



**A Criminological Exploration of queerphobic violence and Victimization of self-identifying queer sexual minority in KwaMashu Township**

**By**

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## ABSTRACT

South Africa is internationally celebrated for its progressive Constitution, which guarantees fundamental human rights, freedom, and equality. However, the country grapples with pervasive crime, violence, and ongoing discrimination, including hate speech and hate crimes, particularly against queer individuals. While the Bill of Rights prohibits discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation and mandates national legislation to prevent such discrimination, a gap exists between these legal protections and the lived realities of queer communities, especially in township settings. This study focused on queerphobic violence and victimization experienced by self-identifying sexual minorities in KwaMashu Township, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. It explored the nature and consequences of victimisation, perceptions of queerphobic violence, the adequacy of available support and interventions, and the strategies employed by queer individuals to navigate their safety in this context.


Using a qualitative approach, the study purposively sampled 15 queer participants from the Invelo Yesizwe Organisation in KwaMashu. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analysed thematically. Findings revealed that significant victimisation of queer individuals is rooted in societal prejudice, lack of knowledge about diverse sexual orientations, and inadequate education about homosexuality. The study highlights the urgent need for educational initiatives to address misconceptions and reduce violence against queer communities in township settings.

**Keywords:** *hate crimes, queer, queerphobic, sexual minorities, victimisation, violent crime.*

## DECLARATION

This is to confirm that this dissertation is my work which I have never previously submitted to any other university for any other purpose. The references used and cited have been acknowledged.

Signature of candidate: .....*AN Buthelezi*.....

Signature of the supervisor . 

At...the University of KwaZulu-Natal .....

On the.....19th.....day of.....December.....2024

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Lastly, I express my deepest gratitude to my family and friends. Your unwavering belief in me has been a source of strength and motivation throughout this journey. Thank you for standing by me.

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to queer community members in townships who face the challenges of queerphobia and victimization due to their sexuality. May this work contribute to acknowledging your struggles, amplifying your voices, and fostering a safer, more compassionate environment for future generations. It is also dedicated to every queer individual, with special gratitude and respect for the queer participants of this study.

## **ACRONYMS**

DOMA	Defense Of Marriage Act
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Plus
SANCYOC	South African National Civic Organisation Youth Congress
SSMPA	Same Sex Marriage Prohibition Act

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

It is undeniable that people who identify as queer are still subjected to discrimination, assault, harassment, and social stigma on a global scale (Bandera, 2023). While social movements have shown progress in many nations such as Belgium, Canada, Spain, and United States toward acceptance, homosexuality is still illegal and punishable, often with death, in other nations such as Uganda, Nigeria, and Iran (Bandera, 2023). According to Smith (2011) in the year 2006, South Africa was the fifth country in the world to legalise same sex marriage, affording full citizenship to the queer community. However, Brown and Dewitt (2018), deliberate that although legalised, same sex sexuality remains a distasteful topic in a South African context because many South Africans, irrespective of race, gender, and age, remain queerphobic.

The queer community struggle continues as it faces various challenges in South Africa. According to the social and political commentator Tafti Mhaka (2021), the queer community has long been subjected to hate speech, discrimination, and grotesque violence in South Africa. Moreover, many South Africans still perceive queer people as inherently immoral and “un-African”, and thus pay little attention to the abuse they endure daily (Tafti Mhaka, 2021). One of the causes contributing to violent crimes against queer people in South African township communities is a lack of awareness of different sexual orientations that exist. In this modern world and society heterosexuality is acknowledged as a sexual orientation and homosexuality is classified as a deviation from societal norms and beliefs, therefore, such beliefs and misconceptions about homosexuality are rooted in and internalised by many (Mkhize, 2018). Mamba 2021 argues that this belief has a large impact on queer people because they have internalised these false beliefs and they find it difficult to live openly as homosexuals.

Graham, Berkowitz, Blum, Bockting (2011) argue that queer people not only belong to the distinct community of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender, and queers but also belong to a diverse global population each with its own characteristics such as ages, race, ethnicity, socio economic status, geographic location, religion and culture. These characteristics determine how queer people experience life. The commonality shared by the queer community is that they

have been historically marginalised and considered to be as the other because they do not conform to society's traditional gender roles and expectations. This non-conformity provides a foundation for prejudice, biasness, discrimination, and violence. (Graham, et.al, 2011). In township areas of South Africa, the ideologies of patriarchy, heterosexism and heteronormativity are valued and upheld (Mamba, 2021). Heterosexism and heteronormativity are based on society's norms on the assumption that only a man and a woman can engage in sexual relations, all others who have different sexual orientation are seen as threats to society. Those who do not conform to gender norms face marginalisation such as the queer community even though it has been legalised in South Africa (Mampane, 2020). This study seeks to explore the violent crimes and victimisation of self-identifying queer sexual minorities.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

The existing body of literature on hate crime suggests that South Africa is internationally recognised for its progressive constitution which guarantee fundamental human rights, freedom, and equality. According to Section 9 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 states that everyone in South Africa is equal under the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Section 9 (4) of the Constitution further condemns any unfair discriminations by persons against another on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex and sexual orientation. Section 10 of the Constitution entitles every individual the right to have their dignity respected and protected (*Press Statement, 2021*). However, forms of violence committed against queer community on the basis of their sexual orientation, sex or gender, constitute unfair discrimination and violate the principles of the Constitution (*Press Statement, 2021*). In stark contrast, South Africa continues to struggle with endemic crime and violence, ongoing intentional unfair discrimination, hate speech, and hate crime (Breen & Nel, 2011). Hate crime in South Africa has a long history that can be traced as far back as the apartheid era. Post-apartheid South Africa continues to wrestle the challenge of nation-building and creating a shared sense of identity to overcome the entrenched division of the past (Breen, Lynch, Nel & Matthews, 2011). According to Breen and Nel (2011), argue that government intervention to address social divisions remains uncertain and are currently undermined by statements from leaders across the political spectrum.

Bree and Nel (2011), reported that queer individuals have experienced some form of victimisation, such as verbal abuse, threats, being chased or followed, being spat on. In comparison, research findings suggest that South Africans were less likely to experience verbal

and threats of violence than their American counterparts, however they were more likely to be physically assaulted and substantially more often sexually assaulted. They further suggested that homophobic hate crime increases as lesbian, and gay become visible. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI's, 2022) most hate crime statistics reporting, anti-LGBTQIA+ have spiked dramatically over the past few years in the United States. The data which includes a portion of participating police agencies, showed that from 2020 to 2021 hate crime against gay men increased by 41%, hate crime against queer groups rose 70%, and hate crimes against transgender people grew 15%. In contrast with South Africa hate crimes are propagated against the queer community because it is considered "un-African" to engage in homosexual activities (Nzimande, 2017). Kotze and Bowman (2018) argue that offenders who commit hate crimes against queer people do this with the intent of harming, dehumanising, or demeaning those who are of a different sexual orientation. These hate crimes include verbal and physical acts which can lead to violent attacks, murder, rape, and acts of intimidation (Breen & Nel, 2011).

The OUT-LGBT Wellbeing (2010) reported that 10% of queer individuals have fallen victim to hate crimes such as rape, sexual violence, and homophobic attacks. It also discovered that most incidents are unreported due to fear of further provocation and humiliation by police officials and healthcare workers. A study conducted by Rudwick (2010) found that during apartheid, homosexuality or any activities linked to same-sex activity were strictly prohibited which essentially implied that Black gays and lesbians were faced with double discrimination and oppression, firstly, the colour of their skin and secondly that of their sexual orientation. Rudwick (2010) contends that township areas were blacks lived, especially in KwaZulu- Natal where people who were suspected of desiring same-sex relationships were colloquially known as *isitabane (gay)* and mistaken for hermaphrodites meaning that they bear the physical biology of both man and woman. Mulaudzi (2018) argues that many Zulu people still living in these spaces have not fully accepted homosexuality as a sexual orientation because homosexuals are still considered in a derogatory and condescending manner

Small settlements and townships in South Africa strive to preserve their distinctive socio-cultural identity (Ferim, 2016). Research conducted by Ngidi, Ramphalile, Essack, van Rooyen, (2020) revealed that rural and township areas were considered most insecure and hostile spaces for the queer people. In their study participants who were transgender found it difficult to navigate their sexuality especially those who identified as transgender women due

to their visual appearance such as dress and behaviour. They further described township areas as conservative whilst elite urban areas were perceived as more accepting and progressive (Ngidi et al., 2020). In another study conducted by Schaffer (2010) participants conveyed their trepidation of public displays of affection especially in township settings in fear of being publicly ostracized and victimised. These participants alluded their fears of reporting homophobic abuses and crimes to police based on their anxiety of being further victimised. Culture in the post-apartheid South Africa, particularly in townships plays a significant role in promoting discrimination against queer people. Lee and Quan (2013) argued that queer people in townships are judged and discriminated as they are deviating from the societal norms and values. Therefore, this results in increased violations of queer people's rights and violent crimes against them in the post-apartheid South Africa.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

South Africa's Bill of Rights declares that no one should be discriminated against by either the state or any other person on the grounds of gender or sexual orientation, among others; its further states that national legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; Chapter 2, 1996:2). Despite having constitutional and legislative protection of the rights of the queer people, there are distinct disparities between the policies that govern the country and the lived experiences of the queer community, particularly those in townships. South Africa is one of the few African countries that protects and recognises queer communities' rights. However, protection afforded to the queer community by the hate crimes bill is not guaranteed (De Jager, 2022). Queer communities still experience social stigma, this stigma has seen gender and sexuality-motivated hate crimes increasing in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal townships.

