directed at 'curing' the white, gay South African man, so that he could re-enter the heteronormative and reproductive sex cycle, and take his just role in helping to build a nation that reflected the principles and aims of the apartheid state. By orchestrating a specific form of hegemonic and republican sexual citizenship that could serve to discipline and control the population, the state attempted to construct a type of South African male sexuality that was aggressive and domineering (Conway, 2004).

Potgieter (2005) further highlights that there is a near total lack of psychological research that directly addresses black South Africans who participate in same-sex practices, who might identify as gay or lesbian, or adhere to another model of same-sex sexuality (Donham, 2005). The works of Potgieter (2005), which focussed on black lesbians, and Mashaba (current), which focuses on a narrative of gay black men, are praiseworthy for their attention on black South Africans. Notably absent from available research is a focus on coloured men. Although important work has been done to study some of the experiences of coloured men (e.g. Salo, 2002; Laubscher, 2003), sexuality research on South African, rural, coloured men is distinctly absent (Lesch & Bremridge, 2006).

Researchers in other disciplines, however, have been more diligent. Important work has for example been done in the fields of sociology (e.g. Graziano, 2004) and anthropology (e.g. Reid, 2005). Although not focusing specifically on sexuality, some researchers have investigated black masculinities, which included same-sex practices (Luyt, 2003; Morrell, 1998). Most of these studies have been conducted with men in hard-labour environments such as the gold mines (Morrell, 1998; Niehaus, 2002). Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have also started to enter the field of MSM research and the promotion of psychological wellbeing amongst MSM. "Out" is one such NGO, and has conducted a pilot study around sexual practices of young MSM as it relates to HIV infection concerns.

6.   Directions for South African MSM research

HIV/AIDS could be the most powerful agent to instigate transformations in the social, political, economic and personal spheres in South Africa (Crewe, 2002).   This epidemic demands a reinterpretation of sexuality and generates an urgency to study sexuality in all of its complexity (Reid & Walker, 2005). South African research should engage with the many complex gender, racial, social and cultural issues related to this virus. Specifically, it should acknowledge the importance of *diverse* male sexualities in addressing HIV/AIDS. Studies must also capture the complex permutations of sexual behaviour and meaning. No longer can rational behaviour models be employed to try and understand sexual behaviour, for this is nothing more than a "pedestrian" way of research (Crewe, 2002, p. 450).

I believe that there is a need for sexuality research in South Africa to engage with same-sex sexualities from critical psychological and social constructionist perspectives. Studies of sexuality should be utilized as a deconstructive space to address issues of subjective, ever-changing identity and its constraints (Sedgwick, 1990). "Sexual orientations" should be understood as sexualities. It should be acknowledged that people's enactment of multiple sexual possibilities is restricted by socio-historical, religious and political mores which rely on arguments of essentialism to engineer social control. In this regard, researchers could draw from transformative research traditions as found in Latin America.

Research must contribute towards providing "alternative" sexualities with a political space. Same-sex sexualities, through currently accepted psychological doctrine, are often relegated to the private, personal sphere. Kitzinger (1987, 1995) calls for a radical departure from this oppressive nature embedded within the doctrine of liberalism, which only perpetuates the silence and invisibility of MSM and gay men. Rather, for freedom from oppression to occur, researchers must assist in politicising same-sex sexualities. This gives men who are oppressed by the morality of religious and state doctrine a voice to express a collective rebellion against a heterosexual patriarchy that has constructed homosexuality as an "alternative lifestyle" and by doing so, perpetuating the heterosexuality-as-normative position. For this political process to occur, it is important that focus not only be placed on "white, middle-class, middle-aged, able-bodied gays and lesbians [as this] is severely limited in scope and applicability and should never be presented as if it reflected the universal experience of lesbians and gays as a whole" (Kitzinger, 1995, pp.143-144.). Therefore sexuality research in South Africa

needs to focus on male sexualities in previously oppressed racial groups and challenge the normative position of white, middle-class heterosexuality.
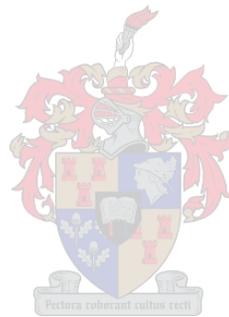
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures implemented to obtain and analyse the narratives.

1.   Study goal

The aim of this study was to explore constructions of sexuality of a group of coloured, gay men living in a semi-rural community in the Western Cape.

2.   A qualitative research design

Eisner (2003) asks: what can we learn from the perspective we take? Deciding on a perspective is dictated by the ontological and epistemological conviction of the researcher, which constructs the research question, and also the theoretical position taken to frame the research question. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) point out that the determinants of good social science research are not so much products of methods used, but epistemology and ontology, which are often handled better in qualitative research – the perspective taken by this study. The qualitative stance, they say, allows for ambiguity as regards interpretive possibilities and lets the researcher's construction of what is explored become more visible. These interpretative possibilities and ambiguities stem from the fact that qualitative research is concerned with generating descriptive, contextual or narrative information (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002) by attempting to "describe life-worlds 'from the inside out', from the point of view of the people who participate. By so doing it seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns, and structural features" (Flick, von Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004, p. 3).

Qualitative research designed to empower marginalised groups can also be seen as a process constituting four acts. Act one is the act of asking. It is the process of identifying and enlisting people who will be the focus of the qualitative investigation. It requires the researcher to be reflexive about the assumptions and goals in selecting the qualitative approach and how it can help 'giving voice' to marginalised groups. Act two is the act of witnessing. It is about listening and affirming the experiences of the research participants. By being a witness, the researcher must be open, totally

present, a passionate listener, who is affected and responsible for what is heard. Another focus of witnessing is an acceptance of what is heard as well as accountability for acting upon it. Act three is the act of interpreting. It calls for the transformation of 'participant stories' into 'research stories' based on the experiences and knowledge of the researcher. The researcher should recognise his or her interpretive authority when working with the qualitative material, and be reflexive about it. Act four is the act of knowing. It asks for the creation of publicly accessible depictions of insight and knowledge gained through the research. It must embody the understanding as well as the reflections that the researcher has about the social context and lives of the research participants (Stein, & Mankowski, 2004). The decision to pursue a qualitative methodology was guided mainly by my epistemological interest in exploring narratives and social realities, which lead to the formulation of a research question based on social constructionist principles.

3.   A social constructionist grounded theory study.

Charmaz' social constructionist grounded theory was used in this study. In its traditional form, grounded theory asks that the representations presented of the psycho-social world be read as 'true' reflections of that world. It asks that the processes engaged in to create such theoretical reflections are formed purely by a standardised procedure for 'reading' the data. The researcher should be able to observe data and build theory from a position of 'scientific objectivity'. Researchers like Charmaz (1995, 2006) and Henwood and Pidgeon (2003) though, call for a social constructionist informed grounded theory. This position argues that theory cannot simply emerge from, or reflect the data because interpretation and analysis is *always* conducted within some pre-existing conceptual framework, which is brought to the task by the researcher. Objectivity is not something to be found *beyond* the borders of language. Rather, the choice of language and the affective loading connected to words *directly* shapes our realities.

The constructionist perspective stipulates that the logic of interpretation requires that the researcher *must* remain aware that "knowing always involves seeing and hearing from within particular individual, institutional, and other socio-culturally embedded perspectives and locations (Henwood, & Pidgeon, 2003, p. 135). There must be an understanding that the *kind* of data produced is a product of researcher and participant interaction. This is due to the topics that the researcher wishes to pursue, and the goals that the participant has for taking part in the study. The researcher must have self-awareness about why and how the data is collected and interpreted (Charmaz, 1995). Rather than a search for causality and

linear reasoning, there is a focus on the indeterminacy of the social, to see truth as provisional and to understand social life as processual (Charmaz, 2006).

The analysis of narrative is done with the researcher bringing to the process disciplinary knowledge and theoretical sensitivities (Henwood, & Pidgeon, 2003). These theoretical sensitivities are to be viewed as tools that can lead to "vision-creating" or "vision-blinkering" (p. 135), depending on the complex interplay of individual, structural and cultural conditions. Theoretical sensitivity can direct the researcher towards certain areas, while ignoring others – processes vital in the construction of grounded theory. As Charmaz (1990) says "grounded theorists attempt to use their background assumptions, proclivities and interests to sensitise them to look for certain issues and processes in their data (p. 32). It is a process that places emphasis on trying to understand *how* and *why* meanings and actions are constructed the way they are in specific situations (Charmaz, 2006). I came to this study with a certain interpretation of what it meant to be coloured, as well as gay. My idea of gay was a construct born from my interaction with white, middle-class gay men, processes regarding my own sexuality, exposure to multiple psycho-theoretical arguments, as well as a psychoanalytically driven desire to understand the gay "Other". My understanding of working-class communities as 'problematic' spaces that impede 'proper' object relations development influenced me to view many processes as problematic.
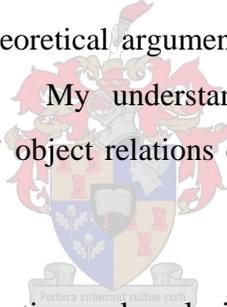
Grounded theory stipulates that data collection and analysis should occur concurrently. Rather than first collecting the data, and *then* beginning the process of interpretation, the grounded theorist does *both* at the same time. How the grounded theory progresses is dependent upon the themes and categorisations that are established during the initial interview cycle (Charmaz, 1990). Henwood and Pidgeon (2003) explain this process as the "*intertwining* [italics added by author] of research process and outcomes – where the *process* [italics added by author] involves the detailed, systematic but flexible interrogation of (a range of) initially unstructured data selected for its close relationship to the problem under investigation and the analytical *outcomes*" [italics added by author] (p. 136).

The early analytic work guides the researcher to collect more data around emerging themes and questions, so generating follow-up topics. The categories are derived directly from the data, and not from pre-conceived concepts. A process of constant comparison between the many narratives, and within individual narratives, is underway. Commonalities found within the narratives are then clustered together into codes and categories. The steps used to 'lift' such categories from the narrative

are then used to configure and regulate the activities of further coding, memo writing, and then the writing of the developing theory. At this stage, the researcher must adopt a position of maximum flexibility towards the data After completing this initial first wave of interviews, the researcher designs the parameters for 'theoretical sampling', a process designed for "collecting more data to clarify your ideas and to plan how to fit them together" (Charmaz, 1990, p. 45).

In conclusion, grounded theory is an inductive process of developing categories, which will eventually lead to the establishment of theory. It assumes an open, flexible approach at first, and as categories are formed, asks for more specific, targeted investigations around emerging themes. Glaser and Strauss (as quoted in Charmaz, 2003) viewed grounded theory as a process that can: "(1) explicate basic processes in the data; (2) analyse a substantive field or problem; (3) make sense of human behaviour; (4) provide flexible, yet durable analyses that other researchers can refine or update; and (5) have potential for greater generalisability than other qualitative works" (p. 109).
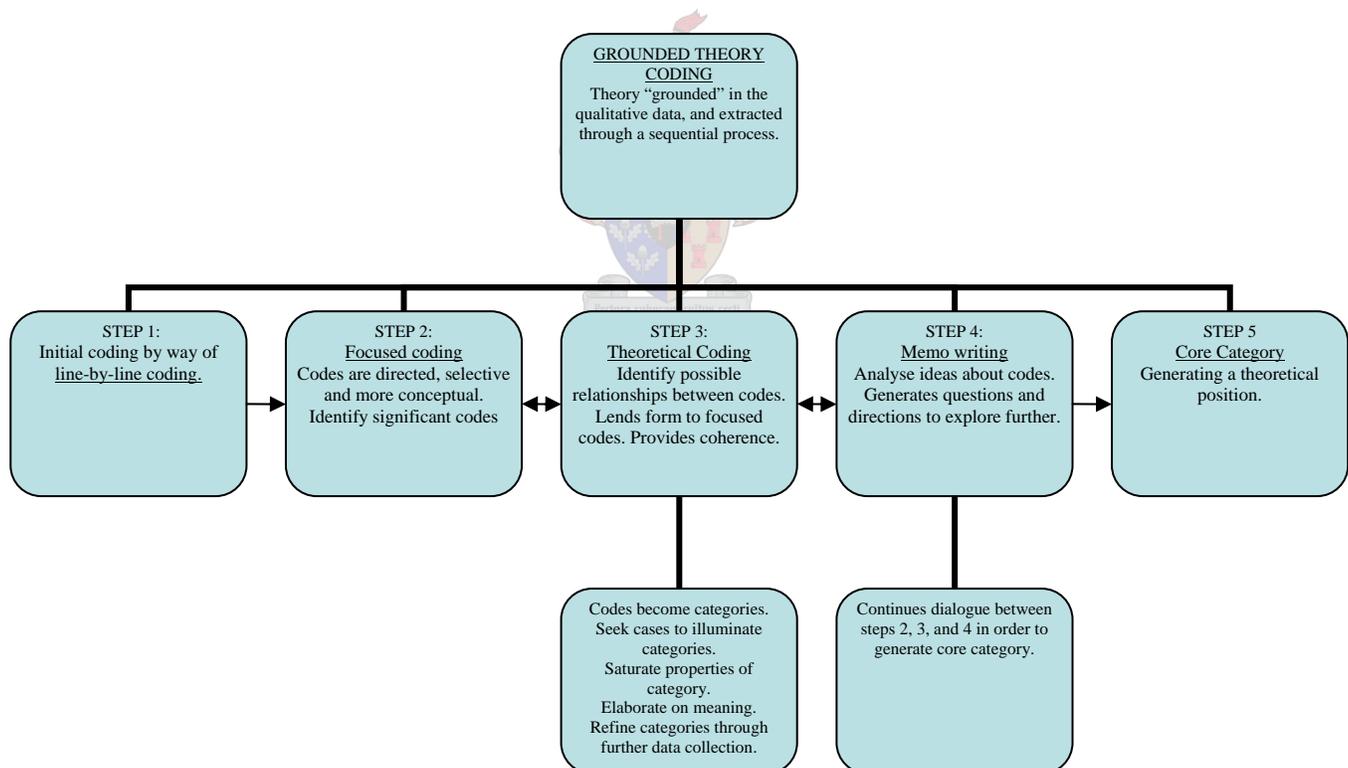
4.   Method

4.1   Research question

As has been stated above, grounded theorists start with a broad concept which they wish to investigate further. The research question for this study was: how do young, gay men, from a semi-rural community, and who are coloured, construct their sexuality. By starting with this broad research question, I was able to formulate, through the process of coding and categorisation, more detailed and focused questions.

4.2   Participants

Identifying participants for this study was a long and arduous task. Lee (1993) states that sampling becomes more difficult the more sensitive the topic is. Also, the less visible an activity is, the harder it is to sample (Lee, 1993). Three different methods were used for recruitment: snowball sampling, outcropping, and screening. The snowballing process started by me contacting the family support clinic in the Stellenbosch area, as well as the social worker at Stellenbosch Hospital. I explained the concept of the study, and asked if they could help me find suitable participants. The participants had to conform to the following. Either identify as gay, or engage in same-sex sexual activity, without identifying as gay. They had to live in a semi-rural area of the Western Cape. They had to be working-class men above the age of 18, and come from a working-class background. A social-worker at the family support clinic helped me in finding a suitable first candidate. I arranged to meet the candidate at his place of work. I explained the study to him and asked if he was willing to take part. The candidate was eager to participate. The first candidate helped me to start a snowballing (networking) process through which many other respondents were generated.

Unfortunately the process of snowball sampling can often be slow and uneven, as the researcher is reliant upon the speed at which participants can network and help with the recruitment of other participants, with issues of bias also a problem with networking (Lee, 1993). The departure point of this study was to understand constructions of sexuality amongst men who have sexual relations with other men. However, it is even more difficult to access such a population (as these men often subscribe to the label of heterosexuality, and deny their same-sex activities), than to purely study gay men, who are slightly more visible. My initial contact was a social-worker from the Stellenbosch family planning

clinic, and she referred me to a gay man, and hence, the networking that took place from this initial source, has generated gay men. I also contacted a church minister who lives in a semi-rural area of the Western Cape, and he also referred me to two gay brothers. Lee (1993) comments that networks tend to turn upon themselves, can be homogeneous in their attributes, and thus limit elements of diversity within a given population. To overcome such a danger, researchers must make a conscious effort to pace and monitor the referral chain that is being constructed. During the initial phase, networking should be used to gain access to the population. However, as time goes by, the researcher must implement more control over the referral chain, such as using a variety of starting points, to so ensure extensive coverage of the population being studied (Lee, 1993). A referral-chain was started, where each new participant would provide me with contact details of a potential candidate. I would phone the candidate, explain the study, and find out if they were willing to take part. On one occasion a candidate declined to participate, but did provide me with contact details of another potential participant, who did take part in the study.   Two respondents were also located after I contacted a minister from a protestant church serving a coloured farmworking community, who brought me into contact with two gay brothers, both of whom took part in the study. Besides the strategies listed here, I visited a gay club in Cape Town to see if I could recruit participants from semi-rural areas who visit the city (outcropping).