According to one media report cited in NEW FRAME (2021) Anele Bhengu, a 28 old lesbian woman whose body was found dumped in Durban South on 13 June 2021, was brutally raped, stabbed repeatedly and her throat and abdomen were slit open. Also, in June 2021, 34-year-old Siphamandla Khoza was humiliated about his sexual orientation and then stabbed to death in the KwaMashu Township in Durban (Naick, 2021). The Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development (2021) reported that queer people continue to be subjected to hate crimes and gender-based violence (GBV). This includes the allegations of homophobia and bullying of queer sexual minorities in schools in South Africa. It was reported that in 2021, 42 pending hate crimes were reported against the queer community, out of the 42 pending cases,

30 cases are murder cases and 12 are rape cases (SA news, 2021) In addition, approximately 29 hate crimes cases were reported from 2020 to 2021, out of these 29 hate crime cases, 16 are on the court roll with remand dates and the remaining 13 cases still under investigation. Additionally, 8 cases have been finalised with severe sentences such as life imprisonment for rape, Daveyton, 25 years of imprisonment for rape Ikageng, 25 years imprisonment for murder in Umlazi, and 14 years of imprisonment for rape in Greytown. However, some 14 cases have been closed as undetected due to a lack of evidence (SA news, 2021). Furthermore, Igual (2024) reported that the Office of the Public Protector in South Africa found that the Criminal Justice System fails to protect victims of gender-based violence and violent crimes against queer community. The report, based on inspections of 38 courts, highlights poor infrastructure, inadequate equipment, and inefficient case management systems. The report further found that the South African police Service (SAPS) also failed to respond effectively to incidents due to insufficient training, lack of resources, and reluctance to arrest perpetrators.

It was deemed vital to obtain empirical data of this phenomenon as the latest South African quarterly crime statistics show an (6,0%) increase in contact crime (crime against the person) but decline in murder (-9.5%) and attempted murder (-0,2%); increase in sexual offences (7,4%) and assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm (14,4%) outline the extent of violent crime in the province, KwaZulu-Natal. The statistics reflect a broad range of crime; however, it does not show the vulnerability of certain sections of queer community by not providing effective reporting and analysis of violence against this community. It is against this background that the study seeks to explore queerphobic violence and victimisation of self-identifying queer sexual minorities. To achieve this goal, the researcher developed objectives as well as research questions.

#### **1.4 Research objectives**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the nature of victimisation incidents committed amongst queer sexual minorities in the KwaMashu community
2. Explore the perceptions of queer minorities on the violence committed against them in KwaMashu.
3. Explore the available support and interventions that seek to address queerphobic violence in KwaMashu.

4. Explore how queer sexual minorities navigate their safety in KwaMashu.

### **1.5 Research questions**

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What is the nature of victimisation incidents committed amongst the queer sexual minorities in the KwaMashu community?
2. What are the perceptions of queer minorities on the violence committed against them in KwaMashu?
3. How do the available support and interventions seek to address queerphobic violence in KwaMashu?
4. How do queer sexual minorities navigate their safety in KwaMashu?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

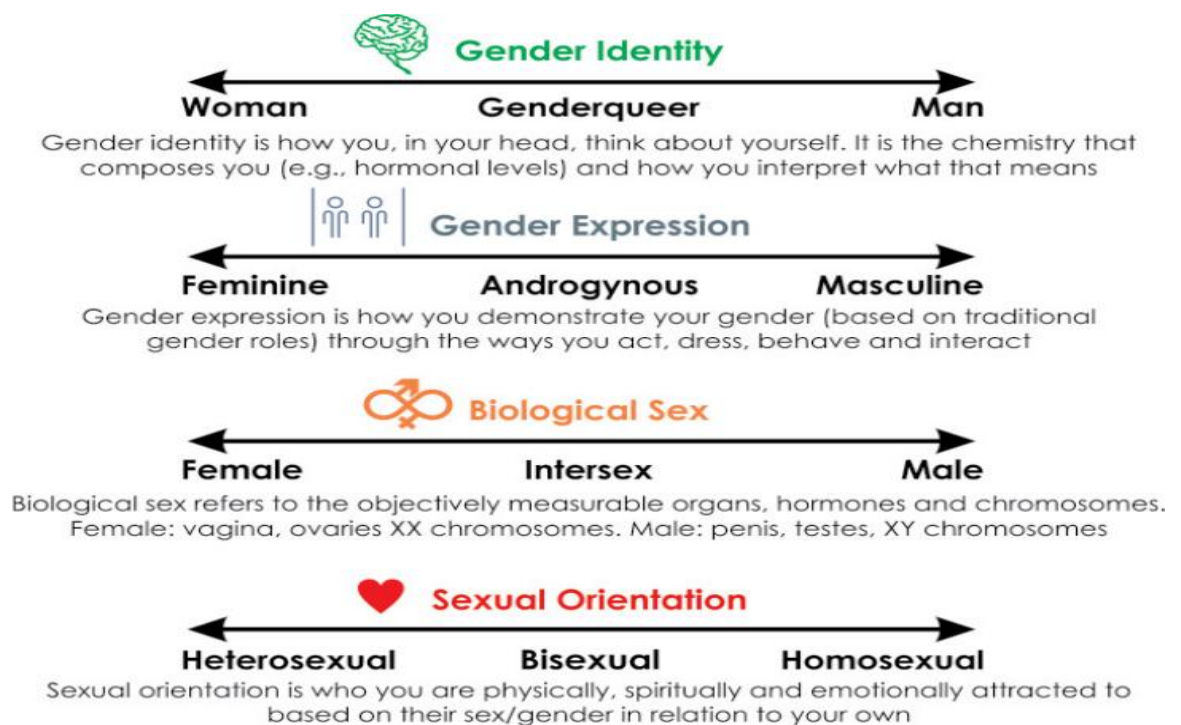
This study was prompted by the fact that an increasing number of queerphobic violent crimes against queer people cases were reported, and the queer community live in fear, in Durban townships, KwaZulu-Natal and little research has been done in this field. Recent reports have shown that queer individuals in impoverished areas are facing the threat of murder or violent assault daily discovering bodies of violently murdered members of their community discovered on a weekly (NEW FRAME, 2021). According to one media report cited in NEW FRAME (2021) Anele Bhengu, a 28 old lesbian woman whose body was found dumped in Durban South on 13 June 2021, was brutally raped, stabbed repeatedly and her throat and abdomen were slit open. Also, in June 2021, 34-year-old Siphamandla Khoza was humiliated about his sexual orientation and then stabbed to death in the KwaMashu Township in Durban (Naick, 2021). According to media reports, on 27 August 2024, Nombulelo Bhixa 28, and Minenhle Ngcobo, 22, were brutally murdered in Edendale, Pietermaritzburg (MAMBA, 2024)

This study aims to contribute to this growing area of research by providing a deeper insight on the perceptions of queer minorities on the queerphobic violence and victimisation against them in township communities. In relation to this study, the theoretical frameworks reveals that the roots of gender-based violence and queerphobic violent crimes against queer community come from the society and heterosexual persons, because of the internalized belief and perception of sexuality and gender roles based on society's norms and principles. It can be argued that these

frameworks advocate acceptance and foster understanding about sexual orientation diversity. Findings from this study anticipations to aid queer sexual minorities and educate societies about homosexuality so that they have a better understanding of same sex relationships and sexual orientations. It will also help law agencies to implement innovative approaches to protect queer community, decriminalise of homosexuality and eliminate social stigma.

## 1.7 Definition of concepts

**Figure 1.1: Breaking through the binary: gender explained using continuums**



**Source: (Killermann (2014))**

**(i) Biological sex** is defined by primary and secondary sexual characteristics identified at birth. ‘Sex’ refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women (ASSAf, 2015).

**(ii) Sexuality** refers to a human’s capacity for sexual feelings and includes sexual orientation, sexual identity, social gender roles and sexual activity. In this study Sexuality is defined as an

integral part of all persons, a basic need, and an aspect of being human. Sexuality includes eroticism, pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction (ASSAf, 2015).

**(iii) Gender** refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. To put it another way: 'Male' and 'female' are sex categories, while 'masculine' and 'feminine' are gender categories (PAHO, 2009).

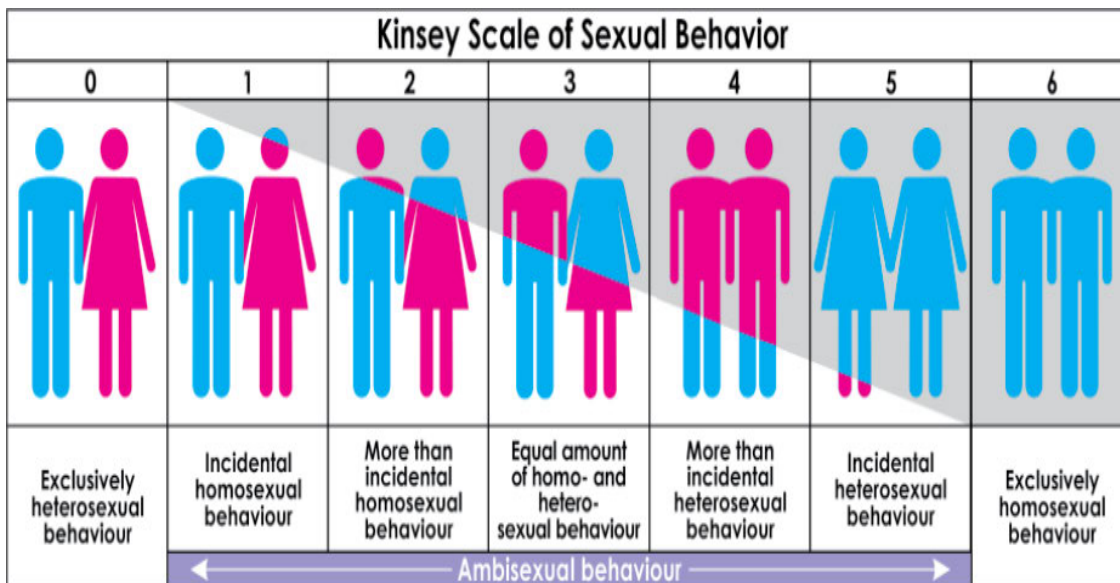
**(iv) Sexual orientation** is primarily about attraction and is demarcated mostly by the sex of those to whom one is attracted to. This study conceptualises sexual orientation as the biological sex of a person's actual or potential relationship partners and this can be people of the same sex as the individual, of the other sex, or of either sex (Diamond, 2014; Feinstein et al., 2014; Seto, 2012). This attraction can be felt as a romantic, emotional, affectionate, or sexual attraction, as well as some combination of these (Mkhize, 2018).

**(v) Sexual behaviour** refers to participation in sexual acts that might or might not be related to sexual orientation or be normative for a particular gender (ASSAf, 2015).

**(vi) Queerphobia** can be defined as an individual's irrational fear or hate of people who identify or are perceived as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (Schuiling et al., 2011).

**(vii) Queer** In this study the term 'queer' will be used in its broadest sense to refer to all Lesbian, gay, Bisexual, transgender, questioning, plus (LGBTQ+) because of the fluidity of sexuality, gender expression and identity. According to Kumashiro (2002), the term "queer" includes more than sexual orientations. Instead, he believes that heterosexism and gender oppression, as well as sexuality, sex, and gender, are all intertwined with queerness (Kumashiro, 2002). Though the term "queer" has been appropriated, its historical connotation of being a derogatory term intended to discourage those who are attracted to people of the same gender and sex as well as those whose gender expression is "misaligned" with socially constructed gender identity and performance is still present (Kumashiro, 2002).

**Figure 1.2: Continuum of sexual orientation**



Source: <http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/research/>

The codification of terminology for the spectrum of sexual attraction, initially developed by Alfred Kinsey, was based on the idea of a continuum of sexual orientation (Figure 1.2). At first, it was mostly based on sexual behaviour, i.e., on what people did, rather than on what people felt. The Kinsey scale, also known as the Heterosexual–Homosexual Rating Scale, developed the terminology and popularised three main categories of sexual orientation: heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality (Bailey, 2009; IOM, 2011; Rullo et al., 2014; Savin-Williams, 2014).

**(viii) Heterosexuality** refers to individuals who identify as, for example, “straight” or who’s sexual or romantic attractions and behaviors focus exclusively or mainly on members of the other sex (ASSAf, 2015)

**(ix) Homosexuality** refers to individuals who identify as, for example, “gay”, “lesbian”, or “homosexual “or whose attractions and behaviors focus exclusively or mainly on members of the same sex (ASSAf, 2015)

**(x) Bisexuality** refers to individuals who identify as, for example, “bisexual” or whose sexual or romantic attractions and behaviors are directed at members of both sexes to a significant degree (ASSAf, 2015).

**(xi) Corrective rape** is a term used to describe a hate crime committed against individuals who identify themselves as queer to ‘cure’ or ‘correct’ their sexual orientation because it is

considered as taboo and violates traditional gender roles. These, actions may be caused or influenced by cultural, religious, or political mores and biases (Mulaudzi, 2018).

**(xii) Hate crime** is the victimisation of individuals because of their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, or national origin, sexual orientation, religion, gender, gender identity or disability (Stotzer, 2012). In addition, hate crime in this study is defined based on South African definition as any crime committed with any bias on the grounds listed in section 9 of the constitution. This includes crimes committed because of the criminal's predisposition against the victim's gender, sex, pregnancy, ethnic, social origin, sexual orientation (Naidoo & Karels, 2012).

## **1.8 Outline of chapters**

The overall structure of the study takes the form of six chapters, including this introductory chapter.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study**

The purpose of this chapter was to introduce the research topic by presenting a general introduction of the entire dissertation. This chapter further provided a comprehensive background of the study, the problem statement, as well as outlining the aim of the study, the objectives that would serve as a guide to the study, and the research questions that the study aimed to answer. This chapter also presented the significance of the study and defined relevant concepts that were used in this study.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter presents an overview of the literature that has been conducted by other scholars in relation to the queerphobic violence and victimisation of self-identifying queer sexual minorities. It begins with a detailed discussion on global perspectives on violent crimes against the queer community, the information that was presented elucidate the origin of this societal malice and, how society perceives homosexuality as well as violent crimes against the queer community and further identifies gaps in literature which this study seeks to explore..

### **Chapter 3: Theoretical framework**

This chapter introduces and describes the theory which guide this research study. The researcher used three theories that are appropriate to explain queerphobic violence and

victimisation. This chapter critically discusses the queer theory, the queer geographic theory and the victim precipitation theory that support the objectives of this study.

#### **Chapter 4: Methodology**

This chapter shows the path the researcher took to articulate their problem and answer the research questions. This chapter outlined the location where the study took place, the research approach, research design, research paradigm, sampling techniques and data collection methods and data analysis methods adopted for the purpose of this study. The chapter further outlined the trustworthiness of the study, ethical considerations, as well as limitations of the study.

#### **Chapter 5: Findings and data analysis**

This chapter presents the findings that emanated from the data collection, and these are presented in themes which emanate from the data analysis procedure. The chapter also discusses these findings.

#### **Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations**

This chapter concludes the dissertation by summarising the main findings of the research and proposes recommendations based on the findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the literature that has been conducted by other scholars in relation to the phenomenon under study and further identifies gaps in literature. Furthermore, casual factors leading to homophobic violence against queer people remain speculative and far too little attention has been paid to lack of studies about sexual identities on the impact of violence against queer people. The primary themes discussed include the history of violent crimes, globally perspectives on violent crimes against queer people, also, this chapter will discuss violent crimes against queer people in South Africa.