Outcropping involves the opportunistic exploitation of possible 'data points' which are readily available. This means finding a location/area where 'deviant' populations congregate and attempting a sampling process (Lee, 1993). This study of gay, coloured men from a rural area (in this case, towns in the Western Cape) revealed that many of them, finances allowing, would travel to the city of Cape Town to frequent gay clubs and pubs located in the gay district of De Waterkant. I decided to visit a pub that drew a large contingent of gay, coloured men. With safety being a primary concern, my supervisor and I, beforehand, carefully discussed the implications of such an exercise, paying careful attention to my personal safety, how I would interact with the people in the pub, that I would avoid alcohol use myself, be accompanied by a friend, and upon completing the sampling process, contact my supervisor per text message and inform her of my well-being. I asked a friend to accompany me who, per chance, knew the owner of the pub. I contacted the owner, explained who I was, and the purpose of my study, and asked him if I could attempt this sampling strategy. I was assured that this would not be a problem. My friend and I visited the pub on two consecutive nights, with me being welcomed both times with open arms by the owner – who introduced me to a patron, a young coloured man from a Western Cape town. With a Coke in hand, I explained the purpose of why I was there, and asked if he was interested in the study, or if he had friends who might be interested. He called some people close-

by to join our discussion. A few politely declined and walked away, while a few others gave me a mean stare before also moving off. The young man who the owner introduced me to also very quickly sexualised the space between him and myself. This made me uncomfortable and I politely left. On the second night I again went, to see if I could find some respondents, but with no luck.

Also, I walked the streets of two Western Cape towns and visited shops in those towns that experience dense traffic of coloured people to see if I could recruit anybody (screening). Screening involves the systematic process of soliciting a particular location so as to identify members of the required population. This method is labour intensive, can be used only over a limited geographical area, and has a poor 'strike rate' (Lee, 1993). As part of the sampling process for this study I engaged in screening. It required me to literally walk the streets. I moved through the main streets of two Western Cape towns. I operated on the assumption that if I approach coloured people working in shops, I could introduce myself, explain my research, and ask them if they would be able to help in locating suitable participants. The process resulted in a 'strike rate' of zero potential participants. I found the process tiring and frustrating with many people I approached looking at me with some scepticism and uncertainty.

Ultimately it was through snowballing that my participants were located, as the other two methods failed to produce participants. I was able to find 12 people willing to take part in the study and I conducted 14 interviews; 2 participants returned for follow-up (2nd wave) interviews. Please see table 1 for demographic details regarding the participants.

TABLE 1:

PARTICIPANT	AGE	WORK	MONTHLY INCOME	EDUCATION	HOUSING	WAVE
1	30	YES	R2500.00	GRADE 12	PARENTS	1st
2	28	P/TIME	R 800.00	TECHNIKON	RESIDENCE	1st and 2nd
3	20	P/TIME	R 800.00	COLLEGE	PARENTS	1st
4	20	YES	R2500.00	GRADE 12	PARENTS	1st
5	31	YES	R3000.00	GRADE 12	PARENTS	1st and 2nd
6	26	YES	R 950.00	GRADE 07	PARENTS	1st
7	24	NO	NONE	GRADE 12	PARENTS	2nd
8	22	NO	NONE	GRADE 12	PARENTS	2nd
9	25	YES	R2000.00	GRADE 12	PARENTS	2nd
10	22	NO	NONE	GRADE 12	PARENTS	2nd
11	21	NO	NONE	GRADE 12	PARENTS	2nd
12	24	YES	R1000.00	GRADE 12	PARENTS	2nd

Besides one participant who had not completed school, they all graduated from matric. Four participants were unemployed, while two were working part-time while busy with tertiary studies (technikon and college). The student attending college was living in residence, while all other participants were staying with their parents. Their average age was 24 (SD = 3.72), with a monthly average income of R1693.75 (SD = 904.92). All employed participants had low-wage, labour intensive jobs, working either on factory floors or as supermarket cashiers.

4.3   Asking sensitive questions: the interview

This study made use of unstructured or depth interviewing to elicit narratives. Lee (1993) points out that there is no reason to assume that qualitative interviews of a sensitive nature are any less uncomfortable for the interviewer, than it possibly could be for the interviewee. The highly personal nature of the topic can make the process a stressful experience for both parties involved. It is of importance that the researcher engages fully with any awkward issues, by being reflexive and, where need be, using colleagues as a soundboard to understand conflicting personal processes, should they occur. To prevent discomfort during the interview, the researcher must be in a position to manage the process effectively, despite the sensitive topic under investigation.

The in-depth interview must be seen as a directed conversation (Charmaz, 2006), where rich, complex, detailed descriptions must be collected so that grounded theory can be properly applied (Charmaz, 1990). A social constructionist position stipulates that the researcher is aware that 'true' accounts do not exist, but rather, to capture the subjective experiences and understandings of the participants, vis-à-vis the research question. The process for in-depth interviewing asks of the participants to present an interpretation of his experience, allowing them to describe as well as reflect upon that experience. To achieve this outcome the researcher must not only observe with sensitivity, but also gently encourage the participant to respond; whilst always maintaining respect for the participant (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) also says that it is of importance to understand that the comfort level of the participant be given priority over the kind of data being generated. The researcher should also demonstrate understanding as well as validation of the participant's experiences, and no interview should end abruptly, which can lead to confusion and unresolved issues not being explored.

Brannen (1988) suggests four sets of contingencies to be in place when investigating a sensitive topic. They are: (a) approaching the topic; (b) being able to deal with the contradictions, complexities and

emotions intrinsic to the interview situation; (c) the operation of power and control in the interview situation; and (d) the conditions under which the interviewing takes place.

4.3.1   Approaching the topic

How the topic is presented to the respondents may not always be an easy matter. Should the topic be described in detail at the outset of the study? And if it is, how is the research to be described? If the boundaries of the question are defined too narrowly it might preclude the raising of other topics, and so limit spontaneous responses. Also, respondents might experience some difficulty in understanding, or making sense of, topics that are unfamiliar to them. Furthermore, dramatic or stressful events are often recounted in an 'existential fog' (Van Maanen, quoted in Lee, 1993), which leads to problematic and vague narratives. Additionally, if the respondents lack vocabulary complexity, then this too can limit the scope and detail of recall.

Depth interviewing, as argued by Lee (1993), also poses more acute problems related to informed consent. This is relevant if the topic under investigation only gradually emerges during the interview process. Even if the sensitive nature of the topic is revealed upfront, participants might not fully appreciate the implications of such an interview. They are asked to reveal a great deal about themselves, perhaps even at some emotional cost. At the outset, participants do not know what they are going to reveal, in what ways, or even at what risk. It is vital then for the researcher to have the process contained within strict ethical parameters.

4.3.2   Contradiction, complexity and emotion

Due to depth interviewing moving beyond purely descriptive positions, as would be found in quantitative studies, there is most certainly a greater sensitivity to the meaning of context. How does the life-history and environmental circumstances influence the data? Such processes become loaded with ambiguities and contradictions. This demands a certain level of emotional investment and monitoring by the researcher. To contain possible emotional fallout from the participant, it is recommended that researchers allocate space at the end of an interview to run a debriefing session, to ascertain what impact the interview has had on the respondent, and to take appropriate action. When running a follow-up interview, discuss the previous interview and identify and engage with the responses in a professional manner; this puts the well-being of the participant first.

Further, it is important to tolerate and manage levels of distress during the course of interviewing a sensitive topic. Researchers who wish to provide aid to participants in distress must question their motives for doing so. Rather, a containing and safe space must be created, with the researcher "enduring and sharing the pain of the respondent" (Lee, 1993, p. 106).

My approach to these issues required of me to be containing and to mirror the emotional processes of the participants. I strived toward maintaining the highest level of respect and professionalism at all times, and was completely prepared to engage with *any* topic that was mentioned during the interview. During this time I maintained a very close working alliance with my supervisor, who is a trained clinical psychologist, as we explored the emotional content expressed in the participant's story, as well as actively exploring any counter-transference that I could be bringing to the interpretation of the narrative.

4.3.3   Power in the interview

The third condition identified by Brannen (1988), is that of how power relations manifest in the interview space. It is argued that it is difficult to identify succinctly what is meant by power relations. A simple description is that it is the status difference between the researcher and the participant. The researcher must ask: how does the status distance between the parties manifest, and how does this influence the kind of narrative being gathered? And, what methods can be built into the interview to minimise the effect of power relations? As researcher, I attempted at best to demonstrate a caring and sensitive approach to the stories being told to me. My framing of the interactional space was one that would hopefully create a safe space. This was done to try and minimise the power imbalances between myself and the respondent. Such power imbalances would be produced by my status as a white, middle-class advanced student of psychology, who feels comfortable within the institutionalised space of academia, and the respondent, who is from a working-class background, of another 'race' group, and who has had limited educational exposure.

4.3.4   Interview procedure

Grounded theory requires a range of interviews to be conducted in order to conceptualise the final category (Henwood, & Pidgeon, 2003). Therefore, procedure calls for a number of interviews to be done, and depending on participant accessibility, continuous sampling until theoretical saturation has

been reached. The volunteers for the first wave were all contacted by telephone. I explained to them the purpose of the study, and asked if they would be willing to participate. All potential candidates, bar one, agreed to be part of the study. Not all respondents reported for the interview on the arranged date. This required me to make further contact, and re-schedule. Reasons given by those respondents were that they either forgot, or had work commitments. No incentives were offered to them to participate.

All the interviews took place in an office building in the centre of a nearby town and were conducted in small interview rooms. The respondents who lived within easy travel distance made their own way to the interview. Those respondents living further away were transported to the interviews by a taxi service. This I arranged beforehand and I also paid for the taxi transfer, which also took them back home. Under some circumstances, I also drove respondents from their home to the interview venue, and back.

The purpose of the interviews, were explained to them. I assured them that all interviews would be handled with the strictest level of confidentiality, and that they could withdraw at any time, or refuse to answer any questions that might make them feel uncomfortable. An information and consent form was given to them (see Appendix A) (printed in English and Afrikaans), explaining the details of the study. All respondents had to read it carefully, and to make sure that they understood the contents. They could ask me any questions about the consent form to clarify any doubts or misunderstandings that they could have. No misgivings were expressed or questions raised though one candidate felt uncertain at first about the interview being recorded on audio-cassette.

As departure point, the first wave of interviews started by me asking the participants to provide me with a short biographical exploration of where they grew up, and to describe their home environment. After probing themes that generated during this initial part of the interview, I asked the participants to recount their first sexual experience. The narratives that were generated from this question led to an exploration of: sexual pleasure, types of sexual experiences, how is the concept of gay identity understood, and what needs are being met through sexual contact? These were only guiding questions used as points of departure.

The interview questions had to be kept as open-ended as possible. As a novice researcher, I often felt overwhelmed by the narratives, in that I had to keep close track of what was being said, and listen for key words or phrases that I could use to probe issues. The interviews were a tiring process at times,

which every so often left me feeling despondent about my skills as a qualitative researcher. My probing would centre around feelings and perceptions as I tried to remain clear of questions that could be read as closed, or in some other way limiting the response.

All interviews were recorded on audio-cassette. The interviews lasted between one hour and two hours. After the interview, I asked all respondents how they felt, and if they would like to discuss the process of being interviewed. All the respondents indicated that they felt at ease, and enjoyed being interviewed. Many of the participants told me that the interview has helped them to feel better about their sexuality, and that it was affirming for them to have somebody listen without passing any type of judgement.

4.4   Theoretical sampling

This process refers to the further collection of data after the initial set of interviews which allows for the elucidation of theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006). Sampling is done purely for the purpose of developing the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2003). Theoretical sampling relies on methods of comparison, where categories are also filled out, the discovery of variations within the categories, and to understand any gaps in knowledge within the categories. The method of comparison allows for the researcher to establish under what conditions categories are linked (Charmaz, 1990). Charmaz (1990) also suggests that theoretical sampling takes place as late as possible in the research cycle. This ensures that relevant issues can become clearly defined, and that analytic insights become trained, so as to ensure that significant data has emerged. Early theoretical sampling may bring about premature closure to the analysis. In this study, theoretical sampling was conducted *after* the analysis of the first wave interview transcripts, which involved eight participants. Theoretical sampling for this study involved four further participants, seen as second wave respondents.

4.5   Procedure for second wave interviews

As per grounded theory procedure, after analysing the first set of interviews, I started the process of preparing for theoretical sampling, which calls for a second wave of interviews with either existing respondents, or pulling in new respondents. My reasons for pulling in new respondents for theoretical sampling were to check the reliability and validity of the emergent codes by comparing the first and second wave interviews, to see if any variation showed up (I used the idea of variation to see if

theoretical categories vary, and so gain further knowledge about the experiences (Charmaz, 2006)), and to see if any negative cases (cases that go against my initial hypotheses) showed up. Second wave interviews were started when interviewing participant 7 through 12. I also conducted a follow-up interview with two participants from the first wave of interviews. This brought the total number of interviews to 14.

4.6   Transcription of interviews

Charmaz (1990) recommends that the researcher should conduct and transcribe the interviews. This is done to ensure full engagement with the data from the beginning. I conducted all the interviews (for first and second wave), and transcribed the first two interviews. From interview three and beyond, I had the interviews transcribed for me. This was the most sensible route, considering time constraints and other practical matters that prevented me from doing all the transcriptions myself. I conducted quality checks on the transcribed work by randomly selecting cassettes and then comparing the transcription with the audio version. I was satisfied with the quality of work done.

4.7   Coding and categorising the data

The initial phase of coding the data is crucial, as it leads directly to the formation of conceptual categories. The coding of all transcriptions started with line-by-line analysis, as recommended by Charmaz (1990, 2003). This mechanism requires that *each* line of text be analysed, and then to define the action or event taking place. This procedure helps the researcher to stay close to the data, without abstracting too early. At this stage an attempt must be made to see an action sequence in each segment of the data, rather than loading it with pre-existing categories. Focus must be placed on words that indicate action, rather than topics (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) says that at first this process might appear strange, but it prevents the researcher from making conceptual leaps, which leads to data contamination. The process of line-by-line coding will assist the researcher in not imputing his or her own motives, fears, or unresolved personal issues into the data. Line-by-line coding asks for the following questions to be asked when looking at the data:

> ➢ What is going on?
> ➢ What are people doing?
> ➢ What is the person saying?

➢ What do these actions and statements take for granted?

➢ How do structure and context serve to support, maintain, impede, or change these actions and statements (Charmaz, 1990)?

The social constructionist position, Charmaz (1990) argues, means that the codes being generated here should be seen as representing one possible view among many. The line-by-line coding helps the researcher to decide what kinds of data should be collected next, as well as what other leads must be pursued. It helps the researcher to remain open to the data and to see the nuances embedded in it (Charmaz, 2006). These coding requirements place focus on meaning and process. The following codes were focused on:

➢ What does it mean to be gay?

➢ How did it feel to be different from other boys?

➢ What does it mean to feel like a woman?

➢ Why so little emotional language when talking about sex?

➢ Why the strong focus on behaviour performance when talking about sex?

➢ Why so many sexual partners?

➢ What meaning does anal penetration hold?

➢ Why is it so important to have a boyfriend?
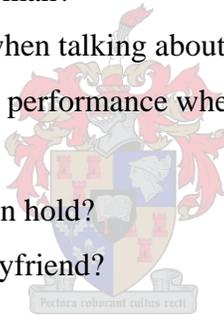
From these initial codes more direct (focused) codes could be produced to guide the subsequent interviews. The focused coding stipulates that earlier codes, which continue to reappear, must be used to sift through large amounts of data and extract narratives that can help to narrow the coding even further. Thus, focused coding is less open-ended and more directed than the line-by-line method. It is the application of limited line-by-line codes to large amounts of data. It is a focus on codes that make analytic sense, which helps to frame the data within categories. Focused coding identified the following categories:

➢ How is gender constructed, and what meaning does it hold?

➢ How is the body understood?

➢ What value is placed on sexual contact?

➢ What were the earliest associations of same-sex sexuality and of being gay?

➢ What needs are met through sexual contact?

➢ Is sex and sexuality linked to issues of exploitation and coercion?

These conceptual categories are more abstract than the previous coding, and help to inform the establishment of a theoretical framework. The raising of a code to a category helps to explain its properties, to specify the conditions under which it arises, is maintained and changed, to describe its consequences, and also to link categories with each other (Charmaz, 1990).