#### 2.2 History of violent crimes against queer people

A large number of transgender and gender-non confirming individuals are murdered every year in the United States (U.S), and the murder of black transgender women particularly is prevalent in the U.S (Human Rights Campaign, 2019). Attacks against queer communities are generally motivated by the dominant belief that there is a normal way for people to live. Heteronormative societies therefore police the expressions, desires, behaviours, and roles associated with the gender each person was assigned at birth, known as heteronormativity and cisnormativity (PsycNET, 2018). Gradually the number of these acts of violence has increased rapidly due to the changes in religious, and political views, increased community visibility, and other factors (PsycNET, 2018). There have been some political protests intended to bring about harsher penalties for these crimes in the U.S (PsycNET, 2018).

It is imperative to clarify what exactly is meant by hate crime. Hate crime is the victimisation of individuals because of their actual or perceived race, ethnicity, or national origin, sexual orientation, religion, gender, gender identity or disability (Stotzer, 2012). The term hate crime first came into use in the United States (U.S.) in the early 1980s, however, it is continually used philosophically in order to describe events which occurred prior to that era (FBI, 2015). Tom (2003) further argued that from the Roman persecution of Christians to the Nazi slaughter of Jews, hate crimes were committed by both citizens and governments long before the term was commonly used.

In addition, as Europeans began to colonise the New World in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Native Americans increasingly became the targets of bias motivated intimidation and violence (Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1999). During the past two centuries typical examples of hate crimes in the U.S. include the lynching of African Americans, cross burnings to drive black families from predominantly white neighbourhoods, assaults on queer communities and the paintings of swastikas on Jewish synagogues (Policymakers Guide to Hate Crimes, 2011:9). Therefore, hate crimes against queer people often take place because the perpetrators are homophobic or transphobic. Violence committed against individuals based on their sexual orientation can be either psychological or physical including murder.

South Africa has a long history of violence, and it has been used as a tool of power and governance by colonialists to repress and control the indigenous people (Heinecken, 2020). The apartheid regime from 1948 used violence as part of its repertoire to gain and maintain social and political control. Under South Africa's ruling National Party from 1948 homosexuality was a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison, this law was used to harass and outlaw the South African gay community events and political activism (Dixson, 2020). In 1966, the Forest Town raid on a large party in Forest Town, Gauteng led to further restrictions on gay and lesbian (Dixson, 2020).

The Forest Town raid was a 1966 police raid that targeted queer people in Forest Town. The raid led to proposed anti-homosexuality legislation in South Africa. Many historians have argued that same sex relationships were historically prohibited in South Africa as the Common law crime of "Sodomy" and "unnatural sexual offence", inherited from Roma-Dutch law (John 1996; Jonathan et.al 1991; Ryan,2001ef). From the 1960s to the late 1980s, the South African Defence Forces, forced white gay and lesbian soldiers to undergo various medical "cures" for their sexual orientation, including sex reassignment surgery (John 1996; Jonathan et.al 1991; Ryan,2001). Thus, it can be argued that in South Africa violent acts such as torture, fighting, physical and emotional abuse including rape and murder were also evident in queer communities.

Prior to 1994, same-sex partnerships were not only denied legal protection but were also considered immoral. Males who engaged in homosexual behaviour risked being imprisoned (Mamba, 2021). In 1996, a new constitutional law declared that under section 9(1) that everyone is even before the law, this included the right to equal safety and assistance of the law

(Matebeni, 2021). The protection of queer individuals through the inclusion of sexual orientation is structured on the framework where unfair discrimination cannot take place.

Traditionally, it has been argued that sexual minority groups including homosexual men, lesbian women and other individuals suffered under the apartheid government; They were labelled as criminals and ostracized as perverts and outcasts by society, because of their sexuality. South Africans who were already enduring the weight of apartheid felt this exclusion and marginalisation more keenly (National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality v Minister of Justice, 1999; Minister of Home Affairs, 2000). One may argue that the South African society is still battling with homophobia, corrective rape perpetrators going unpunished, and queer individuals violently attacked for their sexuality.

South Africa is one of the few African countries that protects and recognises queer communities' rights. However, protection afforded to the queer community by the hate crimes bill is not guaranteed (Daily Maverick, 2021). Queer communities still experience social stigma leading to gender and sexually motivated hate crimes on the increase in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal townships such as KwaMashu where the crime of corrective rape and murder are on the rise. Doug (2008) argues that victims of violence who are both queer and a person of colour may find it difficult to distinguish whether the violence was based on their sexuality or gender identity or whether racism also played a major role. The following section covers the global perspectives of violent crimes against queer communities.

## **2.3 Global perspectives on violent crimes against queer people**

People who identify as queer are still subjected to discrimination, assault, harassment, and social stigma on a global scale. While social movements have shown progress in many nations toward acceptance, homosexuality is still illegal and punishable, often with death, in other nations, (Bandera, 2023). Currently, 62 nations still have laws that make it illegal to be gay, and many of those laws also forbid other types of gender expression (Bandera,2023).

### **2.3.1 Iran**

Iran is a mountainous, arid, and ethnically diverse country in South-western Asia. The country maintains a rich and distinctive cultural and social continuity dating back to the Achaemenian period, which began in 550 BCE (Britannica, 2024). In recent decades it has become known for its unique brand of Islamism. According to Iran's Islamic law, homosexuality is prohibited and is punishable by life in prison (Bander, 2023). Consensual same-sex sexual intercourse is

illegal, and individuals found guilty may be sentenced to prison, public flogging, or even the death penalty (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The Human Rights Watch (2021) reported that two men were sentenced to death by hanging after being found guilty of engaging in homosexual activity. Women who engage in same-sex relationships are not subject to the death penalty, however, they face fines and physical punishment (Bander, 2023).

The Iran government uses theological and cultural justifications to support its position on homosexuality, arguing that it is a sin and goes against Islamic principles. As a result, the government and the public in Iran actively discriminate against, harass, and violently attack queer people (Bandera, 2023). It has previously been observed that more than 1000 Iranians discriminate and violate queer individuals and others whose sexual practices and gender expression do not conform to government endorsed socio-religious norms (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Its further details incidents in which law enforcement officials allegedly mistreated, and in some cases even tortured, actual or suspected members of the queer community in both open areas and detention institutions (Human Rights Watch, 2010).

According to the U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (2021) Iranian security forces harassed, and arrested individuals suspected of being queer community members, in some cases raiding their houses or monitoring their internet activity to gather information. Individuals charged with “sodomy” faced trials where basic evidentiary standards were not upheld (Human Rights Practices, 2021). According to the United Nations and World Health Organization (2023) queer individuals were also reportedly forced to undergo anal or “sodomy” examinations while in regime custody, which potentially constitutes torture.

A survey on LGBTI community in Iran conducted by the Iranian Lesbian and Transgender Network (6Rang) revealed that approximately 20 % of participants reported to have been victims of violence by police officers, security forces, prosecutors, and/or judges (2020). According to the 6Rang, participants reported humiliation or physical violence by the ordinary police, security forces, and patrol police (moral police) for reasons such as different gender expression, breaching binary dress-code norms, insufficient hijab (Islamic veil) or participating in house parties (2020).

To illustrate, Navid a 42-year-old gay man who owned a Café outside Tehran, told Human Rights Watch about an attack he suffered in 2007 at the hands of two men, he said they picked him up as he was leaving work, handcuffed him, and drove him to his home where they beat and forced him inside and sexually assaulted him. Furthermore, the majority of the Muslims in

Iran are homophobic and have continued to criticise same-sex unions as unlawful, immoral, and corrupt despite criticism from other countries and human rights organisations. As a result, heterosexual and cisgender individuals in Iran harass and punish gays through the legal system (Human Rights Watch, 2010)

The death sentence is one type of punishment for homosexuality under the Iranian penal code, which also forbids all sexual conduct outside of the institution of marriage, same-sex relationships, and queer-related matters (Karimi & Bayatrizi, 2018). One exception that offers a way to have legal interactions is temporary marriage contracts, but queer persons are not given this choice. With executions of between 4000 and 6000 members of the queer community since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has become one of the most homophobic nations in the world (Human Rights Watch, 2010). Additionally, recent evidence suggest that enforcement of this rule is ongoing and occasionally seen in the news, as in January 2019 when a 31-year-old man was publicly hanged after being found guilty of having homosexual intercourse (Sacha, 2021). According to human rights attorney Shadi Sadr, government has prosecuted not only those who engage in same-sex relationships but everyone who publicly advocate for and support queer communities' rights. Queer activists in Iran have expressed concern that the regime has used the pretence of other crimes, such as sexual assault, to execute queer Iranians. Rezvaneh Mohammadi, an activist for gender equality in 2019 was convicted to five-years in prison for the unprecedented charge of "collusion against national security by seeking to normalise homosexual relations" (United Against Nuclear Iran, 2023:4).

Surprisingly, gender reassignment and the existence of transgender people is allowed in Iran, given the strict and draconian official laws towards homosexuality in the country (Human Rights Watch, 2010). However, as in many other nations, Iran has a negative attitude toward transgender people on a personal and societal level. Transgender citizens frequently experience harassment and social discrimination from other citizens because of the conventional attitudes that have been long led on the prosecution of non-heterosexual and cisgender people. Even completely transitioned individuals face rejection and frequently relocate to different cities to start over with their new, accepted identity. Several studies have reported that a lack of support for transgender people causes them to flee from home, engage in inappropriate behaviours and substance abuse and experience a lack of family support (Marshal, 2013). Thus, transgender individuals experience limited access to social services and a lack of social support and as such they lead a low quality of life (Zeluf et al., 2016).

In a study by Yang et al. (2015) trans women experienced different forms of stigma, maltreatment, disrespect, and inequality in accessing decent employment and dwelling places, as well as healthcare and legal services. Important to note is that transgender individuals' experiences of healthcare services are filled with feelings of humiliation and deprivation. Despite their special needs, they are not understood by professional healthcare providers, as a result, they cannot speak openly about their identity and feel doubtful or ashamed (Plöderl et al., 2015). Therefore, it could be argued that transgender individuals have healthcare issues in Iran.

### **2.3.2 Nigeria**

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse federation of 36 autonomous states and the Federal Capital Territory located on the western coast of Africa (Britannica, 2024). In Nigeria, those who identify as queer persons are seen as malignancies that are eating away at the fabric of society and must be eradicated (Dibia, 2016). Anyone found guilty of homosexuality faces a maximum sentence of 14 years in jail, according to the federal Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act of 2014. Akuson (2017) argues that death by stoning is a punishment under Sharia law, which is applied in 12 of the country's northern states.

According to a 2013 Pew Global survey, 98% of Nigerians argue that homosexuality should not be tolerated in society. Surveys such as conducted by The Initiative for Equal Rights (TIERS) in 2017 argue that 90% of Nigerians support the upholding of the country's anti-gay laws. In this case, queer individuals are tortured and extorted by authorities and harassed by community members. Being a member of the queer group without restriction became a crime in Nigeria in January 2014. In 2016, the young man Akinnifesi Olumide Olubnmi was lynched for being gay by a mob of furious youngsters in the unpopular Nigerian town of Ondo West, Ondo State, he passed on the next day (Dibia, 2016). However, in 2016, former Nigerian president Goodluck Jonathan stated that:

*"Since passing the ban on same-sex marriage, I can attest that not a single Nigerian has been discriminated as a result of the law."*

Furthermore, Akinnifesi's death highlights that this was not an isolated incident of violence against a person identifying as queer in Nigeria since the enactment of the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA) in January 2014 under the leadership of former President Goodluck Jonathan. This legislation is argued to have contributed to an environment where queer individuals face heightened risks of attacks, threats, and arrests (Dibia, 2016). The lack of legal

protections for queer people in Nigeria exacerbates the situation, as the government is accused of not taking significant steps to address or mitigate the tide of violence. Instead, state institutions appear complicit in perpetuating hostility toward queer individuals (Dibia,2016).

A 2015 study conducted by various human rights organizations in Nigeria revealed that, in the year following the enactment of the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA), 282 individuals experienced violations of their freedom of expression and human rights due to their gender identity. The report detailed 172 incidents of human rights violations across 18 states. While proponents of the SSMPA may argue that it seeks to protect the sanctity of heterosexual marriages, similar to the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) in the United States, the SSMPA extends further by criminalising several aspects of homosexual identity, including same-sex associations (Dibia, 2016). One of the most concerning aspects of the SSMPA is its application to target and harm organisations that provide support and advocacy for queer individuals.

Africa is home to 55 countries, of which 36 enforce laws against homosexuality, making Nigeria's targeting and discrimination of queer individuals' part of a broader regional trend (Dibia, 2016). Legal rights for queer individuals across the continent continue to erode, with new laws like Nigeria's Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA) and Uganda's anti-gay bill further restricting the already limited freedoms granted under existing anti-sodomy laws (Dibia, 2016). These developments significantly curtail the human right to freedom of expression for queer individuals in many African nations. Historically, Nigeria's stance on queer issues has been inconsistent, often marked by deep-seated prejudice against individuals perceived as gay or those who do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth (Dibia, 2016). Such discrimination has long restricted queer individuals' freedoms, a situation that has worsened in recent years. Notably, during the 1980s and early 1990s, the existence of queer individuals in Nigeria received minimal public attention, reflecting a stark contrast to the heightened scrutiny they face today (Dibia, 2016).

In February 2009, Nigeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ojo Madueke, stated during an address at the United Nations Universal Periodic Review on Human Rights in Geneva:

*“We have no record of any group of Nigerians who have come together under the umbrella of a queer group, let alone to start talking of their rights.”*

His statement essentially dismissed the existence of queer individuals in Nigeria. He further claimed that

*“if they are an amorphous group, then the question of violence against them does not arise, let alone negotiating special rights for them.”*

This reflects a broader denial of the queer community’s existence and, by extension, their right to freedom of expression. Unfortunately, this perspective has permeated Nigerian society, shaping public opinion and policy. A recent poll indicates that over 85% of Nigerians support the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act (SSMPA) and do not believe queer individuals deserve any rights (Akuson, 2016).

It is now established from a variety of studies that the queer community and other sexual minority groups in Nigeria are not only violated physically but they are also being deprived by the Bill of Rights. Based on the above, several lines of evidence suggest that there are no protection laws for the queer individuals, and they face violence daily from the states and from the communities they reside in.

### **2.3.3 Uganda**

Homosexuality in Uganda has been punishable by life imprisonment since colonial Britain outlawed it in 1950. Nevertheless, today’s lawmakers have deemed that too lenient. A new law signed on May 2023 by President Yoweri Museveni provides for the death penalty for same-sex acts, including those that might spread HIV (INFO MIGRANTS, 2023). Other clauses envisage long prison sentences for ‘promoting’ homosexuality or even for renting a room to a gay couple. This is after the parliament speaker, Anita Among stated that:

*“We have a culture to protect, the western world will not come to rule Uganda”.*

Furthermore, recent evidence suggests that queer people in Uganda continue to face major discrimination, actively encouraged by religious and conservative political and community leaders (*PinkNews*, 2014). Violent and brutal attacks against queer people are common and habitually done by the state officials (INFO MIGRANTS, 2023).

According to Tim (2019), families where same-sex person are the head of the home are not eligible for the same legal protection available to opposite-sex couples. This is because same-sex marriage was constitutionally banned since 2005. Furthermore, homosexual relations were accepted and common in precolonial Ugandan society. The British empire introduced laws punishing homosexuality when Uganda became a British colony, these laws were still practised after independence (*PinkNews*, 2014). Samuel (2023) argues that the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023, which prescribes up to 20 years in prison for ‘promotion of homosexuality’ and the death

penalty for ‘aggravated homosexuality’ came into force in 2023, making Uganda the only Christian majority country to punish individuals for consensual same-sex acts with the death penalty (Nicholls, 2023). In addition, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, has made his position clear by stating that: “we cannot accept that living unnaturally is a human right, and the Ugandan society has never supported homosexuality” (Chapman, 2016). Therefore, it can be argued that violent crimes are viewed as good riddance of homosexuality since the death penalty is used as punishment for anyone found guilty of homosexuality.

According to the WH.GOV (2023) since the Anti-Homosexuality Act was introduced, reports of violence and discrimination targeting Ugandans who are or perceived to be queer are on the rise. The queer community members are now living in fear of going into the public spaces such as healthcare institutions since they are targeted by hateful reprisals. It has been reported that some have been evicted from their homes or fired from their jobs and some have received graver threats including lengthy prison sentences, violence, abuse among others (WH.GOV, 2023).