4.8   The core category

Grounded theory states that the explicated categories should be reconstructed in such as way as to demonstrate and emphasise *understanding* of the observed social processes (Charmaz, 2006). To capture this understanding, priority must be given to the showing of patterns and connections within the data. Furthermore, there must be engagement with the multiple realities, indeterminacy, provisional truth, and the processual nature of social life. The establishment of a constructionist grounded theory must ask *how* and *why* meanings and actions manifest in specific situations or communities (Charmaz, 2006). The above-mentioned factors must be engaged with by structuring the analysis around the identified main concern (Charmaz, 2006). I read the established categories to be constructed around the main concern of a feminised sexuality; as the participants would say: "to be like a woman."
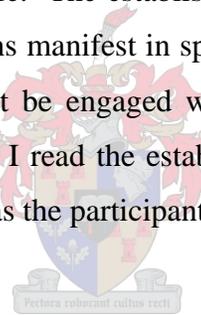
4.8.1   Memo writing

Memo writing helps the researcher to deconstruct processes, assumptions and actions identified in the codes. It helps the researcher to develop ideas in narrative form. It is an in-depth exploration of ideas that are created about the categories. It allows one to think about the data, to engage with it in an almost organic fashion. Memo writing asks for any type of thought or insight to be written down and explored. It is about working with assumptions that one has about the data, and integrating different categories into a more coherent gestalt. Memo writing should be a continuous process, until the study has been completed (Charmaz, 1990). For this study I used memo writing as a process of note-taking after the interviews. I wrote down my reflections on the participants, exploring what processes they activated in me, and tried to reflexively understand how they make sense of their experiences.

4.8.2   Writing up the analysis

Charmaz (1990) asks that the researcher provide enough verbatim material in the final document to demonstrate the connection between the data and the analysis. Nevertheless, focused attention should be placed on the concepts that the researcher identified in the data. A clear link must be made between the data and the theoretical conception. It is argued by Charmaz (1990) that many detailed interview quotes be used in the body of work. This is done "in order to keep the human story in the forefront of the reader's mind" (p. 47). Only once the conceptual analysis of the data has been completed, can the literature review process start. The literature review links the core category with relevant material. This is done in order to further ground the theory with other appropriate sources of verification.

5.   Critique of grounded theory

Bohm (2004) argues that grounded theory, despite its manualised approach, renders its learnability quite difficult, due to it requiring a certain interpretive art on the part of the researcher. It makes particular demands on the researcher with respect to their creativity. The call to distance oneself from theory and allowing the theory to develop from the narrative can cause insecurity among novice grounded theory practitioners.

A further point of criticism relates to theory construction. The end product of grounded analyses should be the establishment of theory. However, as Charmaz (1990) points out, most grounded theory work never transitions to the point of theory building. Researchers develop rich, conceptual categories and detailed analyses of lived experiences, without framing it within a substantive theory. "Thus, these grounded theorists have given greater emphasis to developing analytic categories that synthesise and explicate processes in the worlds they study rather than to constructing tightly framed theories that generate hypotheses and make explicit predictions" (p. 48). This study has attempted to generate theory, and move beyond only generating analytic concepts.

6.   Assessing qualitative research

One of the supposed strengths of quantitative research is its ability to provide normative standards against which work can be evaluated and scrutinised. It is argued that qualitative research lacks such techniques of verification (McGrath, & Johnson, 2003). There are, however, methods to evaluate the

credibility of qualitative research (Willig, 2001). Such methods must be able to legitimise the central quality of qualitative research, which is to ensure that the perspectives of the participants have been authentically represented in the process of research, and that the interpretations made from the information generated adheres to this authenticity. Also, that the findings must be coherent, so that they 'fit' the data and social context from which they were derived (Fossey, et al., 2002).

Fossey, et al. (2002), recommend that a number of questions be asked in the evaluation process of qualitative research. First is congruence. In terms of research design, does the chosen methodology actually 'fit' the research question, do the methods 'fit' with the chosen methodology, and is the study conducted in a way that is compatible with the chosen methodology? Second is the responsiveness to social context. Is the research design so structured to respond to real-life situations within the social settings in which it was conducted? And in terms of sampling, data gathering and analysis, did the researcher engage with the participants and become familiar with the study context? Third is appropriateness. Were the different sampling techniques used appropriate to identify participants and other sources, to so inform the research question being addressed? And were appropriate data collection methods used to inform the research question. Fourth is adequacy. In terms of sampling, have sufficient sources of information been sampled to so develop a rich account of the issue under investigation? Has a detailed description been provided of the people who participated, how they were sampled, and to what degree they were willing to participate? Does the researcher provide a full description of the data gathering and analysis process? Were the methods of gathering, recording and documentation sensitive to the participants' languages and views? Was there a generation of corroborating, revealing and rival accounts, to so explore multiple aspects of the research issue? And is the description of the methods used detailed enough for the reader to understand the context of what is being studied? The fifth aspect involves issues of transparency. With relation to data collection and analysis, is the process of data collection and analysis presented in a transparent fashion? How were rival and/or competing accounts in the analysis dealt with?

And finally, to what extent do the many ways of data gathering and analysis give privilege to the participants' knowledge? The execution of this study, I believe, satisfies the requirements stipulated above. The methodology of a qualitative, social constructionist study is appropriate to the research question. Data gathering and analysis was done in accordance with the procedures and spirit of grounded theory. Sampling was not done to achieve generalisability, but to elucidate categories.

Furthermore, as researcher, I have tried to move away from a superficial interpretation of the data, but to explore its complexity, generate theory, and move beyond conventional ways of seeing the world.

The above questions also inform issues of reliability, validity, representativeness and reflexivity, which are discussed below.

6.1   Reliability

The traditional meaning of reliability is that a good measuring instrument would produce the same results each time it is used, regardless of who does the measuring (Graziano, & Raulin, 2000). Those who work within a qualitative paradigm are less concerned with issues regarding reliability. This is due to the epistemology designed in a way to explore particular, possibly unique phenomenon or experiences. It does not aim to measure a specific attribute in large numbers. However, if qualitative methods are applied properly and rigorously, then it ought to generate reliable results. Meaning that if the same data, when collected and analysed by different researchers using the same method, should produce the same findings, irrespective of who carried out the research. It must be understood though that there is disagreement among qualitative researchers about the extent to which reliability ought to be of concern for qualitative research (Willig, 2001).
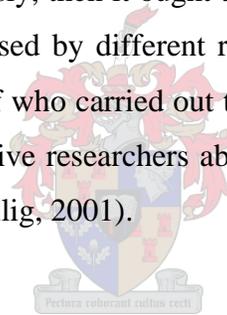
6.2   Validity

Validity in the traditional sense refers to how well a study or procedure does what it is supposed to do (Graziano, & Raulin, 2000). That is, how can we be sure that we are, in fact, researching what we think we are researching (Willig, 2001)? Due to the flexibility and open-endedness of qualitative research, there is the space for validity issues to be addressed. Whereas quantitative procedures will rely on pre-coded data collection methods, qualitative research allows participants to challenge certain assumptions that the researcher might have regarding concepts and categories. Qualitative methodologies engage with validity in a number of ways. First, the method of data collection aims to ensure that the respondents are free to challenge, and where appropriate, correct assumptions made by the researcher about the meanings being investigated. Qualitative researchers can also obtain feedback on the findings of the study from the participants. If the study and the findings make sense to the participants, it lends itself towards a certain level of validity. The process of researcher reflexivity

ensures that the research process is scrutinised throughout, and that the researcher repeatedly reviews his or her role in the research process (Willig, 2001).

6.3   Representativeness

The process of data collection must also deal with the issues of representativeness. An important criterion for quantitative research is to what extent can the findings generated be extrapolated from the sample to the population? To ensure that this quantitative process can take place, the researcher must ensure that the sample selected is representative of the population. Due to the time-consuming and labour intensive nature of qualitative work, researchers tend to work with relatively small numbers of participants. Therefore, qualitative research does not work with representative samples. Is this problematic (Willig, 2001)?

The answer to this question depends to some degree on the research question itself. If the research involves a case study, then representation is not of concern. If however, the study wishes to extrapolate beyond the sample, then representativeness can become an issue. The argument reads: even though a small scale qualitative sample cannot, strictly speaking, be used to generalise, if an experience is identified in the sample, then it is also subject to possible universalisation (Haug, quoted in Willig, 2001). That is, if a particular experience is found, it can be argued that it is available within a culture or society, as experiences are socially constituted (Willig, 2001).

7.   Ethics

Sensitive research can be understood as work that holds potential consequences or implications, either for the participants involved in the research, or for the class of individuals represented by the research (Sieber, & Stanley, 1988). Further, it can be understood as research that deals with life surrounded by taboo, is laden with emotion, and inspires feelings of awe or dread (Farberow, quoted in Lee, 1993). Less dramatic, it is "research which potentially poses a substantial threat to those who are or have been involved in it" (Lee, 1993, p. 4). Lee (1993) remarks that sensitive research, like sexual behaviour and sexuality, raises questions, for example, about the types of research that are permissible in society, the extent to which the research could encroach upon peoples' lives, problems with ensuring data quality, and the ability of the powerful to control the research process. It is also research that potentially can have an effect on the personal life of the researcher, as well as his or her personal security.

To ensure protection for my participants as well as for me, ethical guidelines stipulate that, where people or their behaviour is the focus of research "their right to decent treatment should be respected and in particular their right to privacy, their right to confidentiality of personal information, their right to informed consent and their right to the minimisation of risks to which people could be exposed in the research process" (University of Stellenbosch, 1998). Before this study was conducted, the proposal and ethical parameters were studied by two members of the department of psychology (as stipulated by intra-departmental regulations). The study and ethical guidelines were deemed appropriate, and consent was given for me to continue. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants, with the following being highlighted:

> ➢ The research goal;
> ➢ Explaining the different stages of the research process, and what their involvement would entail;
> ➢ That their confidentiality would be of utmost concern to me, and that it would be protected at all stages of the research process;
> ➢ That I as researcher can discontinue the involvement of a participant, if I felt his psychological well-being could be jeopardised;
> ➢ That a respondent has the right to discontinue an interview, without any penalty being imposed, or reason requested by me.
> ➢ That psychological support resources will be made available to any respondent, should the interview activate any underlying personal problems.
> ➢ That I will provide my credentials, as that of a Masters student in research psychology.

8.   Reflexivity

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000) point out that there is no "one-way street between the researcher and the object of study" (p. 39). There must be an acknowledgement that the researcher plays a central role in how the phenomenon under investigation is constructed. It dictates that all knowledge findings are constructions, and partly influenced by the lens of the researcher. Reflexivity demands that the researcher reveals who he is, and how personal interests and values shape the research process. It also asks for continuous evaluation of the research process.

I am a 31-year old, white, Afrikaans speaking man who is a full time Masters student in Psychology. I am the eldest brother of two, born into a conventional Afrikaans upper middle-class family. Both my brother and I received the highest level of care and affection from both parents. I was raised to understand that the man is the traditional head of the home. The relationship I observed between my parents was one of love, partnership and consultation. I consider both parents to be sexually liberal, and I was exposed at a pre-pubescent age to the language of sexuality. Reproduction and genitalia were openly discussed, and a culture of questioning was encouraged. Degrading opinions regarding either non-procreative sex, or non-heterosexual sex were never voiced, nor encouraged in any form.

My primary education was a product of an apartheid era, Afrikaner nationalist schooling system based on principles of submission to authority, Christian teachings, and the encouragement of a Protestant work ethic. At the time, the schooling system promoted an Afrikaner nationalism that was fiercely structured around institutionalised heterosexuality. A republican sexual citizenship was the ideal, through which the population could be disciplined and controlled to help built the apartheid state.

As I entered adolescence, I moved with my family to Europe, and entered an English medium schooling system. During this time I became rather reclusive and viewed sexuality as something quite dangerous, which should be oppressed and denied. Today, I consider myself a gay man, yet with occasional uncertainty about what that should actually mean. When I started my university education, I had just 'come out the closet' to my family and friends and, with very little actual sexual experience, being gay was still very much an academic journey more than anything else. I read a considerable amount of psychological literature on the topic, and every chance I got would write a 'gay-themed' academic essay. Even at this time, I still viewed sexuality as something dangerous and threatening to my rather insular existence. I avoided sexual contact and found gay culture to be overwhelming and frightening. It could be said that a rather strong sense of internalised homophobia structured my interaction with both gay and straight men; a need to avoid the former and not give the game away to the latter.

I think that my interest in sexuality studies is due to the fact that I tried to deny my own sexuality for so long and viewed it as something exotic, yet dangerous. It is only now, during my time as a Master's student in psychology, that I am beginning to integrate the many complex facets of how sexuality is socially constructed through many modes of regulation and resistance. In terms of regulation, my own sexuality is a product of often attempting to deny myself a sense of sexuality due to societal sanctions

against people who express desire for same-sex sexuality. The rigid standard of the heterosexual, masculine ideal profoundly influenced how I viewed myself, as an outsider, and somebody who would always be judged by what I did *not* accomplish as a man – to marry, and raise a family.

My attempts at maintaining an a-sexuality also meant that I did not engage with the political meaning of being gay and therefore I denied myself a voice of resistance against the assumption of heterosexuality as normative. By attempting to firstly hide and, secondly, to live ambivalently with my sexuality, I individualised my struggles, and so kept it private. Only now, by becoming more secure in my sexuality, am I prepared to let my voice be heard in declaring same-sex sexuality in all its many rich forms to be seen not as a deviation from the normative heterosexual position, but as something which suggests a sexual fluidity, and sexual consciousness. This asks of us to view our sexual desire, history and future as something which is informed by the complexity of social interaction. My gender is male. My political conviction is one that asks for a voice to be given to *all* people who are oppressed and silenced by the powerful control of social and state apparatus. Part of my identity is that of a gay man and having an awareness of the political and sexual implications that this holds. I am however also aware that I am far more than a gay man, I hold within me many potentialities for sexual expression and desire. I have a rich emotional life, empathy for those who are in pain around me, and a desire to share a fulfilling life with a man who can positively reciprocate on all the many levels of human interaction.
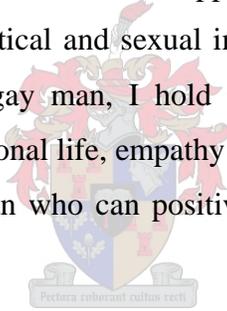
I tried my utmost to keep the interactional space between myself and the participant as relaxed and friendly as possible. My social background and own moral insights into this world called on me to be as emotionally present and containing as I can be, so that my participants would have no reason to feel unduly uncomfortable. At all times I tried to keep the questions as open-ended and non-threatening as possible. And hopefully, by declaring to the participants that I am also gay, give them the assurance that I, to some degree at least, understand the world that they come from.

8.1   Researcher experience

As qualitative research expands and becomes more prolific as a tool of investigation, heightened attention is not only directed at researcher reflexivity, but also at the experiences of the researcher during the research process (Moch & Gates, 2000). Qualitative work often asks of the researcher to reconsider issues of boundaries, and researcher-participant interaction, due to the intimate nature of

capturing personal narratives. To consider: is the participant a participant or friend? The process of obtaining information often results in the researcher getting to know the participant quite well. How does this affect processes and findings (Moch & Gates 2000)? After I completed an interview, the participant reflected that he now felt that I was his friend. This is because he had shared such a personal journey with me, and now felt that I could be called a friend. Some other participants would at the end of our conversation probe into my personal life and attempt to establish a connection of similarity with me. Such issues raise a second point; what is the right thing to do (Moch & Gates 2000)? This is not always clear, and asks the researcher to be reflexive and aware of processes at all times. Should I provide personal information, if it is asked of me?

Furthermore, what are the differences and similarities between the researcher and the participants (Simmons, Gates, & Thompson, 2000)? Lofland (quoted in Simmons, et al., 2000), says that there are six types of social phenomena to be considered by the qualitative researcher: acts, activities, meanings, participation, relationships, and settings. We perform roles given to us by society. Societal domains dictate to a large degree how we interact, with whom, and the meanings assigned to verbal as well as bodily communication (Simmons, et al., 2000). How am I like and unlike the participants I have chosen for this study? To start with, I, like the participants, am gay. This assisted in the creation of an interview environment that lent itself towards being comfortable with the topic. A comfort at least from my side initially, and being able to quickly facilitate a sense of comfort with the participants. I had a sensitivity regarding the questions asked, and a personal understanding vis-à-vis the complexities of forming a gay sexuality, given societal reprimands against it. With regards to differences, I differed immensely. I am a white, upper middle-class man, in the process of completing a post-graduate degree. I feel that my socio-economic and political standing has given me a sense of agency. The hardships that my participants face in terms of lack of finances, the lack of easy mobility, the struggle to access education, as well as maybe lacking an understanding of the importance of education, experiencing still the injustices of apartheid in a post-apartheid South Africa, and being denied many other values and taken-for-granted liberties associated with a liberalist ideology, are far removed from my daily existence.