Based on the above, it can be concluded that members of the queer community in these countries are among the most vulnerable to violent crimes perpetrated by their communities, state institutions, and law enforcement officials. Evidence indicates that queer individuals are frequently subjected to verbal and physical abuse and are often compelled to conceal their sexual orientation or gender identity (Bandera, 2023). This enforced secrecy contributes to social isolation, depression, and various mental health challenges. Furthermore, queer individuals are frequently targeted by vigilante groups or mobs, who may assault or even kill them with impunity; attempts to seek help from authorities often result in further victimization, as police and other officials routinely neglect their complaints or fail to take meaningful action (Bandera, 2023).

While many countries prohibit homosexuality, South Africa stands in contrast by decriminalising it and enshrining the rights of queer individuals in its Constitution and Bill of Rights. As a democratic nation, South Africa allows queer individuals to live openly, with legal protections that include the right to same-sex marriage (Mkhize, 2018). However, despite these advancements, reports indicate that queer individuals in South Africa continue to face violence and rights violations due to their sexual orientation. Mkhize (2018) argues that although South Africa has made significant progress in granting queer individuals the freedom to engage in same-sex relationships, they remain vulnerable to violent crimes. Similarly, Kutsch (2013)

highlights that, despite the legal acceptance of homosexuality, hate crimes against queer individuals persist in South Africa.

## **2.4 Contributing factors to homophobic violence in township communities**

### **2.4.1. Homosexuality and African culture**

The term “homosexuality” was first used in the United States of America but originated from European medical literature (Blasius & Phelan, 1997). Originally known as a number one “sexual inversion”, homosexuality was a descriptive term used to denote a sexual illness (Le Vay, 1996). Furthermore, Msibi (2018) argues that if truth be told the term homosexuality is un-African. Epprecht (2008:8) agrees that “the term homosexuality, notably, suggests a clarity arising from a specific history of scientific enquiry, social relations, and political struggle that did not historically exist in Africa and still does not very accurately describe the majority of men who have sex with men or women who have sex with women in Africa”.

According to Mkhize (2018:12) homosexuality can be defined as the strong feelings a person experiences of sexual, physical and emotional attraction towards another person of the same sex. This implies that men have such feelings for other men and women have such feelings for other women. While a variety of definitions of the term ‘culture’ have been suggested, this study will use the definition first suggested by Albertyon (2009) who states that culture encompasses the values that the group members hold, the norms they follow and the material goods that they produce. In addition, he views culture as something that defines not merely how we view ourselves but also how we view others. According to Ezedike (2009), African culture is defined as the total shared arts, beliefs, moral codes and practices that characterize Africans and can also be referred to as an African heritage’.

According to Schaff (2010) most black South Africans deem homosexuality as a westernised phenomenon brought in by colonialism and western influences. However, scholars argue that homosexuality is not a western import. It existed before colonisation of African nations (Mamba, 2021). However, the missionaries who first came into the African continent regarded it as a taboo and thus the concept of ‘homophobia’ came to fruition in Africa (McCornick, 2013). Several lines of evidence suggest that the late Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe has been blunt and upheld his position with fierce consistency. At a United Nation General Assembly meeting, Mugabe said:

*“We reject attempts to prescribe to new rights that are contrary to our norms, values traditions, and beliefs. We are not gay”.*

In essence, there is a belief that Africans are not and cannot be homosexuals because homosexuality goes against what it means to be African, and it is against African culture (Mamba, 2021).

African societies historically have been, with very few exceptions, far more tolerant and accepting of non-normative sexualities and behaviors than those who colonised them (Epprecht, 2004; Hoad, 2006; Murray, 2002; & Cantu et al., 1999). This is one of the ironies of modern-day Africa, which is governed by communities. It was not always the case that same-sex practices implied a particular sexual orientation or prohibited opposite-sex relationships or acts; this was especially true in African society at the time (Diversity of Humans Sexuality, 2015). For instance, many males engaged in same-sex behaviors in more stereotypically masculine contexts, such as initiation rites, age-cohorts, “tribal” militias, and, later, with the arrival of colonialism, the mining industry or colonial jails. Large numbers of men practiced same-sex activities without necessarily feeling they were ‘homosexual’ (Diversity of Humans Sexuality, 2015). On the contrary, many of these men maintained a categorical heterosexual orientation and worldview (Moodie & Ndatshe, 1994; Hoad, 2006; Tamale, 2011).

Mampane (2020) hypothesises that heterosexual marriages are revered in African culture, this is because of the financial and reproductive gains such as lobola or bride price in the Zulu culture as well as the generative additions through procreation. Ngubane (2020) revealed that most traditional South African communities hold marriage and children with great esteem. Mulaudzi (2018) affirms that large families created through reproduction serve functional roles such as physical labour, continuation of bloodlines and family names. Homosexuality does not offer these liberties in the African culture hence it is considered taboo, unacceptable, and therefore seen as non-conformance to societal rule hence punishments are very likely.

Mulaudzi (2018) quoted the late Zulu King Zwelithini when he expressed his take on homosexuality stating:

*“If there was homosexuality in past and if homosexuality was permitted in Zulu culture, then there would not be as many there are today”*

in essence, two men or two women cannot procreate so the purpose of marriage is not compiled with. The purpose of marriage is to build a family and grow a nation and if people of the same

sex are together, they cannot fulfil their duty to the community (Mulaudzi, 2018). This argument is used to support the belief that homosexuality is contrary to African culture, because of the importance of procreation in African marriages (Manion & Dewaal, 2008).

Furthermore, most nations in Africa view same-sex relationships as a crime, besides many leaders in the continent have articulated in clear homophobic tones, pointing out that homosexuality is not African (Mamba, 2021). In the views of these leaders, homosexuality is “un-African” and represents a major danger to the cultural integrity of their countries. This idea raises issues like: why is homosexuality considered un-African, yet some queer people are native to and originate from African societies? When would a queer person learn and embrace such a lifestyle if part of their sexual orientation and masculinity becomes apparent at an early age in some cases but not until they were adolescents in others? “What is important in terms of recent work is that strong evidence has accumulated to suggest that sexual orientation in humans becomes established for most people earlier than had previously been thought; Studies suggest that the initial stages of this ‘discovery’ occurs in mid-childhood and predates, for most, the onset of puberty, i.e. the sense of whom one is attracted to develops early in life and, for most, remains the dominant orientation for life” (Diversity in Human Sexuality, 2015: 50).

In addition, the violent crimes committed against queer people receive less attention due to the stereotype that homosexuality is un-African. Therefore, a need for the present research around this topic is critical to explore. South African communities, particularly in the townships of KwaZulu-Natal province are deeply rooted in the Zulu culture and a way of life. This includes the practise of some of the cultural practices such as lobola, reed dance, umbondo and polygamy (Mamba, 2021). These practices are compulsory for community members and failure to practice them results to one being labelled as deviant. In the Zulu culture, same sex marriages are not allowed, and community leaders strongly disapprove to grant community members permission to marry or be involved in same sex relationships (Awoniyi, 2015). Therefore, same sex marriages are perceived or viewed as violating cultural norms. Finland (2011), argue that culture plays a significant role in shaping the attitude of a society with Reddy (2013) adding that culture is all about the acceptable norms, beliefs, and standards that each society holds upon its members. Therefore, this is reason why queer people are considered as deviant and demonic. Which ultimately, results in high levels of ill treatment of those who identify as queer (Nkoli, 1995).

According to Lee and Quam (2013) in township areas the impact of discrimination is different because non-conformity to traditional gender roles is poorly understood. The cultural conservativeness in township areas causes homophobia. Queer people have different homophobic experiences, and these can range from verbal, physical, emotional, and mental abuse. The LGBTQI community experience various forms harassment and abuse from their peers within these communities. The lack of social cohesion toward queer people do not provide a safe environment for these individuals.

Brown (2012) maintains that many heterosexual men in South Africa regard lesbianism as a disrespect to their masculinity and diminution of their power. Hate crimes such as corrective rape, also known as a curative rape, is a brutal act of violence through which women and teenagers who are, or presumed to be, lesbians are raped to cure them of their homosexuality (Breen & Nel, 2011). Naidoo and Karels (2012) purport that perpetrators believe that having sex with a male will help cure and correct a homosexual woman's orientation. In South Africa, lesbians from the township communities are more prone to fall prey to this corrective rape due to the cultural environment. According to Morrissey (2013), black lesbian women are of concern because much of the prevailing discourse in South Africa black societies denotes that lesbianism is forbidden and same sex desire is not acceptable in South African culture. The general notion held by most black communities is that homosexuality is "Un-African" (Morrissey, 2013). Breen and Nel (2011) further contend that African lesbians in townships are particularly vulnerable to corrective rape and possible murder because men feel they challenge and threaten traditional gender norms.

#### **2.4.2 Religion**

Opponents of homosexuality in Africa often cite religion, particularly Christianity and Law as the reasons for their justifications for rejecting homosexuality, while Specific passages in the Bible seem to condemn certain homosexual acts, the Bible itself is a foreign document in much of Africa (Msibi, 2018). However, it can be argued that there are a lot of contradictions within Christianity, some scriptures are used to discriminate against other people or condemn homosexuality. Msibi (2018) further argues that Africa rejects ideologies brought from the West, then, religion imported from the West obviously cannot be used to oppose anything that is rejected because it has alien origins. Another argument against religion and homosexuality is that homosexual marriages are not included in the bible scriptures because homosexuality is against the word of God. Schoeman (2017) argue that according to Christians there are no examples of same-sex marriages because in God's eyes all marriages are heterosexual, and

homosexual marriage is ungodly and not recognised. However, Gnuse, (2015: 70) contend that “the scriptures are historically and culturally limited”. He further argues that relying on scriptures which were written thousands of years ago can be limiting as they are not relevant to the culture of today due to culture and lifestyles revolving over time. It can therefore be argued that religion has influenced the way people perceive queer people which can lead to negative attitudes towards queer people.

## **2.5 Homophobic violent attacks committed against queer people in township communities**

### **2.5.1 Homophobic Bullying**

Ging and Neary (2019) note that homophobic bullying encapsulates name-calling, physical violence, sexual harassment, or online bullying as well as social segregation of people who are gay, lesbian or transgender. Queer individuals experience this type of aggravation because their behaviour is non-compliant with typical gender stereotypes (Ging & Neary, 2019). Most homophobic bullying takes place at a time when young people, especially boys, are tentative about their own emerging identity. They are subjected to confusing messages about what society deems as correct gendered behaviour and what it means to be gay (Hall, 2013). Ging and Neary (2019) argue that the frustration and stress amongst young queer individuals regarding their sexuality further adds to their vulnerability and susceptibility to bullying or physical and emotional abuse. Jarryd Harris, a local member of the queer community, said although his family has accepted his sexual orientation, he is always wary of how he behaves in public for fear of harassment (Khanyile, 2020).

Brown (2012) argues that queer individuals in townships are exposed to numerous negative homophobic bullying, these are physical, emotional, or verbal. Brown’s (2012) study demonstrates that queer individuals have frequently experienced derogatory comments such as verbal abuse that include offensive names calling such as moffie, faggot dyke or isitabane. These disrespectful terms given to the queer people are based on their non-conformity to masculine or feminine behaviour. Many queer individuals residing in townships areas have reported verbal abuse due to their sexual orientation or gender expression whilst some have experienced more severe physical aggravation and assault because they portray these characteristics. Naidoo and Karels, (2012) argue that although queer individuals across the country experience harassment and abuse, individuals in township communities are more

frequently victimised as opposed to those individuals in suburban and urban areas. Experiences of homophobic discrimination are associated with an increased prevalence of psychological disorders and increased odds of reporting suicidal notions amongst gay and bisexual men. Experiencing homophobia may cause severe physical and mental health consequences for gay and bisexual men (Chard et al., 2015). Fitzsimons (2020) found that gay men are far more ostracized and detested than lesbian women.

### **2.5.2 Stigmatisation and discrimination by association**

Friends and family members of lesbian, gay, and transgender individuals are often compelled to confront their own fears, prejudices, and assumptions. At the same time, they frequently become targets of homophobia, facing accusations of "guilt by association" (Hall, 2013). Families with gay, lesbian, or transgender members may also experience harassment and victimization simply due to their association with a queer relative (Ging & Neary, 2019). This dual stigmatisation places significant emotional and psychological strain on queer individuals. Not only must they cope with societal and community ostracization, but they also endure the added burden of witnessing the stigma and victimization directed at their loved ones. This compounded distress can lead to severe mental health challenges, including self-harm or suicidal ideation (Ging & Neary, 2019).

Research conducted by Zahlan, Khauli, and Khoury (2020) reveals that in many Arab countries, homosexuality is criminalised, with homophobic violence often going unpunished. These legal systems frequently impose imprisonment and hefty fines for homosexual acts, further perpetuating societal stigma. A study conducted in Beirut by Wagner et al. (2013) found that while homosexuality is more accepted in urban areas, homosexual men in township communities often conceal their sexuality due to the fear of stigmatisation. Participants in the study reported living with extended family members and expressed concerns about potential physical violence, abuse, discrimination, and even death based on their sexual orientation. This research highlights the pervasive impact of homophobia, which not only affects queer individuals but also extends to their familial and social networks, thereby creating a cycle of fear, discrimination, and psychological harm.

Gocmen and Yilmaz (2017) argue that individuals are often subjected to stigmatisation for a variety of reasons, which can lead to profound emotional and psychological effects. Stigmatisation frequently triggers feelings of sadness, low self-esteem, and anger (Moufakkir,

2015). Queer individuals, in particular, are often labelled and framed as "other" or "both," further reinforcing their marginalisation (De Vries, 2015; McConnell et al., 2018). This labelling is perpetuated by those who discriminate against queer individuals, solidifying their position as outsiders within society.

A study conducted by Orok and Tunc (2022) revealed that queer individuals who lived openly and authentically in accordance with their gender identities were particularly vulnerable to stigmatisation, rejection, and loss of reputation. Participants in the study described experiences of marginalization and noted that such treatment often led to their being labelled as either "sick" or dangerous. This stigmatisation created an environment of "object violence," forcing many queer individuals to live in fear as a consequence of their honesty and authenticity.

In response to these challenges, some participants reported concealing their gender identities and adopting a façade in public, effectively leading double lives. They believed that this strategy was a necessary means of self-protection against societal stigma. Despite these efforts, the impact of living inauthentically combined with the broader societal rejection remained a significant burden. Thus, the queer community continues to face pervasive stigma and its associated challenges, including marginalization, fear, and psychological distress. This underscores the urgent need for societal change to foster acceptance and inclusivity, thereby alleviating the immense toll that stigma imposes on queer individuals.

## **2.6 Societal perceptions on homosexuality in township communities in South Africa**

Mulaudzi (2018) highlights the enduring stigma against homosexuality in South Africa, referencing former President Jacob Zuma's controversial statement: "When I was growing up, *'ungqingili'* (a gay person) would not have stood in front of me; I would knock him out." Although Zuma later apologised for this comment, it reflects a broader rejection of homosexuality by many leaders. This rhetoric further highlights how misinformed and resistant traditional leaders are about diverse sexual identities within South African communities. The lack of education and research on sexual identities contributes significantly to the violent treatment of queer individuals, as many have internalised false beliefs, framing homosexuality as disgraceful and unacceptable within society.

Lee and Quan (2013) argue that queer individuals in township areas are often judged and discriminated against for deviating from societal norms and principles, leading to their

ostracization and lack of recognition. This social exclusion has perpetuated high rates of rights violations against queer individuals, particularly in the post-apartheid context. Dlamini (2006) adds that many Africans have internalised the belief that homosexuality is a foreign import from Western countries, a notion supported by Sithole (2019), who asserts that queer identities are rarely documented or studied within African contexts. This lack of representation in African literature reinforces negative perceptions and deepens the stigma surrounding homosexuality.

Whipple (2012) emphasises that in countries where Christianity is the dominant religion, like South Africa, the likelihood of legislation criminalizing homosexuality is lower. However, Christian beliefs are often weaponized to delegitimize queer identities. Sithole (2019) highlights that the KwaZulu-Natal province, where Christianity is prevalent, exhibits strong adherence to biblical interpretations that cast homosexuality as sinful and demonic. Lock (2002) echoes this, noting that Christian teachings are frequently invoked in debates surrounding homosexuality. Dlamini (2006) further argues that rejecting heterosexuality is seen by some as a cultural and religious curse within African communities, intensifying the social rejection of queer individuals. Despite the legalisation of same-sex relationships in South Africa, Richard (2006) notes that societal acceptance remains a significant challenge. Violent attacks and social exclusion of queer individuals persist, rooted in struggles to reconcile traditional beliefs with evolving norms around sexual diversity.