CHAPTER 5

GROUNDED THEORY ANALYSIS

1.   Introduction

This chapter is concerned with describing and discussing the categories which I identified in my analysis. As Charmaz' (1990) advises, I will attempt to clarify the properties of the different categories, the conditions under which they arise, how they change, their consequences, and finally specify their relationships to other conceptual categories. In my discussion of the categories I will indicate how my findings link to relevant theory and literature.

Quotes from the interviews will be used to illustrate the building of categories. In the excerpts and quotes the interviewer and respondent will be identified through the letters *I* and *R*. The quotes have been translated from Afrikaans to English, with this process removing much of the meaning of the colloquial Afrikaans words.

The first category is concerned with how the participants understand the meaning of being gay. I argue that being gay is equated with a very specific type of feminine identity. The participants understand this as "being like a woman." The second category highlights a construction of sex as acts of submission. This second category suggests that the participants' understanding of being gay promotes a sexuality that draws on themes of submission. Third, is the idea that submission holds the potential for sexual coercion to infiltrate sexual spaces. I argue that specific gender norms promote coercive practices, and I also highlight the theoretical difficulties in framing how to understand the complex nature of sexual coercion. Fourth, I try to understand the meanings attached to different sexual behaviours. Fifth, I attempt to appreciate the need for intimacy that is expressed by my participants, and the struggles they face to achieve it. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to an exposition of the core category underpinned by these five categories.

1.1   Thinking like a woman, talking like a woman, walking like a woman: Gay means being like a woman.

This study uses as a departure point the concept of same-sex sexuality. I did not presuppose any specific type of identity or label by which my participants would come to understand themselves. Rather, I gave them a space to use words with which they felt comfortable. Without exception, all my participants referred to themselves as gay. I came to understand that their understanding of gay was far different from how I had come to understand the word. Whereas I inhabit a socio-political space which uses the word gay to make a political statement regarding my 'otherness' which includes, but is not limited to my sexual object-choice, my participants understood it as inhabiting a space that denotes a specific kind of femininity.

Participant 4:

P: *I started making food without anybody teaching me. I did this because I started developing the feelings that a woman would develop. I cleaned the house, I did the shopping, everything that a woman would do.*

Participant 4, in a follow-up interview, stated that

P: *What I feel is what a woman would feel. This does not make me a woman. I am gay, but I am born with more female hormones than male hormones. Therefore, I think like a woman, I talk like a woman; my attitude is that of a woman.*

Participant 7:

P: *When I was younger, well, I was crazy about women's clothing. I did not want to wear men's clothing. I was just crazy about women's clothing. I had this way of dressing…*
I: *How did you dress?*
P: *I was extremely fond of my mom's high heeled shoes. Also dresses, nice skirts, things like that.*

Participant 8:

P: *My style?   I exaggerate everything!   Normal gay men won't be like me.   I exaggerate everything, just like a woman would!*

Participant 8 continued by stating:

P: *I will dress like a woman. I am very focused on how I look – nails, hair, make-up, all of that.*

Participant 11:

I: *You said that within yourself you feel like a woman. Can you describe this? What about you makes you feel feminine?*

P: *It is in my thoughts.*

I: *Describe your thoughts to me.*

P: *It means that my thoughts are the thoughts of a woman. I sometimes wonder what it is like being a woman. What is it like to be a woman in public, and walk like they walk.*

I: *And what type of woman do you imagine yourself then to be?*

P: *A woman with long hair, so that I can play with it and tie it up.*

I: *And what about that image do you like?*

P: *To be a woman every day, and also to wear such a woman's clothing. I often wonder what it would be like being a woman. I would like to be either a secretary or a school teacher.*

The interview extracts provided above demonstrate a theme that occurs throughout all the interviews: the importance of presentation that emphasises perceived female attributes.   All the people I interviewed performed an exaggerated femininity as articulated by participant 8.   They dressed to reveal the body as a feminine sexualised object. Participant 8, in explaining how a woman should be, stated:

P: *A woman must always try and get a man's attention. She must always be sexy. As a woman, you must not abuse yourself, but you must always show cleavage and be sexy. Wear nice tight clothing and such things.*

This is a theme all the participants use to build a form of stylistic representation. Their clothing is used to show a symbolic cleavage; tight jeans that highlight their posterior and their genital areas. They all wore tight fitting T-shirts showing arms, upper body and neck. I came to realise through personal observation and in their descriptions of being feminine that it is important for them to have a very sleek body, with thin arms, a flat chest, and no stomach. Participant 1 presented for his interview wearing a black fish-net shirt, clearly showing both nipples pierced with nipple-rings. In conjunction with a personal appearance reflecting an adherence to values of femininity, they also all assumed a style of walk that one would associate with femininity, with particular emphasis on movement of the hips. In an interview, I asked participant 10 how he uses his body to show people that he is gay; to which he replied

P: *In my walk. Everyone has his own, unique walk.*

I: *And what do you want people to think when they see you walk? What message do you want to send to them?*

P: *They must see that I am gay. They don't have to come and ask me if I am gay, they can just see it.*
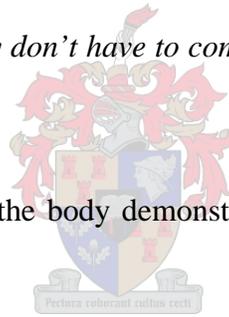
Participant 7 also reflected the idea that the body demonstrates a 'true' gay sexuality once you have accepted that you are gay.

P: *After a year at work I could openly be gay. I could walk the way I wanted to walk, stand the way I wanted to stand, sit the way I wanted to sit. I could accept myself in a real way.*

My perception was that their clothing, combined with an overtly stylised form of walk, gave them all unmissable campness. This notion of a feminised gay sexuality is also reflected in Latin American same-sex research. Carrillo (1999) comments that, in Mexico, a strong machismo culture results in the stark separation between the worlds of masculinity and femininity. This type of separation results in substantially different levels of power between men and women. Despite Mexico incorporating socio-cultural themes of modernity and post-modernity, these forms of cultural expression still clash with more traditional categories and thus create a type of cultural hybridity. Even with this hybridity, the bulk of Mexican society cannot imagine a gay man who is not typically effeminate. Also, this effeminate gay identity is viewed as particularly prominent within working-class communities where masculinity must be rejected in order to be accepted as a person who enjoys same-sex relations.

Similar findings are reported by Caceres and Rosasco (1999) in their study of MSM in Lima, Peru. Here it was also found that gay men who inhabit more traditional roles of femininity come from working-class communities with rigidly maintained roles of active and passive. In a study of sexual politics in Brazil, Klein (1999) also reports on the feminine and masculine binaries that exist and the complexity of the Brazilian gender and sexual order. In this order a continuum is established for men who cross-dress ('travestis'), effecting how they are positioned along 'male'/'female' gender lines. A 'travesti' is not a person who is in drag, or a *transformista* (men who perform as female impersonators). Rather, what distinguishes the travesti from the other two categories is that they typically maintain a continuous 'female' gender, while also physically transforming their bodies to mark themselves as the idealised vision of femininity, but stopping short of having a sex-change operation. Most travesti are linked to prostitution and so also inhabit a working-class space.

This feminine visibility contrasts with literature commenting on a hyper-masculinity found among working-class gay men in the Anglo-developed world. In Australia, for example, gay men who live in working-class areas tend to try to achieve a visual identity that is far removed from any form of stereotypical gay 'queerness'. What is important is to conform to an essentialised understanding of a rugged, tough masculinity (Connell, 1992). Clarkson (2006) conducted research on how a specific gay internet site was modelled on the idea of a working-class hyper-masculinity. One of the members in his study remarked that "I am very tired of pissy, bitchy queens who insist on being the visible face of our community" (p. 192). This working-class aesthetic could however be used as a mechanism by certain gay men to cope with their homosexuality by displaying negative attitudes towards femininity both feminine gay men and women. This coping mechanism constructed around the image of the working-class man is a product of a selective homophobia which is directed at other gay men who are not the working-class "every-day Joes" (Clarkson, 2006) – a concept imbued with sexualised meaning valorising what is perceived to be heteronormative masculinity.

It would seem that my working-class participants adhere strongly to a form of gay 'identity' found in the Latin American research. There must be a performance of femininity, and it seems that only then will you be accepted by the community-at-large as someone who desires people of the same sex. Any same-sex sexual behaviour that does not include the feminine/masculine role-play is viewed as circumspect.

The stories recounted by my participants regarding their methods to display a type of femininity highlights the role that the body plays within their shared discourses. Their bodies have to be lean, visible, arousing and suggestive. It must project the community's perceived attributes of female sexuality; the "cleavage" must be shown (participant 8). Throughout the research process, I was intrigued by this form of bodily representation, if not on occasion somewhat uncomfortable by this overt display of 'female' sexuality

Research that focuses on the body and concerns about the body among gay men has found that gay men are more at risk for body image dissatisfaction (Drummond, 2005; Levesque & Vichesky, 2006). Initially it was thought that gay men idealise and prefer an underweight body, and that they place more emphasis and are more driven in their pursuit of thinness than heterosexual men. More recently though, it has been suggested that while some gay men exhibit the need for skinniness, the majority of gay men express a strong desire for muscularity (Drummond, 2005; Levesque & Vichesky, 2006; Yelland & Tiggemann, 2003). The relationship between gay men and their bodies is a complex one, fuelled to a considerable extent by the HIV epidemic, varying degrees of internalised homophobia, and societal norms of sexual importance. The HIV epidemic has resulted in the gay community understanding muscularity as a mark of health, displaying this to other MSM, as well as a reactionary position against the 'gay plague' onslaught that was initially linked to the virus (Levesque & Vichesky, 2006).
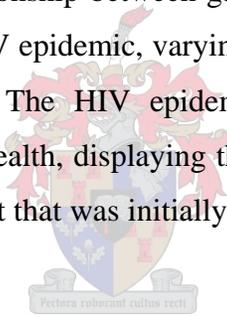
Whereas it would seem that the contemporary (read: white, urban, mobile) gay man is striving for a muscular physique (Drummond, 2005), the participants in this study are attempting not to achieve any defined muscularity, but certain cultural ideals of feminine thinness. A hyper-masculinity is viewed as the ideal object choice for sexual contact, but the participants themselves cannot also inhabit such a bodily space. Sex can be between two male bodies, but the one should be constructed as masculine and the other feminine.

What must also be considered is a specific, coloured historical trajectory, which places great emphasis on associating being gay with femininity. From a historical perspective, Cape Town has a particularly visible and socially developed gay culture. This is especially so in the coloured, working-class communities where energy was directed at creating specific aspects of gay life, namely cross-dressing and drag queens. This is a ritual and lifestyle that has its origins in areas such as District Six in the 1950s and 1960s (Chetty, 1994). It is thought that this emphasis on gay as cross-dressing and drag is

due to the fact that the traditional Coon Carnival was always led by a 'moffie'.[3] The act became seen as a process of mocking and subverting the normative views of gender and sexuality. This, it is thought, established the tradition where gay, working-class coloured men could not just be 'moffies', they also had to look the part. Female movie icons of the time became their inspiration, allowing these men to invest much in the quest for womanhood (Chetty, 1994).

Han (2006) engages with the matter of how gay Asian men are positioned within discourses around sexuality and gender. Here too there is a distinct and overt process of positioning the gay Asian man as the feminine "other". Within the context of same-sex sexuality, white, Western masculinity is the superior ideal, dominating and controlling the gay, feminine, Oriental body. Gay Asian men are seen through the prism of femininity, and they become the feminine counter-part to the masculine gay white male. Han (2006) also remarks that in the structure of intimate relationships, gay Asian men, when partnered with a white man, will act the role of the mysterious and submissive sexual "other." The gay Asian man then is also limited in his ability to question sexual actions of the dominant white partner, or to negotiate a sexual role for himself (Han, 2006).

In this section I have tried to demonstrate that the people I recruited for my study had a very specific idea of what it means for them to be gay. It places a strong emphasis on the performance of femininity, and a very stereotypical and constrained performance from my perspective. Emphasis is also placed on the body as a type of text, which they use to demonstrate certain sexual attributes. The following section will expand on this idea of the body as an important signifier for the gay men that took part in this study, and how this relates to their perception of themselves as sexual beings.

1.2 "*He* wanted to have sex." Sex as an act of submission.

Participant 1:

P: *He wanted to have sex, but first he had to make me on-heat. He then showed me how to relax. We first just smoked some cigarettes, and then he again started talking about how I must relax,*

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[3] A word coined in the coloured communities of the Western Cape. It carries meaning equivalent to that of 'queer' or 'faggot', and so has very scathing connotations. Still, especially among coloured gay men, the word has been re-appropriated, used with some pride, and as a term of self-identity (Chetty, 1994).

and then he started to penetrate me. I then said no he must wait I am a little bit scared. So he just again told me I must relax.

Participant 3:

P. *He was very good for me, he said, okay, this will happen... Like I said, he was older, so he knew what was going to happen.*

I: *What did he tell you was going to happen?*

P: *He told me it is going to hurt a little bit, it is going to be long, but it is also going to be very nice. One thing, he was very decent with me. He handled everything very well.*

Participant 8:

I: *Tell me about the first time you had sex.*

P: *Well, the first time, it was at a party, and, we, we had sex in the kitchen. He approached me (*high school partner*) and said we must have sex.*

I: *And tell me what happened?*

P: *Ag, not much happened. We kissed, and then in the 'heat of the moment' we did it.*

I: *What happened in the "heat of the moment?"*

P: *I don't really have words to describe it, it just happened. One thing just leads to another, and then it just happened. It is difficult to describe, but he penetrated me.*

In their construction of these first sexual interactions, participants present themselves as assuming a passive role. The partners appear to initiate, direct and determine the outcome of the sexual interaction. Sex is something that happens to the respondents, with the partners being the ones who are knowledgeable about sex.

The theme of sexual submission has been explored by Flowers, Smith, Sheeran, and Beail (1998) with young, gay, working-class men from a rural town in the United Kingdom. Their qualitative study found that young gay men, when entering the local gay community, are vulnerable due to their lack of knowledge concerning gay culture and gay sexual knowledge, with their first sexual experience being understood as overwhelming and they struggle to articulate a sense of agency. It appears that the same applies to my respondents. However, I believe that my respondents' construction of sex as submission

is also reinforced through their social process of feminisation and identification with a traditional female sexual role. Although these men understood that they were men, being a gay man (as discussed in the previous section) also means being like a woman. This creates an interesting tension, a duality, of being a man (by having a penis), yet having the thoughts of a woman, as they see it. The idea of womanhood becomes essentialised, which translates into relations of mastery and subordination for them. Being penetrated means there has to be an abdication of power (Silverman, 1992). All sexual encounters are products of power relations. Yet, the extracts above indicate a passivity that is so anchored in a discourse of traditional femininity that they, as sexual people, are usually in a position with little recourse but to be a sexual object to their partners, leaving themselves with little space for any type of negotiation.

Women who live within traditional gender-role settings are viewed as passive and dependent and see themselves as sexual objects (Marston, 2005; Maybach & Gold, 1994). The internalisation of feminine gender roles may lead women to deal ineffectively with men who are sexually coercive (Murnen, Perot, & Byrne, 1989). Sanchez, Kiefer and Ybarra (2006) believe that woman who associate sex with being submissive create a restricted negotiating space that allows limited autonomy in the sexual context and reduces sexual arousal. These researchers argue that gendered norms, widely transmitted through such mediums as television, cinema, magazines, and radio (to name a few ways), permeate nearly all sectors of society and promulgate female sexual submissiveness as a way to please male partners. In research exploring constructions of sexuality of female adolescents' from the same community as my respondents, Lesch (2000) concluded that these young women adhered to traditional sexual roles with men initiating and pursuing sexual encounters and women as sexual recipients. I suggest that there are similarities between how the gay men in my study and the young women in Lesch's study construct their sexuality.

Vance (1997) states that women most certainly experience powerful tension between sexual danger and sexual pleasure. For women, she argues, sexuality is concurrently a realm of restriction, repression and danger, while also being a site for exploration, pleasure and agency. A tension exists though; to speak only of pleasure and gratification is to mask patriarchal structures, yet to only speak of violence and domination ignores women's encounters with sexual agency and choice. Yet, by 'reading' the narratives as a display (to a greater or lesser degree) of sexual constriction and timidity are signs of "thoroughgoing damage" (p. 330). Concern must be expressed to not construct sexuality as being either wholly pleasurable or dangerous. Sexuality is far too complex for such a simplistic take.

Nevertheless, Vance (1997) argues that women are encouraged to subscribe to the idea that all male sexuality done to them is pleasurable and liberatory. Therefore it must be asked: do these participants, in their understanding of themselves as "being like women", place themselves in continuous danger through the internalisation of rigid gender roles? Vance alerts us to the fact that sexual desire should most certainly not be allowed to only be coded as male. I would encourage these participants to express sexual desire. However, it cannot be a process constructed around sexual "ignorance" (p. 331), as this increases the chances of sex being linked to oppression and humiliation.

Given that my participants gravitate sexually towards men who do not identify with being gay, I would like to argue that both gay men and heterosexual women from these coloured, working-class communities are exposed to similar forms of sexual socialisation – to be passive recipients of a powerful, male (uncontrolled?) sexuality. Such a construction restricts sexual agency and limits the capacity to negotiate sexual health practices.

1.3   Sexual submission and the potential for sexual coercion.

I often read my participant narratives as accounts of sexual coercion. I needed to reflect on this because their own words did not suggest that they themselves understood these processes as sexual coercion.
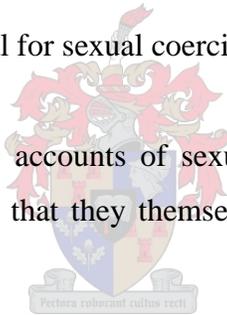
The respondents spoke about their interactions with straight men:

Participant 2:

P: All he wants to talk about is why I don't want to have sex with him. I am tired of it, tired of being seen as only something sexual.

This respondent's experience is that his sexual partner only sees him as a sexual object. He resents it, but he does not act on this awareness. He does not resist or question his partner.

Further on in the conversation:

P: The men I work with all just say, "ag, I want to sex you up." Then I just laugh with them.

I: Do they say this to you?

*P: Yes, they say this to me. They will say, "Just give me a hug" and then I do what they want me to. And then maybe they will kiss me in the neck. …Many of them tell me how they will give me such good sex, but they never talk about how they want to get to know me.*

In this excerpt it is clear that, although the respondent portrays an awareness of how straight men in his work context target him as a sexual object, he plays along with what could be perceived as sexual harassment by these men. He does not refuse, resist or object.

Participant 6:

I: How was it (anal sex) for you?

P: It was actually very painful. But it was not as painful as thinking afterwards, what have I done now?
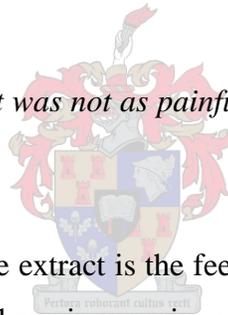
What is of key concern to me in the above extract is the feeling of regret that the participant expresses immediately after the sexual encounter. The pain experienced by being anally penetrated is, to him, not as bad as the pain he felt afterwards. He reprimands himself for being, as I see it, manipulated into a sexual exchange. The participant said that afterwards he stayed home, not wanting to engage with his social environment.

The participant continues, recounting a different sexual experience.

P: It is important to me that we talk after having sex, because then I know what he will be thinking of me. Then at least I know what he will be saying when he walks away, which means I then know how to prepare myself. This makes me feel so much better knowing what is going to happen, so I can then prepare myself.

Further on in the conversation:

P: *I want to be with somebody who will not talk badly about me. I don't just want to be used for sex. Tonight he has sex with you, and tomorrow he tells everybody else. He will tell them what happened and explain everything in detail. He will tell everybody, so that he can make me weak. Most men are like that. They all talk behind your back, so they cannot be trusted.*

This participant conveys an understanding of sex as something that is dangerous, and has the potential to hurt. That sex is exposing, vulnerable and instils the feeling that partners cannot be trusted to protect and honour one after the sex act.

Participant 7 had the following to say about a sexual experience.

P: *After much uncertainty, I had sex with him, but I did not want to…He asked me a lot, he insisted on it. After we had sex I was worried that he might think bad things about me. …A day later he spoke to me. He said that he is sorry he influenced me in a bad way, or that he maybe did something wrong to me. …Afterwards everything was fine.*

The construction here is that even if there is uncertainty about whether to have sex, it cannot be expressed. If the dominant partner wants to be sexual, then that is what is expected and acted upon. The coercion is structured around the exploitation of uncertainty. By being insistent, hesitation is taking advantage of, without the need for some form of physical aggression. The fact that the respondent expresses fears about what his partner might think about him again highlights the lack of psychological safety that many of the respondents experience on a regular basis. The partner's efforts at some form of reparation continues the cycle of control and submission, in that the participant accepts the display of regret, and then repositions himself in such a way that allows the relationship to continue in this taken-for-granted manner.

Participant 9:

I: *Do you feel pressured into then having sex?*
P: *Yes, I do sometimes feel pressured. Like this one guy … he just pushed it in.*

Participant 9 structures a similar narrative. It is one of feeling pressured into having sex, yet not knowing how to structure the interaction in a way where he feels in control and empowered to actively direct an outcome that is appropriate for him.

Participant 8:

P: *I don't really have words to describe it, it just happened. One thing just leads to another, and then it just happened. It is difficult to describe, but he penetrated me.*

I: *How did this make you feel?*

P: *To be honest with you, I cannot remember anything about it. My mind has cut it out, I remember nothing.*

I: *Why do you think your mind has cut it out?*

P: *I don't know.*

I: *So, if I had to ask you whether you enjoyed it or not, would you be able to answer?*

P: *I wouldn't be able to tell you.*

This participant talks about not being able to remember his debut penetrative sexual experience. I would think that such an event would be so exciting, that as many details as possible are remembered. Here though we see the exact opposite. It is claimed that nothing is remembered, and little effort is made at recall. Again, I view this as a sexual situation where the participant felt he had no control over what was happening to him. It is not remembered with fondness, or other signs of positive affection. This again suggests to me, coercive practices in the establishment of a sexual relationship.

I would like to draw some similarities that I see between this study and work done by Salo (2002) in the coloured, urban township of Manenberg. I have demonstrated that I read the narratives of sex with heterosexual men as very often being a process of coercion, manufactured by the heterosexual partner (but also perpetuated by the participant). I find it interesting that Salo reports how heterosexual men in her study produce their macho image by 'consuming' and using young women's sexuality. These men differentiate between loose women, and women who are sexually monogamous. Women who are seen as loose are used for sexual practice only, which allows the man to build a reputation of virility amongst his peers. I would argue that similar processes are at work in my participants. My gay participants, in assuming a certain feminine role, are also placing themselves within that discourse that

defines them as loose. They are sexual objects, not to be pursued as possible long-term, monogamous partners, but as objects for sexual practice and conquest.

The above examples lead me to think that the sexual scripts of submission that they believe they have to play, can lead to practices where they are coerced into having sex. The coercion is structured against the sexual norms of the community which, as Lesch (2000) remarks, leads to situations where the sexual experience is understood against what is known about gender relations at large, which are built around themes of submission and domination. Therefore I believe it is often difficult for the participants to be aware that they are in coercive situations, because as "women" they are already disempowered through their beliefs about gender. Consequently, men don't have to be coercive through the use of violence; they can rely on the default, feminine position, which is about being available to a man and that sex is associated with feminine submission (Sanchez, et al., 2006). It is within such a context that I see themes of coercive practices unfold.

My ideas about sexual coercion are guided by the works of Marston (2005) and Moore (2006) who suggest that the interconnection between passivity and submission lead to situations of sexuality that lend themselves to coercive practices, whether those in the sexual encounter are aware of it or not. Marston (2005) asks: how can narratives of vulnerability be read as coercion, when sexual pressure may not immediately be read as coercive, and when is it impossible to give an objective account of what coercion is, as it often does not include the taken-for-granted link it has with physical force, and active pressure from the partner to enter into a sexual experience? Answering this question must start by saying that men and women play their own parts in manipulating and reproducing notions of masculinity and femininity. Studies that ignore the role that both men and women play in reproducing discourses of masculinity result in creating only a partial understanding of the processes of coercion. This theme is addressed in my work in which I try to gain insight into how ideas of gender influence the subject's sexual positioning. Furthermore, sexual interactions must be understood in a number of ways, as no single understanding can represent the truth of the event. In terms of my research, this calls for an understanding that this piece of work is producing *a* type of knowledge, which is influenced by what both I and my respondents bring to the process. There must be an acknowledgement that meaning can shift over time, as well as existing in chorus in different forms among different people. This asks for an understanding that, as sexual meaning changes over time, ideas of what constitute coercion must also change.

Marston's (2005) work relating to sexual coercion in Mexico City amongst working-class heterosexual people helps to problematise the taken-for-granted idea of sexual coercion. She argues that varied constructs must be identified in order to establish how coercion should be evaluated. Within her research context, the following factors apply. Firstly is the idea of gender roles. The participants, all Mexican, have their lives constructed around very stereotypical discourses of gender. Men are strong, dominant, and *macho*. Women are modest and innocent. Being feminine is simply understood as being absent of masculine traits, of being passive. Men seek sex, and women must resist. Such findings resonate strongly with my work. This study of gay, coloured men from the Western Cape draws heavily on such themes as gender roles, the dominant positioning of 'heterosexual' men in the community, and the display of a gay identity which is often structured exclusively around the absence of masculine traits. Secondly, Marston (2005) raises the question of how location sets the parameters for coercive sex. I would argue that, for my participants, location does not play a significant role in how coercion is either enforced or suppressed. A central sexual motive for my participants is to be sexually available as 'women' for their partners, irrespective of location. Thirdly, the degree to which verbal pressure is used to pursue the possibility of sex must be considered. Traditionally it is argued that a high degree of verbal pressure must be present for coercion to be identified. Marston (2005) argues otherwise, saying that how gender relations are structured and enacted can establish the scene for coercive sex without verbal pressure. This is most certainly true of my work. Except for one instance where a respondent commented on the experience of verbal pressure to have sex, no other respondent reported it. Yet I experienced their narratives as expressions of coercion. This is despite the respondents recounting it as a typical sexual encounter. This reading I base on a fourth factor identified by Marston: the individual's evaluation of the sexual experience *after* it has happened. This forms an important part of the subsequent construction, which goes above and beyond the event itself. Very often my respondents, retrospectively, would articulate a loss or an expectation that is not met, or regret that sex took place.

This idea of evaluating the sexual experience after it has happened provides a base for assessing the subjective experience of being coerced. The above extracts all contain, to a greater or lesser degree, a sense of not being fully aware of what they could ask for or decline during the sex act. This lack of awareness that I read runs parallel to their sense of not really wanting to have been in the sexual exchange in the first place, but they did not know how to circumvent it, as the gender role that informs their behaviour do not allow for alternatives.

To understand the complex nature of coercion, gender ideals and social norms should inform a conceptualisation of coercion. Standard descriptions are too restrictive and behaviour-specific to help articulate this complex phenomenon (Marston, 2005). Marston says that given the difficulties in establishing a definition, research should rather begin to look at the characteristics of negative versus positive experiences of sexual events, and acknowledge the different ways of understanding meaning when trying to classify sexual experiences.

I am of the belief that gay men in this community are prime targets for being lured into coercive practices. As gay men, they express the desire to be sexual with straight men. Further, as gay men, they believe themselves to be like women, and expect to be treated as such sexually. This combination triggers an entire gambit of gender and sexual assumptions which further exposes these participants to coercion and sexual exploitation.

1.4   Sexual behaviour

1.4.1   Oral sex as distance and control

The participants indicated that they are usually the performers of oral sex and rarely the recipients. The act of oral sex is a contested experience for these participants. It generates mixed emotions, resulting in ambivalent feelings for them regarding this form of sexual expression. The act of oral sex, for them, is charged with issues that pertain to the control that other people might have over them, or that it is not viewed as sex at all. A couple of my respondents indicated that they did not enjoy oral sex, as this was a way of giving control to the other person and of submitting themselves to their sexual partner's demands.

Participant 6:

P: I hate it when a man asks me to perform oral sex on him...The moment that I say yes to it, he will do with me just what he wants. And I'm sorry, but I will not be used like that.

Participant 6 continues:

P: *A man who expects you to walk after him the next day, he is going to expect you to have oral sex with him.*

I: *How do you decide to perform oral sex?*

P: *I must know him.*

I: *And with anal sex?*

P: *If a guy had sex with another guy, that's fine, I'll have anal sex with him, but not oral sex.*

I: *Why then anal sex?*

P: *Because with oral sex, it will just be totally disgusting. You don't know where his dick has been.*

The participant concludes by saying that.

P: *This is why I will prevent oral sex, because it gives the man power, especially where we live.*

The participant is constructing a narrative that is built around a theme of exploitation. Oral sex can lead to hurt and humiliation. For this person it is a more intimate experience and can only be performed on somebody who is well known to the participant, so that a sense of safety can be obtained.

This is in contrast to other participants who claim to enjoy oral sex.

Participant 5:

P: *I like oral sex... You don't have to feel obligated.*

This participant also does not think of oral sex as sex;

P: *Oral sex is not sex to me.*

Participant 3 articulates a very similar position, when he says;

P: *I don't think oral sex is actually sex. Anal sex must happen for it to really be sex.*

To me these extracts capture the ambivalence that my participants experience regarding oral sex. On the one hand it allows you to distance yourself from your sexual partner and to remain autonomous as it is not seen as 'real' sex. It therefore does not require being loaded with a range of emotions and self-reflection. Alternately, it is experienced as a more personal and intimate act charged with fear of exploitation afterwards.

Interestingly the idea of oral sex as a control mechanism contrasts with the findings of sexuality surveys. These indicate that oral sex is usually seen as a form of behaviour that is far more impersonal, and therefore lacks in any type of serious affective response, whereas anal sex symbolises a more intimate connection (Middlethon, 2002). This general finding does not seem to easily fit the responses that I have received. Embedded in this is perhaps the following process: the very act of oral sex is seen as controlling and exploitative *because* of its impersonal nature. The respondents all profess a need to be close to someone, and to be taken care of. If penetrative sex is seen as the ultimate sexual expression of closeness, oral sex which is not "real sex", could be experienced as the partner not really wanting or loving them but just using them for sexual satisfaction – especially as the participants are always the performers of oral sex and not the recipients. This behaviour, of nearly always performing oral sex, I read as the participants having to engage with the phallic nature of masculinity. The partners, who do not perform oral sex on my participants, do so because they abdicate themselves from engaging sexually with a person who has a penis, and would rather think of the participant as feminine, as so to avoid any phallic threat.

1.4.2   "Anal sex must happen:" Anything else is not real sex

Participant 3:

P: *For me oral sex is not real sex, anal sex must happen.*

Participant 4:

P: *(Anal) sex really is not a big deal for me.*

Participant 8:

P: We would go to my place.

I: And what would happen?

P: Have sex. It's just sex.

Whereas oral sex is understood as a contested process by many of the participants, anal sex is seen as an unproblematic sexual activity. The participants' believe that anal sex is not only "real sex", but that it is an activity that should not generate any anxiety or fear.

Conceptions of anal penetration are produced by particular societies and communities in which people live, which also provides them with images and symbols of anal penetration (Middlethon, 2002). Work done by Middlethon with Norwegian gay men concerning the practice of anal sex found that, for the vast majority of them, anal sex was a contested subject with conflicting desires and emotions. The act of anal sex is seen as evidence about *who* you are as a gay man. Being penetrated, carried for these Norwegian gay men a range of doubts, anxieties and fears. Whereas masturbation or oral sex did not hold any power to signify the self, anal sex held such power in abundance. Middlethon found that her participants often expressed fears that by being penetrated, they might be regarded as a woman, and so lose dignity. The act of penetration could often be a painful process that took the participants years to fully enjoy. Middlethon concluded by commenting that the act of penetration is a "complex, symbolic interaction inviting interpretation" (p. 197). The respondents are actively engaged with processes that are structured around enhancing understandings of selfhood and inter-subjectivity in a continuous progression of insight and self-transformation, which is done "forcefully, often eloquently, testifying to the difficulties [and] possibilities of transformation" (p. 197).

The work by Middlethon stands in stark contrast to my own. The Norwegian study shows patterns of intense ambiguity regarding penetration. There are themes built around what it means to be penetrated, fears that it could show a desire for femininity, and assault on a sense of gay masculinity. Not so with my respondents. Even though I comment above that I sense that my participants feel they *must* engage in anal sex, they do not express the possibility of anal sex 'degrading' their sexuality. It has the opposite effect. Anal sex is an embrace of "the woman inside." It presents to them an act in which they are engaged that consolidates their feelings regarding what it means for them to be gay.

Participant 1 had the following to say about anal sex:

I: What does anal sex mean for you?

P: Many people ask me, so what is the kick about anal sex? Well, there is a kick!

I: And what is this kick for you?

P: It all depends on how you're getting fucked…It's not just about sticking it in, and then bam-bam, it's all over. If you do it with rhythm, then I scream with pleasure. Then I force my partner to go even deeper, so that he can touch that spot. Oh, I like that!

There is no expression of uncertainty, or conveying any sense that the position of the one being penetrated is problematic for him. Even if we look at this participant's recounting of the first time he had sex, there is no sense of emotional discomfort about the fact that he is penetrated. Anal sex is about pleasure, and about the role of a gay man. This idea of anal sex as about both partners' pleasure, and the role it holds in this gay community is also expressed by participant 4, when he says;

P: To me, sex only means anal sex. Oral sex is not sex. That is how things work. We are in this relationship, and sex means anal sex. I am in the position of the women, and [the partner] is in the position of the man. I will always be in the role of the woman. My partner will say that is fine. For anal sex, I am the receiver.

I: And how is anal sex for you?

P: Oh, I like it! It gives me a good feeling inside!

Research in Australia conducted by Connell and Kippax (1990) shows that people do not seek out casual partners for specific kinds of sex acts, which they feel they cannot explore with their regular partners, for example, sado-masochism. The repertoires, whatever they might be, stay consistent. Greater caution though is exercised in terms of protection with casual partners than with regular partners. Practices not involving anal intercourse behaviour are practices related to kissing, sensuous touching, masturbation and oral-genital sex. Also, the data does not show primacy of one erotic zone as a major principle differentiating sexual experiences and enjoyment. Interestingly, the Connell and Kippax study shows that anal penetrative sex occurs slightly less frequently among working-class men, than amongst middle-class respondents. Finally, it is shown by Connell and Kippax that men older than 40 are more likely to nominate anal intercourse without condoms as a preferred form of anal sex.

They would also be less likely to nominate kissing and sensuous touching as the most satisfying sexual experience.

Important to consider are gender roles and how they relate to sexual activity. Peplau et al., (2004) report that studies indicate that gender roles, in terms of masculine and feminine positioning during sex, hardly ever feature within a couple's sexual relationship. Work by Harry (quoted in Peplau et al., 2004) did not find any association between a man's role during anal sex and other measures of masculinity and femininity. Blumstein and Schwartz (quoted in Peplau, et al., 2004) reached the conclusion that anal sex was associated with masculinity by *both* partners, and that in couples where both partners are forceful and outgoing, as well as being aggressive, there is more anal sex.

The Connell and Kippax findings have a number of implications for this study. This includes their finding that anal intercourse is not seen as having to be the logical outcome of a sexual interaction. Indeed, their data shows a higher chance of non-penetrative practices to be enjoyed. This contrasts with my work, which shows that anal penetration is almost exclusively seen as the indicator of a successful sexual interaction. Even though my work shows non-penetrative sexual practices, it is not viewed as an end in itself, but rather a build-up to the inevitable practice of penetration. For *this* study, it appears as if the primary erotic zone must be anal-genital contact. It is currently slightly problematic to comment on condom use as my participants claim high compliance. My intuition though is that the adherence to condom use for this study is not as high as would seem from the interviews. Also, many of my respondents are sexually active with older men; this causes concern when related to the Connell and Kippax finding that shows that men over 40 show a decreased need to use condoms. Finally, the distinction made between the understanding of masculinity and its relation to anal sex by gay men in developed countries and how my participants from a developing country view it, must be understood within its socio-political context. Whereas Connell and Kippax draw information from an Australian sample, this study must also draw on work from other developing countries. Investigating and drawing on work from Latin American gay sexualities can help in this process.

The current sexual repertoire of my respondents show: high need for anal sex, the importance of placing anal-genital contact as the primary sexual outcome, not seeking out different sexual partners for different activities, that sex between younger gay men and older men (straight or gay) could be a site for increased sexual health risks, and that anal sex does not seem to be problematic, but a 'natural duty' that must be performed. This is in sharp contrast to the ambiguities of anal sex expressed by

participants in the Middlethon (2002) study. Also, oral sex in this study is problematised far more than in other research findings.

I would like to conclude this section by looking at a quote from participant 7's interview:

 P:	*Afterwards [anal sex], he kissed me and said thank you. So then I felt that he does love me.*

 I think that it captures many of the stereotypical beliefs held by this gay community regarding penetrative sex. First, it addresses the issue of gender-norms, in that as gay men (as men who are "like women") they must strive towards the ultimate form of sexual expression deemed so important in heterosexual relations – that of penetration. Whereas oral sex holds an inferior position that can lead to exploitation and humiliation, anal sex is sex in its 'pure' form. Here man and 'woman' meet each other as it was intended to be. The role-play reaches its logical and therefore safe conclusion. The man says "thank you" and kisses his gay partner. It is the fantasy of nurturing and caring that has come to life. The gay participant feels loved and so the sex act has conformed to the standards upheld for 'good' sex. Therefore, anal sex does not cause anguish in terms of what it says about these participants as gay men. It solidifies and grounds them in their identity as gay men.

In contrast to this, I also think that penetrative sex has been so normalised that the fantasy must also give way to the reality. Sex is a commodity that can buy emotional, social, as well as economic capital. This idea is explored below.

1.5	"*He* must make me feel like there is a connection between the two of us": The never-ending search for intimacy.

All the respondents spoke about wanting to be close with a partner or having an emotional connection to a partner.

Participant 2:

P:	*He must make me feel that there is a connection between the two of us. I can open up and I can go where I would not allow anyone else to go with me. He must be vulnerable as well. He must be able to tell me things. He must go with me, take me to places that he would not show*

anybody else. I want to know how he feels, what are his ambitions, what makes him happy? Also though on a spiritual level I want a meaningful relationship. Yes, these are the things that I am looking for.

All the participants articulated the strong need to be in a relationship, and the need for this relationship to be the form through which they find protection. So many themes were shared about parents not providing the support or affection that they wanted as children, or that they were and are still so often ridiculed by peers, community members, and colleagues. These themes are all about what they did not have, and what they so wanted to have: acceptance. I read this as them ultimately experiencing a lack of emotional attachment to others.

A theme that runs throughout their stories is the desire to be connected to somebody and to feel protected by this connection. I would suggest that this need finds its origin in the many destructive relationships that they experienced when younger and the lack of emotional nurturance that was often the norm in their home-of-origin.

Participant 2:

P: My dad was a drunk. He would either always hit us kids or my mom.

Participant 6:

P: My parents? I hate them, they are just things. I know one should care for your parents, but I don't. My dad is nothing, just a thing.

Participant 7:

P: Oh, the times when my mom was drunk. She would wake us up at night, drag us to the train station and take us to Cape Town. Then we would walk the entire night through the city with her and she would be drunk.

What is being constructed here are images of isolation, of not being recognised, of instability, and even of hate.

Many of the participants also expressed the importance of attaching financial security, and access to consumer goods as an important reason for entering into a relationship. These economic markers of success could very possibly provide the participants with a sense of individual choice, of freedom, of having obtained a way out of their otherwise poor existence.

When discussing a boyfriend, participant 6 says:

P: *He was so sexy, and he had some money! For our first date, he picked me up in a white sports car. He took me to this great restaurant, and I just wanted everybody to see me getting out of this car, and they had to know that I was with this man. It made me feel like a real woman. And after dinner, then, well, he wanted to kiss me. And I let him, because everything was just so perfect.*

I asked participant 7 how he met his boyfriend, and why did he want to pursue the possibility of a relationship?

P: *You know, he was very sexy! We worked in the same shop, but he was in a different section. So I just saw him walk around, we never spoke. But he had such a nice body, and such a great ass, he was just so sexy! I just thought he is going to be my boyfriend!*
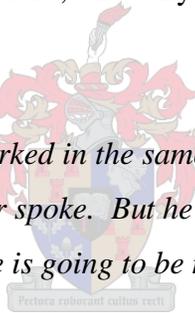
Participant 12 recounts how he was struggling to decide between two men. Both were seen by the community as heterosexual, with one of the partners in a relationship with a woman at the same time. Ultimately the participant made his choice about who he would rather be with. His reason:

P: *I mean he drove a better looking car. He had all the 'appliances', audio sounds, he had a DVD player and a video camera. All these things and I liked it.*

Participant 3 recalls how one of his relationships started.

P: *He came towards me. I'll never forget this; he came to me and asked me what my name was. So we introduced ourselves. My dad worked on the machine right next to mine. There was a café right outside the factory and he offered to buy me a cool-drink. So, as we're walking we're also talking. I wanted to know a lot about him because he was so sexy. I started to develop this*

feeling like I'm interested. I'll always ask a man if he has ever been sexually involved with a gay person. By asking, you become comfortable with the idea. He said no, he has not. So, then my second question will always be; so, are you interested in being sexual with a gay guy? It then just gives them something to think about. So, the next day we go to the shop again and then he started kissing me. So, I asked him how it feels, and he said he likes it. At that time he had a girlfriend and they are now married. I told him that he has a girlfriend. He said yes, but that he is attracted to me. He said that he does not understand it, but something about me just makes him want to be with me. I have everything a man has, but also something else. That is why he started kissing me. So, then we started to kiss again, because then we knew that a relationship had started.

This extract reveals nothing about the need for a secure and trusting environment. The first reason why the participant wanted to know more about his partner was because he was sexy. This conforms to models of attraction which all list physical attributes as an early trigger of interest (Brehm, 1992).

All the stories about finding a boyfriend are common in that he (the boyfriend) was sexy and this is what made him attractive. Further, it is about sexual interest being shown towards the participant. Also, the boyfriend should be heterosexual, and not another gay man. As participant 8 says:

P: *You cannot have another gay man as your boyfriend. That is then like two women being together and that just is not right.*

The processes informing the dynamics involved in partner selection will be looked at from the theoretical perspectives informing intimate relationship studies, which also include attachment theory. There is a scarcity of empirical work on this subject due to sexuality researchers largely ignoring the relationship context of gay men while paying close attention to the sexual activity of individuals (Peplau, et al.,, 2004).

An important construct in the formation of a relationship is the idea of attraction (Brehm, 1992). It can be understood as being built on the notions of direct rewards and rewards by association. Direct rewards refer to all the positive consequences that can be obtained from being with someone. Rewards by association link a potential partner with the emotional tone of the surrounding within which that partner was met (Brehm, 1992). What rewards are given to the respondents in my study by being in a

relationship? Are the awards direct, or through association? I believe them to be direct awards. Boyfriends are selected either by virtue of their sexual attraction, or what they can offer on a material level. Given the parameters within which masculine and feminine are deduced in these communities, it is important to pursue a relationship. Women are supposed to be partnered with somebody who can not only protect them, but also assume the role of being the one who controls the relationship dyad. Economic considerations must also be taken into account. Within working-class communities, what value is placed on a woman finding a partner? Is it desired that a partner is found who can provide financial benefits and security? I would suggest that it is indeed an important issue to consider. If these then are certain scripts that women internalise, to what extent do my participants then structure their own expectations around these messages? A successful woman is somebody who is partnered with a good provider. Would this type of status symbol also apply to gay men in my community?

Brehm (1992) defines an intimate relationship as having the following three characteristics: behavioural interdependence, need fulfilment, and emotional attachment. Also important to take into consideration when studying intimate relationships are: the need for intimacy, social integration, being nurtured, and to be nurturing, assistance, and the reassurance of one's own worth. Brehm (1992) says that "in close, rewarding, intimate relationships, partners meet each other's needs – disclosing feelings and sharing confidences, discussing practical concerns, helping each other, and providing reassurance" (p. 5). This I do not see happening in the relationships of my participants. They might gravitate towards a relationship in the unspoken hope that these needs are present and met, yet the reciprocity that is required, and the complexity of emotion that this reciprocity asks for, do not seem to be present in these respondents' relationships with sexual partners.

Attachment needs and its relation to sexuality further help in understanding, not only the engagement in sexual practices, but the respondents' need for a boyfriend. Ideally, adult attachment should be built around reciprocal care-giving, sexual attraction and sexual mating needs (Feeney & Noller, 1996). To achieve this optimal attachment relationship, a developmental view is needed. Childhood experiences of warm and responsive care-giving should promote secure attachment, together with the capacity to give and receive care and to strive for mutual intimacy and sexual pleasure. However, an alternative path linked to stressful child-rearing promotes insecure attachment to parents, and supports the development of a "precocious sexuality in adolescence" (p. 184), as well as the formation of unstable pair-bonds (Feeney, & Noller, 1996). I would argue that the interactions that my participants experienced during childhood, in often adverse home conditions, promoted forms of insecure

attachment. Insecure attachment is related to less-adaptive relationship outcomes (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004). Avoidant attachment is connected with fear of intimacy, while anxious-ambivalent attachment is associated with emotional instability, obsessive preoccupations and a strong desire for a union (Elizur & Mintzer, 2003). Gentzler and Kerns (2004) report on findings which indicate that people who are securely attached value emotional intimacy and maintain romantic relationships, with the understanding that sex should be restricted to committed romantic relationships. Also, attachment security is linked to having fewer partners. Secure individuals also report more positive emotions and less negative emotions about previous sexual encounters than do people who are insecurely attached. Avoidant attachment is associated with the limiting of intimacy in romantic encounters, avoiding sexual intercourse, or engaging frequently in casual sex.

Peplau, et al., (2004) remark on the difficulties that gay couples experience as their relationship is built and developed within a social climate of sexual prejudice. In terms of sexual exclusivity and relationship openness, it must be understood that exclusivity is by no means the norm among contemporary gay couples, which asks for careful consideration of attachment styles. It is important to differentiate between the agreements made about sexual openness and actual behaviour. Research findings regarding levels of sexual exclusivity conducted in the United States are not uniform, but one study's findings stand out. The American Couples Study (Peplau, et al., 2004) sample showed that 66% of male couples who had been in a relationship of two years or less had engaged in extra-dyadic sex; 94% of the couples who had been together for more than ten years reported extra-dyadic sex. Further findings from the American Couples Study report that even when gay men enter into a relationship with the intention of being monogamous, they will either change their intentions or fail to live up to this standard. It is important to consider in such research to what degree has exclusivity, or the acceptance of an extra-dyadic relationship, been discussed? Peplau et al., (2004) remark that little research has gone into answering this question, calling for future research to be conducted on this matter. Recently though, gay affirmative therapists view extra-dyadic relations, not in terms of instability, but as a process that occurs and that should be negotiated. According to Tessina (as quoted in Peplau et al., 2004), it is the violation of the rules of the contract that becomes problematic, and not the extra-dyadic sex itself.

Feeney and Noller (2004) argue that attachment, gay sexuality and relationships do not always follow a linear model, as espoused by heterosexual research. Attachment patterns with gay men may very well be influenced more strongly by peer relationships than by early parenting. Within a gay community,

peer relationships are *very* important, with secure attachment linked also to 'self-acceptance', support from friends, and having a multi-dimensional view of a gay identity.

Nardi (2001) says very often gay men must create their own spaces of belongingness which are constituted through friendship networks. These networks will become the primary site where daily lives are carried out as well as shaped. These friendship networks will often become reconceptualised as kinships of choice and become the source of developing communities of identity as well as equality. A network of gay friends, however, does not constitute a community, unless one also has a gay identity. This community establishes a collective history and memory that can then reproduce the complexities of its institutionalised parameters (Nardi, 2001).

One of the key binding factors which pull my respondents together is that they are all part of a cohesive friendship network. All the respondents either know directly, or indirectly, participant one, who helped me with initial recruiting. In many ways this participant is an archetypal gay figure: flamboyant, visibly camp, dressed in feminine clothing (which is also very revealing), a thin, feminine body, needing to be treated and understood like a woman. He also wants to be positioned sexually as he understands a woman would be – to be dominated. This network's social interactions are structured around going out to bars in their neighbourhoods where they often pick up heterosexual men. In groups they would also often travel by train to Cape Town and visit the city's gay clubs. An important social event in these communities is the often held drag-queen shows, in which a number of the participants take part as contestants.

The friendships shared by this group of participants are about conforming, connecting and living out a specific gay identity. Furthermore, it is about a "creative and spiritual transcendence" (Suttles, as quoted in Nardi, 2001, p. 300). Nardi (2001) argues along post-modern lines that a community of friendship is a way to challenge and question heteronormativity, the nuclear family, religious institutions and the legal system. My participants do not position themselves in these fluid, political terms. Their cohesive identity is around being like a 'traditional' woman, the pursuit of sexual experiences, and the protection of each other in an often discriminatory environment.

2.   Exploring the core category: "Being like a woman."

This section will be an exploration of the core category, by raising and discussing theoretical ideas that could aid further understanding of the core category.

Engaging with the core category is to engage with a process of theorising. This final part of the grounded theory process asks for a commitment towards an imaginative understanding and a sensitivity and appreciation for multiple realities. Whereas previous sections addressed the coding process on a more descriptive level, the core category asks for articulation in abstract terms, involving theoretical claims, the acknowledgement of subjectivity, and an imaginative interpretation. It is the process of theory building in many ways in order to resolve the main concern. Theorising means: to stop, to ponder, to think anew, and to engage in the analysis from multiple viewpoints. It is a process that should ideally create a sense of seeing new possibilities, of establishing connections, and of asking questions (Charmaz, 2006).

As explained earlier, all my participants form their sense of identity around a very specific notion of how they understand their same-sex attraction. They all acknowledge that they are gay men. It is, however, not an identity that is partially constructed around a sense of political distinctiveness and viewed as a challenge to the structural benefits of heterosexuality. Rather, they see themselves as being like women, and having to act accordingly. This sense of womanhood is displayed in a very overtly feminised way. Edwards (2006) points out that gender and sexuality as practices, discourses and constructs are intricately linked. It is often more accurate, he says, to talk about gendered sexualities and sexualised genders, instead of seeing sexuality and gender as two distinct categories. I align myself with this position and attempt to reach some type of resolution below.

Briefly, gender identity is seen as a major component of "femaleness" and "maleness." The notion of gender includes: psycho-sexual development, the learning of social roles, as well as the shaping of sexual preferences (West & Zimmerman, 1991). West and Zimmerman (1991) also state that doing gender is unavoidable due to the consequences of "sex category" membership, as well as the allotment of power in inter-personal relationships. The way then in which gender is structured reproduces institutional arrangements that legitimise and favour heterosexuality.

According to Castells (1997), enactment of femininity could be a key cultural attribute that holds priority over other sources of possible subjective identity and has been internalised at a collective level. The participants' gay identity, which is a product of time and space, involves materials from history, geography, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory as well as personal fantasy (Castells, 1997). These processes and their meanings are then rearranged according to social determinants and cultural projects that are rooted in social structure (Castells, 1997). The social structures of the respondents in the current study are informed by the socio-economic processes of their larger community, which can be summed up as a lack of resources, framed against aggressive, heterosexual masculinity.

I would further like to suggest that the feminine way of the participants functions as a counter-point to the working-class masculine image, namely that of violence and aggression (Canaan, 1996) which is often also present in working-class coloured communities (Martin, 2001). The counter-point is to take on the role of women, both to distance themselves from a masculinity that they do not identify with, and because a man who understands himself as gay in this community, is rejected by the hierarchical structures of masculinity. A counter-point to anchor an identity in is then needed – femininity.

Paechter (2003) argues that many practices of masculinity *and* femininity take on different shapes over different times with people occupying masculine and feminine positions simultaneously. I do not see any simultaneous positioning with my respondents. It would appear to me that my participants are trying to distance themselves from any masculine form of practice. The ambiguities of holding both are rejected. Moreover, Paechter (2003) says that communities of practice cannot be understood independently of other communities and practices; "joining a community of practice involves entering not only its internal configuration but also its relationship with the rest of the world" (p. 73). As Connell (1995) says, femininity cannot exist without masculinity (and vice versa). I would like to apply the *semiotic* definition of masculinity to this study. This approach abandons the understanding of masculinity at the level of personality, and rather defines it through a system of symbolic differences. Masculinity then is an unmarked term, a place of symbolic authority, and the 'phallus' acting as the master signifier results in femininity being defined by the lack of the phallus (Connell, 1995). It is this semiotic field of masculinity that acts as a counter-relational community of practice to the production of femininity that my participants engage in. Part of hegemonic masculinity, is the act of placing homosexual men in a subordinate position. This subordination can manifest in political and cultural exclusion, economic discrimination, and street violence (Connell, 1995). Being gay within a

patriarchal ideology then becomes the "repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity" (Connell, 1995, p. 78). From the vantage point of hegemonic masculinity then, being gay can easily be assimilated into femininity, in that it is read and experienced as anti-phallic (Connell, 1995).

McNay (2000), drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, presents us with the idea of 'capital'; economic, social, cultural and symbolic structures that denote the different goods, resources and values around which power relations in a particular field crystallise. The capital of gender positions masculine as the privileged position that excludes the term 'feminine', and so assumes a "phallonarcissistic" (p. 54) view of the world. McNay continues by arguing the women's exclusion from the masculine does indeed allow them a certain critical insight into masculinity. However, by maintaining their subordinate position, women remain complicit in the games that men play. This results in them (women) participating, by proxy, in their own subordination. Although the work of Bourdieu is critiqued for underestimating the complexity and ambiguity of masculinity and femininity, I do think it compliments the insights given by Connell. It also highlights for me how gender capital within this community is structured, and how 'access' to it is regulated. That said, this regulation is not something conscious or rational, but a product of the complexities of trans-historical power relations informed by the socio-political trends of South Africa, and indeed the trends that inform gender constructs the world over.
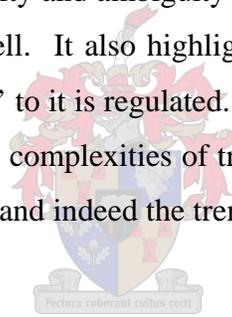
Paechter's (2003) ideas about communities of practice can also be used to shed some light on the participants' collectivist gay identity. According to her, a community of practice, broadly, is a group that engages in shared activities. Novices to that practice develop expertise through the participation in legitimate and acknowledged activities that contribute to the practice. Gradually the participation becomes more elaborate and important, as the novice moves towards full participation. This process develops not only the expertise needed for the practice, but also entails an understanding and embeddedness in the culture that surrounds it (Paechter, 2003). I argue that this idea of community of practice can explain the social cohesion that informs the collectivist identity shared by my participants.

It appears that the gay identity of the participants in this study is influenced by the *practices* that my participants enjoy, such as the specific type of clothing they wear, the types of conversations they have, and the meanings they attach to different forms of sexual expression and behaviour. These shared practices are what hold the community together and are continuously reinvented and renegotiated

(Paechter, 2003). In order not to be a peripheral figure, there must be a complete acceptance of these practices, and so "core meanings" (p. 72) must be shared. In this instance, the core meaning (as well as the grounded theory core meaning) is being gay and feminine. This helps to explain why these gay men are so homogeneous; being gay is not enough to be allowed access into the group, one must be a feminine gay person who seeks out very particular types of people to be sexual with. This idea resonates with the comment made by one of the respondents in that he could not be sexual with another gay man as it would be "like two women having sex." Members of the community all agree, if even at an unspoken level, that for their communal gay identity to be shared and protected, only certain sexual partners must be sought out.

Mieli (as quoted in Connell, 1995) suggests that a radical politics of gay liberation *must* assert a sense of femininity. It must celebrate glitter, glamour, queens, and transvestites as an essential part of transformative politics. However, this strategic positioning is also flawed. The political power that the participants *have*, by establishing the parameters of their community of practice which is built on attributes of femininity, is exactly that which results in a sexual positioning that I perceive as damaging. Herein we find the paradox. The heterosexual/homosexual binary that operates so strongly in this community informs the following: the sexual object choice that my participants make is not just a choice of "a-body-with-a-penis" (Connell, 1995, p. 156); it is the choice of a certain embodied masculinity. The cultural meanings of masculinity are, often, part of the package (Connell, 1995). Connell (1995) says that "gay men are not free to invent new objects of desire any more than heterosexual men are; their desire is structured by the existing gender order" (p. 160). Therefore, when my participants remark that "two gay men cannot be together, because then it is like two women together" or "I want to be protected by him," then they are expressing the expectations of the communal gender order. They have internalised the idea of a type of femininity to the point where they have discarded what multiple meanings of *both* femininity and masculinity could be like for them. They *must* embody a certain identity in order to maintain a specific, accepted gender order.

Judith Butler's ideas around gender and sexuality also offer an interesting position for analysis. I include it here, because I relate epistemologically with her work, and also because feminist researchers such as Cosgrove (2003) point out that unfortunately people like Butler are rarely considered by psychologists when theorising. Butler holds the social constructionist position that the body is discursively constructed. Bodies are constructed *as* male or female, heterosexual or homosexual

through language. The subject becomes the product, not the producer, of linguistic construction as all meaning is a product of deferment (Vasterling, 2003).

Butler asks, "How are we to understand the constitutive and compelling status of gender norms without succumbing to determinism" (Butler, 1993, x)? Butler answers this by drawing on Foucault's position that power produces the subject that it controls. Gender is constituted through relations of power, of dominance and subordination and does not exist as something essential. Such processes of power relations become enacted through gender performance. Butler does not suggest that people can freely choose which performance they would like to take on. Rather, the coercive mechanisms of discipline, surveillance, punishment, and compulsive heterosexuality function in such a way as to compose a gendered subject. Performance, Butler argues, is not "willed" (Campbell, 2000, p. 148), but rather an illustration of the effects of power on the subject. Butler states that sexuality is regulated through the shaming of gender (Butler, as quoted in Vasterling, 2003). By this she means that gender conformity, as a hegemonic construct, is the product of ungrieved homoerotic longing. Gender becomes a traumatic loss, as well as a solution to the disavowal of homoerotic desire. Gender is a product of splitting and a false-self operation. For me, the processes of phallic rejection, of internalising the feminine, of being marginalised as both coloured and gay, culminates in the taking on of a specific gendered role and enacting it according to certain regulatory rules. This process of gay *and* feminine marginalisation is also a route towards being shamed (Goldner, 2003). Femininity then becomes seen, from a patriarchal lens, as "subject as object" (Dimen, as quoted in Goldner, 2003, p. 132). The gender hierarchy never allows these participants to understand themselves as anything but feminine. This results in a complex inter-play of unconscious collective shame informing the positioning of the sexual subject. Butler would argue that the Oedipal resolution of gay people is far more stable than for heterosexuals, in that it actually acknowledges the love object as lost (the father), but can be found again in relation to the external world (Campbell, 2000). What is problematic is the fact that heterosexual men defensively claim the phallus, split off that which is unacceptable (the feminine), the gender hierarchy results in gay men internalising this heterosexual splitting and they become trapped in the performance of the female.

Edwards (2006) argues that central to the debates around being gay and how gay people are positioned in society are issues around identity and desire. From the point of identity, being gay certainly holds enough capital to be politically and socially noticed, and for gay men to claim political and social space. However, it is at the level of desire that things become problematic in gender politics. Desire,

as the idea of men having sex with each other, activates defences and threatens normative masculinity and the privileged position of heterosexuality. I am intrigued with how this argument of identity and desire plays out in the communities I worked with. On the level of identity, the gay participants are forced to perform the role of hyper-femininity and occupy a peculiar space within the larger community. Yet, on the level of desire, they are somehow acknowledged as men by heterosexual men, creating a strange fusion of attraction between their feminine attributes and the fact that they have a penis. As participant 4 remarked to me: "nearly all the men [in this town] will have sex with us. It is not that difficult to get them to do it. The next day though, [they are]back with [their] girlfriends." In the end, as Edwards says, gay men are indeed located in an awkward space in relation to [normative] gender, both psychologically and socially.

Lastly, the notion of sexual citizenship also provides a useful lens for thinking about this study's findings and conclusions. Plummer (2001) suggests that citizenship be understood as a "sensitising concept which sets about analysing the plurality of public discourses and stories about how to live the personal life in a late modern world where we are confronted by an escalating series of choices and difficulties around intimacies" (p. 238). It asks us how we should be living with others, and how we should approach new climates of emerging moralities and ethics. What are our obligations within a social world? van Zyl (2005) points out that claiming citizenship (for example, through human rights instruments), emerges within a context of deep division. This division is derived from historical and social relations, as well as predicated on the forces of unbalanced economic and political power. Such factors are always set against ongoing struggles for hegemonic dominance.

The idea of the sexual citizen, van Zyl (2005) argues, is complex and contended, in that it problematises current mainstream understandings of citizenship, which are seen primarily as a tool to understand heterosexual subjects. The concept helps to address how we should go about understanding a vast range of sexualities, as well as trans-gendered worlds, which includes the breakdown of traditional masculinity and femininity, as well as bi-sexuality, gender bending, and queers. Weeks (1998) argues that citizenship is ultimately to claim a new form of belonging. It is about "the remaking of the self and the multiplicity and diversity of possible identities that characterise the late or post-modern world" (p. 35). The sexual citizen is a new presence because of the accelerating transformations taking place in everyday life. In addition, the idea of sexual citizenship must be one that expands on earlier, more restrictive ideas of citizenship. It must understand the impact that the heterosexual/homosexual binary has on people. It must promote the idea of justice and equity for

emergent sexual minorities. It must strive towards the ending of exclusion, as well as promoting economic emancipation. It is about understanding that sexual politics as well as the claim to sexual citizenship should be at the heart of contemporary politics, as it is centrally concerned with the politics of life. Moreover, sexual citizenship must be about inclusion, about belonging, about creating new subjectivities, new identities, new collective struggles, and new narratives about personal life. Intimate commitments must be based on negotiation between consenting partners. Also, there cannot be assumptions of a single identity from which all social action proceeds. Rather, there must be multiple possible identities, which should become continuous narrative quests (Weeks, 1998).

Such ideas as proposed by Weeks (1998) must be taken up as opposition to the idea of (hetero)sexual citizenship being seen as essentialised. It must guard against sexuality being relegated to the private sphere- especially same-sex sexuality, as well as guard against same-sex sexuality being othered as something less than normative heterosexuality. van Zyl (2005) also points out that an increasing awareness is taking place that, for democracy to succeed, recognition must be given to the profound interdependence of the public and private spheres. I ask: to what degree can the idea of sexual citizenship be applied to my participants? I answer this question by saying that the idea of sexual citizenship has not yet infiltrated the social space occupied by my participants. Yes, resistance is offered towards male hegemony in the form of a visible, flamboyant feminised sexuality. Yet, the resistance is problematic, for its reach is limited. This community demonstrates the ever-present tension in this developing country between the modern and post-modern. Queer theory dominates gay sexuality studies in the developed world. Queerness, Minton (1997) says, has become a site for challenging heterosexist hegemony, and so is also seen as a source of transformational energy. It is an attempt to resist homophobic discourse and place emphasis on a de-essentialised identity that is purely positional. Whereas gay identity is grounded in an affirmative choice of homosexuality, queer identity only has meaning in terms of its oppositional relation to what is dominant and normative.

I do not feel that my participants are engaged in a queer interpretation of their lives. They not only claim an essentialised identity, but use the markers of traditional femininity to anchor their sexuality. They are locked into a modern discourse, without fully appreciating that they can build new narratives for themselves. This challenge does not have to mean discarding a need to be seen as feminine. They must have the *right* to be feminine. What is needed is a *new way* of being feminine, and therein lies a different way of being sexual.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CRITICAL REVIEW

This chapter summarises the categories and core category identified through grounded theory analysis, provides recommendations for future research, and also provides a critical review of the research study. These recommendations are neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, but rather represent the most critical issues for the researcher.

1.   Findings

1.1   Understandings of the word 'gay': The participants all associate the idea of being gay with being feminine and being "like a woman." Bodily representation should be *both* sexually charged, and display an overt femininity. I see similarities between my interpretations of femininity to that of Latin American gay research, which makes comparable observations. It is interesting to note that, in Latin America, gay femininity is also prominent in working-class communities. These findings stand in sharp contrast to gay research done in Australia amongst working-class communities where findings indicate gravitation by gay men towards hyper-masculine representations of the self.
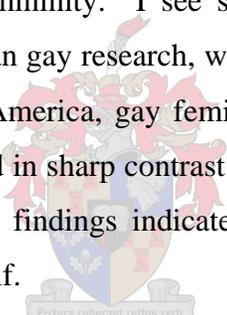
1.2   Sex as act of submission: Participants, in describing sexual debut, as well as sexual experiences thereafter, placed strong focus on describing the behavioural sequence, with little or no emphasis on the emotional loading of the event. I perceived their descriptions of sexual encounters to be one where sex just "happens" to them. There was a focus in the narratives on what sexual acts their partners wanted them to perform, with little description or assertion of what they wanted during the exchange. This could be due to established perceptions in the community that say that men must be in control during sex and that as "women", the participants must be passive recipients of a powerful male sexuality.

1.3   Submission as facilitator for sexual coercion: My readings of the narratives made me understand their stories as descriptions also of sexual coercion. Literature (Holland et al., 2000; Marston, 2005; Moore, 2006) suggests that the taken-for-granted interpretation of sexual coercion (verbal and physical threats) is not able to capture the complex social interactions that

facilitate coercive practices. Assuming a passive sexual role can lead to sexual situations that are coercive, with no need for the partner to use physical threats or violence.

1.4   Strong focus was placed on both oral and anal sex. It was found that most often the participants had to give oral sex, with hardly any reciprocity from their partners. Oral sex triggered mixed emotions and ambivalence. It was a practice that carried emotional loading, made them feel vulnerable, and worried that it could lead to sexual exploitation by the partner. Anal sex, in stark contrast, was viewed as something that "must happen." Any other sexual practice that did not involve them being penetrated was not seen as "real sex." The participants had to always be penetrated, as this was seen as their "duty as a woman."

1.5   A strong desire was expressed to establish intimate connections with others and to be in a relationship. This need is very often linked with the desire for protection and economic benefit.

1.6   Core category: The need to be like a woman and to demonstrate extreme forms of femininity was established as the core category. I showed that specific communities of practice produce and hold the idea of equating being gay with having to be feminine. Additionally, I argued that the idea of a passive female subjectivity strongly informs the participants' sexual decision-making. I argue this position by drawing on ideas that show the structural impact of the homosexual/heterosexual binary, which operates strongly in this traditional, working-class, coloured community. I continue by saying that a strong hegemonic masculinity within this community discards all that is feminine. As a result, gay men, as a group, become the container of these projections and internalise them. I conclude with the theory of sexual citizenship and argue that the participants for this study are excluded from being citizens in their full-right, but are rather merely marginal characters.

2.   Recommendations

This section will make recommendations for future research. Some of the recommendations include limitations that are identified in section 3.

 2.1   A new discourse of femininity

A key recommendation flowing from this study is that a new discourse of femininity is needed for these gay men to identify with. Contemporary gay research draws heavily on queer theory for inspiration, asking how queer sexual practices can be used to challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions that are made regarding sexuality. Currently, this queer discourse is missing from the parameters of identity construction and sexual expression that my participants engage in. Their identity perpetuates the traditional heterosexual/homosexual binary that is active in this community. Although their femininity is used to some degree as a way of separation and to proclaim uniqueness, it is done in a limited and non-reflexive way. It is not used to provide political commentary but merely as a way to stabilise their perceived essential nature as feminine gay men. As far as I am aware, South African gay sexuality research has not yet addressed the different ways in which sexuality is constructed in different gay communities, along different lines of habitus. Therefore blanket statements cannot be made regarding the progression of gay equality and its political emancipation if different communities have different ideas of what it means to be gay. A new discourse of gay femininity should therefore:

- Validate different gay communities' needs for specific ways of expressing their identity;
- Endorse different ways of expressing identity in order to build ways which will help people protect themselves from sexual exploitation;
- Acknowledge and validate gay sexual development (however it might progress);
- Acknowledge and validate the exploration of sexual needs, pleasures and desires, as this is an essential part of sexual development;
- Ultimately though, a new discourse of femininity for gay men who engage with it requires a new discourse of heterosexual masculinity. This is a difficult and challenging task.

2.2   Psychoanalytic theory as theoretical framework

I felt that the narratives provided ample opportunity to explore them from a feminist psychoanalytic perspective. However, the scope of this specific study did not allow me to follow this avenue. I would recommend that future research conduct analysis through such a lens, as I think valuable and insightful conclusions can be obtained.

2.3   Increase community-based sexuality research

Considering the many different ways in which sexuality is constructed, depending on social and geographical location, more community-specific knowledge is needed. I am particularly interested in understanding constructions of sexuality amongst MSM who do not identify as gay. Further research must also explore the complexities and constructions of hegemonic heterosexuality to have a better understanding of how this could influence gay sexual identity.

3.   A critical review of the research

I would like to share the following concerns that I have about this study:

3.1   I often felt overwhelmed by the amount of interview data I had. The unpacking of it by way of a grounded theory methodology was not an easy process. This is the first time that I have used grounded theory in such a comprehensive fashion and to its intended conclusion (theory building). I am a novice researcher and my skills in data analysis are still in the process of being developed. Also, I often despaired when reading work by other researchers and felt that I could not achieve their level of clarity and integration.

3.2   I feel that my skills as interviewer at this stage disappointed the capturing of richness and complexity I hoped I would find. This I feel is lacking in this thesis. I also feel that the data I collected could have been analysed in more psychological depth. Unfortunately, my limitations as researcher currently prevent any further insight, even though I feel that it is indeed lacking.

3.3   As I have mentioned earlier, the findings and conclusions of this study are a co-construction by me, the researcher. In part, therefore, this research is the construction of a white (thirty-

something), male, middle-class master's student who was for all purposes an outsider looking in. One will never know if and/or how the findings and conclusions of an insider researcher would have been different.

4.   Post-script recommendations

I wish to include here a couple of remarks that was made by my external examiner about this thesis. I believe these comments to be useful in better understanding the findings presented. First, my examiner at times thought I was projecting a framework of understanding that was limiting interpretation that could ideally have been more complex and fluid. Second, the readings of sexual penetration as being automatically equated with an abdication of power (see p. 71), might be read as a being too deterministic a relationship; that penetration should automatically be viewed as renunciation of power. Does receiving a penis not also bring with it a sense of power? Third, caution should also be exercised to not read the feminine/masculine relationship in too binary a manner. It is suggested that the feminine performance of sexuality as being equated with inferiority should be more actively challenged. Fourth, maybe instead of suggesting a different way of being feminine for these gay men, their current practices should be accepted and valued as having a type of cultural capital that is important for them. Finally, it is important not to suggest, by default, that working class communities are inherently problematic and a production space of pathology.

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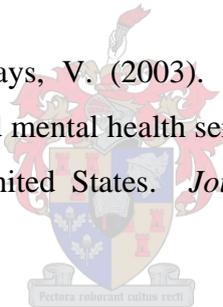
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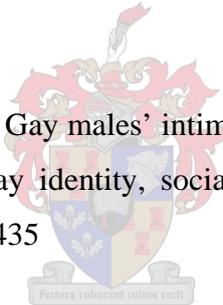
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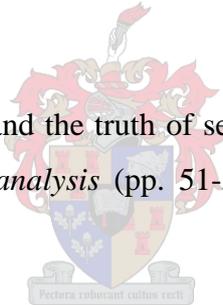
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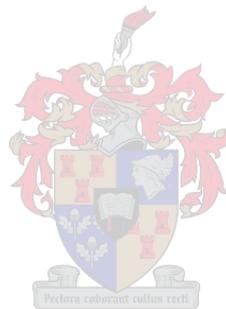
Information and consent form

Dear participant:

I am a senior psychology student at the University of Stellenbosch, and this research project is part of my degree programme. I would like to invite you to join me to take part in it. The research looks at how gay, coloured men who live in a rural area, construct, experience and understand their sexuality. This project will help to increase the visibility of positive gay research in South Africa, to help create better understanding around psychological processes connected to our sexuality, and to help in the formation of knowledge that can be used to design better HIV prevention and other sexual-health programmes. I fully understand that this is a sensitive topic and that people would like to keep this kind of information private. If you continue to read, you will see that I will ensure that anything you say to me will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

The names of the participants will not be used in the writings that will come from this research, thus ensuring complete anonymity.

If you are prepared to take part in this study, then the following will be expected of you:

1. To take part in an individual interview with me. This interview will be recorded on audiocassette, and will be conducted in a private room in the department of psychology building at the University of Stellenbosch. Only you and I will be present for this interview and other people will not know what we are talking about. You are not required to reveal your name to me, allowing you to use any name you like. I will be the only person listening to the tape of the recorded interview.

2. Besides the individual interview, you will also be asked to take part in a group interview, where I will be present. This means that you will be interviewed alongside other gay men who are also participating in this study. This group interview will also take place in the department of psychology, University of Stellenbosch. You will

discuss amongst one another your sexual experiences and ideas relating to sexuality. This interview will be recorded on videocassette. Again, I can assure you that only I will have access to the tape, and that nobody else will be present.

3. The interviews will each not exceed two hours. Transport back home will be arranged for you, should you require it.

I trust that the interview will be an interesting and helpful experience for you. It is possible that some of the questions posed will make you feel somewhat uncomfortable and be of a personal nature. You are allowed to not answer some questions, should you rather so wish.

If after the interview you feel that you would like to speak to someone about things that might bother you, or have upset you during the interview, then you can make use of the following support numbers
Stellenbosch Hospital, Counselling services: (021) 887 7913.
Dr. E Lesch: (021) 808 3466
Mr. C Petty: (021) 808 3453
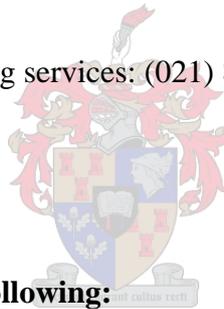
I as researcher undertake the following:

1. Even though you have signed the consent form, you can withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer a question.

2. I am the only person who has your contact details, and that it will be kept in a place of safety at all times.

3. That the audio and videocassette recordings will be stored in a secure and safe place at all times.

4. I will be the only person who has access to the above-mentioned material.

5. Upon completion of the project, a copy of the final document will be made available to you.

Now that you have read all of the above, and you are still interested in taking part in this study, then you can read the following form and complete it.

Thank you so much!!

CONSENT FORM:

Declaration by participant:

I, the undersigned,

_____

of_____

_____

_____

_____(Address) with contact number_____

A. I acknowledge that:

1. I have been invited by the researcher to take part in this study.

2. The purpose and procedures of the project has been properly explained to me.

3. The number of people involved, as well as the number of hours required of me, as been disclosed.

4. I have been warned that some of the questions could very well make me feel uncomfortable, as they are of a personal nature. I have been informed that the information obtained will be treated as confidential and anonymity will be ensured, but that the data obtained will be used to produce a thesis toward satisfying the requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Psychology.

5. A copy of the final report will be made available to me.

6. I have been informed that I can refuse to take part in this study, or cease participation at any time, without suffering any consequences. I also understand

that the researcher can terminate my participation at any time, should he deem it beneficial to my mental well-being.

7. I understand the information given above, and that I have been given an opportunity to ask questions, and that these questions have been answered in a satisfactory manner.

8. No pressure has been placed on me to participate, and I understand that I can withdraw at any time.

9. I will not incur any additional costs by taking part in this study.

B. I agree without, any coercion, to take part in this study.

Signed (day)_____on_____2005.
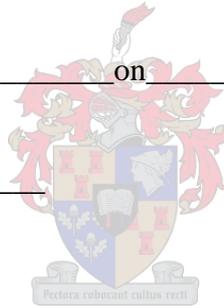
_____   _____
(SIGNATURE)   (WITNESS)

DECLARATION BY THE RESEARCHER:

I, _____declare that:

1. The information presented in this document has been explained to the participant_____

2. I have asked him whether he has any questions, and/or if anything is unclear.

3. This discussion has taken place in a language of his choice (either Afrikaans or English), and that no translator was used.

Signed(day)_____on_____2005 .

_____   _____
(SIGNATURE)   (WITNESS)

Inligtings en toestemmingsvorm

Beste deelnemer:

Ek is n senior sielkunde student by die Universiteit van Stellenbosch, en hierdie navorsingsprojek is deel van my kursus. Ek wil jou graag nooi om deel te neem daaraan. Die navorsing kyk na hoe gay, kleurling mans in 'n landelike gebied hulle seksualiteit verstaan en beleef. Hierdie projek sal help in die bevordering van positiewe gay navorsing in Suid Afrika, om 'n beter begrip te ontwikkel rondom sielkundige prosesse gekoppel aan seksualiteit, en om te help in die formasie van kennis om sodoende beter MIV/VIGS en ander seksuele gesondheidsprogramme te ontwikkel. Ek besef dat dit 'n sensitiewe onderwerp is en dat 'n mens sulke inligting privaat wil hou. As jy verderaan lees, sal jy sien dat ek sal seker maak dat jou inligting aan my vertroulik sal bly.

Geen name van die deelnemers sal in die werkstuk wat ek oor hierdie onderwerp moet skryf, gebruik of bekend gemaak word nie.

As jy bereid is om deel te neem aan my projek sal die volgende van jou verwag word:

1. Om deel te neem aan 'n individuele onderhoud met my. Hierdie onderhoud sal met 'n bandopnemer op band opgeneem word. Hierdie onderhoud sal in 'n kamer by die departement van sielkunde by die Universiteit van Stellenbosch plaasvind, maar net ek en jy sal teenwoordig wees en niemand anders sal weet waaroor ons praat nie. Jy hoef nie aan my jou naam te verstrek nie, en jy kan vir jouself enige naam gee as jy dit so verkies. Ek sal die enigste persoon wees wat na die band van die onderhoud luister.

2. Om behalwe die individuele onderhoud, ook deel te neem aan 'n groep onderhoud. Dit beteken dat jy saam met 'n groep ander gay mans van jou gemeentskap (en waarskynlik ander gemeentskappe ook) met my sal vergader (weer in 'n kamer by die departement van sielkunde, Universiteit van Stellenbosch), en waar julle onder

mekaar praat oor julle seksuele ervaringe en idees oor seksualiteit. Die onderhoud sal op videokassette opgeneem word. Weereens kan ek jou verseker dat net ek na die opname sal kyk, en dat niemand anders teenwoordig sal wees nie.

3. Die onderhoude sal elk nie langer as twee uur duur nie. Vervoer huistoe sal vir jou gereël word as jy dit benodig.

Ek vertrou dat die onderhoud vir jou interesant en behulpsaam sal wees. Dit is moontlik dat die vrae vir jou ongemaklik sal maak en dat sommige vrae persoonlik van aard gaan wees. Jy is nie verplig om te antwoord nie en kan enige tyd weier om die vrae te beantwoord.

As jy na die onderhoud voel dat jy met iemand wil praat oor iets wat in die onderhoud vir jou gepla het, kan jy gerus een van die volgende nommers skakel:

Stellenbosch Hospitaal, Voorligtingsdienste: (021) 887 7913.

Dr. E. Lesch: (021) 808 3466.

Mnr. C Petty: (021) 808 3453.

Ek, as navorser onderneem dat:

1. Al het jy die toestemmingsbrief geteken, kan jy ter enige tyd weier om 'n vraag te beantwoord of om verder deel te neem aan die navorsingsprojek.

2. Ek die enigste persoon is wat jou kontak besonderhede het, en dat dit ten alle tye in veilige bewaring geplaas sal word.

3. Dat die band en video opnames ten alle tye in veilige bewaring geplaas sal word.

4. Ek die enigste persoon is wat toegang tot bogemoemde items het.

5. Na afhandeling van die projek sal 'n afskrif van die werkstuk wat ek gaan skryf aan jou beskikbaar gestel sal word.

As jy nou alles gelees het, en bereid is om deel te neem aan die navorsingsprojek, kan jy die volgende vorm lees en invul.

Baie dankie !!

<u>TOESTEMMINGSDOKUMENT:</u>

Verklaring deur deelnemer:

Ek, die ondergetekende,

_____

van_____

_____

_____

_____(Adres) met kontak nommer_____

A. Ek bevestig dat:

1. Ek uitgenooi is om deel te neem aan bogemelde navorsingsprojek wat deur die navorser onderneem word.

2. Die doel en aard en die prosedures van die projek aan my verduidelik is.

3. Die hoeveelheid mense wat betrek gaan word sowel as die hoeveelheid ure wat van my verwag word, aan my bekend gemaak is.

4. Ek gewaarsku is dat sommige van die vrae dalk ongemaklik of persoonlik van aard gaan wees. Ek meegedeel is dat die inligting wat ingewin word as vertroulik en anoniem behandel sal word, maar wel vir 'n Magistergraad in die Sielkunde, aangewend sal word.

5. Na afhandeling van die projek 'n afskrif van die navorsing aan my beskikbaar gestel sal word.

6. Ek meegedeel is dat ek mag weier om deel te neem aan hierdie projek asook deelname daaraan mag staak, en dat enige sodanige weiering of staking nie op enige manier my sal benadeel nie. Ek verstaan ook dat die navorser my van die projek mag onttrek indien dit in my belang geag word deur hom.

7. Ek die inligting wat hierbo weergegee is verstaan het, en dat ek die geleentheid gegee is om vrae te vra en dat al my vrae bevredigend beantwoord was.

8. Daar geen dwang op my geplaas is om toe te stem tot my deelname aan hierdie projek nie en dat ek besef dat ek deelname te enige tyd mag staak sonder enige penalisasie.

9. Deelname aan die projek geen addisionele koste vir my inhou nie.

B. Ek stem vrywilig in om deel te neem aan die bogemelde projek.

Geteken te_____op_____2005.

_____   _____
(HANDTEKENING)   (GETUIE)

VERKLARING DEUR DIE NAVORSER:

Ek,_____verklaar dat ek:

1.   Die   inligting   vervat   in   hierdie   dokument   aan   die
        deelnemer,_____
        verdeuidelik het.

2.   Hom versoek het om vrae aan my te stel indien daar enigiets onduidelik was.

3.   Dat hierdie gesprek in Afrikaans plaasgevind het en dat geen tolk gebruik is nie.

Geteken te_____op_____2005.

_____   _____
(HANDTEKENING)   (GETUIE)