Surveys, such as those by Duncan et al. (2019), reveal that heteronormativity remains widespread in South Africa, contributing to discrimination against individuals who defy traditional gender roles. Gender expectations, typically dictated by societal norms and an individual's sex at birth, frame acceptable behaviour. Muller (2015) identifies heteronormative patriarchal discourse as a mechanism that silences female sexuality and delegitimizes homosexuality, framing it as 'un-African'. Nzimande (2020) concludes that heteronormativity, as a socially constructed concept, trivialises queer identities while upholding the supremacy of heterosexuality. Across these studies, homosexuality is consistently portrayed as a societal threat highlighting the urgent need for education, advocacy, and systemic change to combat the entrenched stigma and violence faced by queer individuals in South Africa.

## **2.7 Protections rights for queer communities**

According to the South African Constitution, the queer community is entitled to equal human rights, similar to all citizens living in the country. These rights are protected by law

enforcement and are upheld through policies designed to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals are included in these human rights protections, which extend to their communities regardless of gender identity (Cock, 2003). The Constitution obligates the state to respect, protect, and fulfil the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Section 10 of the Bill of Rights guarantees everyone's inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected. Other rights include the right to life and the right to bodily security and autonomy (Matebeni, 2021).

Despite these constitutional guarantees, queer activists continue to call for stronger protections against hate crimes. The tragic killings of Siphamandla Khoza, Andile Lulu Nthuthela, Nathaniel Spokgoane Mbele, Lonwabo Jack, and many others highlight how these rights are often disregarded. Nath (2011) notes that South African police do not systematically categorize gender-based violence or hate crimes against queer individuals, making it challenging to accurately determine statistics on corrective rape, violence, or hate crimes. Section 27 of the Constitution provides for the right to access healthcare services, while Section 29 guarantees the right to basic education. However, queer communities face significant barriers in accessing social resources, including education, healthcare, housing, employment, and recreational activities. Homophobia leads to marginalization within families, schools, and communities. Black lesbians, in particular, face exclusion from activist movements and national campaigns against gender-based violence (GBV). State institutions often fail to record violence against lesbians based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Media representations also predominantly portray Black lesbians as victims of violence, perpetuating a one-dimensional narrative (Mkhize, 2022).

The exclusion and violence faced by queer individuals prevent them from fully participating in society, politics, education, culture, and the economy. These experiences often lead to negative outcomes such as self-harm, suicide, and substance abuse as coping mechanisms for homophobic violence (Mkhize, 2022). Nath (2011) further highlights that communities fail to provide safe spaces for queer individuals, denying them the freedom to contribute meaningfully to society or utilize public resources and services. The key question remains: can queer individuals freely exercise their rights, express their identities, and live according to their sexual orientation, especially when their existence causes no harm to others or society?

Coleman (2008) questions whether states have the right to regulate consensual relationships and the expression of attraction between adults.

The *Diversity in Human Sexuality* report (2015), particularly in Sections 6 and 7, confirms that there is no scientific evidence to suggest that homosexuality harms individuals or society. Instead, harms associated with same-sex orientation arise from adverse social environments that discriminate against and persecute non-heteronormative sexualities. In many African societies, legislators prioritize communal well-being over individual human rights. This often leads to the perception of queer individuals as threats to the "natural" functioning of communities rather than constituents deserving consultation and protection. Legislators' views are shaped by the belief that heterosexuality is the default human state and that queer individuals undermine this norm.

However, scientific evidence refutes this notion, demonstrating that heterosexuality is merely the most prevalent among a naturally occurring spectrum of sexualities. Historically, many African cultures have recognised this diversity, acknowledging the wide range of sexual orientations, identities, and practices as integral to communal well-being (Cantu et al., 1999; Gevisser & Cameron, 1995; Herdt, 1997; SMUG, 2014). These findings challenge contemporary legislative frameworks and advocate for a more inclusive understanding of human sexuality.

### **2.7.1 Secondary victimisation and unreported crimes and the queer community**

According to Orth (2002), secondary victimisation refers to the harm victims experience not as a direct result of a criminal act but through the reactions of institutions and individuals toward them. Institutionalised secondary victimisation encompasses a range of consequences, from inadequate treatment of victims by police to failures in the criminal justice system, such as unsolved cases or the release of offenders. It can also involve the denial of human rights by institutions that refuse to acknowledge victims' experiences. This type of victimisation often manifests as victim-blaming and insensitivity, which further traumatise victims (Orth, 2002).

For queer individuals, reporting crimes is often fraught with challenges, including constant discrimination and the fear of secondary victimisation. Murphy and Barkworth (2014) found that many victims did not report crimes, particularly sexual abuse, because they did not perceive the crimes as severe enough. For example, some queer participants, despite experiencing sexual violence, considered themselves "lucky" for not being beaten or killed and

thus did not view their experiences as warranting police intervention. Another key reason for non-reporting was the desire for privacy to avoid revealing their sexual orientation.

A distrust of the police and the broader criminal justice system also emerged as a significant factor. Participants reported that police were often ineffective at solving crimes, which eroded faith in the system. Muller and Meer (2018) highlighted that queer men with feminine characteristics were frequently dismissed or ridiculed by police, who viewed them as overly dramatic or exaggerating their victimisation. For example, Thobeka Khumalo, a 26-year-old lesbian from KwaMakhutha, reported being threatened by boys on multiple occasions. When she sought help at her local police station, officers laughed at her and refused to open a case (New Frame, 2021). In addition, the report cited in MAMBA online (2024) highlighted deficiencies in training for dealing with GBV cases, a lack of Victim-Friendly Rooms (VRFs) in police stations, inadequate support for victim including medical assistance. The findings from this study concurs with the existing studies on the criminal justice system in South Africa fails to provide adequate measures to effectively protect victims of gender-based violence and violent crimes, particularly queer community.

Queer hate crimes are often more aggressive and involve greater physical harm than other types of victimisations, yet they remain significantly underreported. Queer individuals cited fears of secondary victimisation by social institutions due to the lack of empathy shown toward them (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). Many victims feared for their safety and that of their loved ones if they reported crimes. The lack of community and familial support further discouraged reporting, as disclosing their sexual orientation often led to ostracization.

A consortium of 23 human rights organizations, including the Gay and Lesbian Network and Lawyers for Human Rights, has highlighted the persistent discrimination queer individuals face. They stated: “Not only do we fear for our lives, but we continue to face discrimination all around us. Our state dehumanises us in police stations and government offices.” In response to the ongoing violence, the South African National Civic Organisation Youth Congress (SANCOYC) has organised anti-hate crime awareness walks to address sexual orientation-related crimes and discrimination. These efforts follow the murder of Siphamandla Khoza in KwaMashu and numerous other unreported cases of hate crimes that have left queer communities living in fear.

Further evidence of systemic insensitivity was provided by Sazi Jali of the Trans Hope Organisation, who reported experiencing secondary trauma when interacting with government

institutions. Officials often insist on addressing transgender individuals by the gender they were assigned at birth, exacerbating their victimisation (Daily Maverick, 2021). Despite widespread outcry and repeated calls for government action, recognition of violence against the queer community remains limited. Although the South African Constitution guarantees equal rights for queer individuals, the reality falls far short of these protections. Law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system often fail to apply existing laws effectively, perpetuating secondary victimisation instead of offering protection. This deprives queer individuals of their fundamental right to safety and justice.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Society often views violent crimes against queer individuals as justified punishment for what is perceived as "un-African" behaviour that contradicts cultural and religious norms, particularly within patriarchal and Christian frameworks. This discrimination is exacerbated by social marginalisation, geographical isolation, and rejection by families and institutions, leaving queer individuals vulnerable to violence, including sexual violence used as a form of control. Limited access to information and societal punishment for non-conformance to gender norms further contribute to their plight. Addressing homophobia requires a comprehensive focus on sexual rights, cultural and societal norms, and improved law enforcement to combat violence rooted in sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, which is intrinsically linked to broader gender-based violence issues.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 Introduction

A theory is a plausible or scientifically acceptable general principle or body of principles offered to explain phenomena (Smith, 2021). It is a belief, policy, or procedure proposed or followed as the basis of action. The researcher employed the queer theory, the queer geographic theory and the victim precipitation theory to give a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. By integrating these theories, the researcher sought gain a nuanced understanding of community perceptions of violent crimes against queer individuals in traditional, conservative settings.

#### 3.2 Queer theory

The term "queer theory" was introduced by Teresa de Lauretis in her 1991 work in the feminist cultural studies journal *differences*, titled "*Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities*" (Gust, 2014). Emerging from the field of post-structuralism, queer theory critically examines and deconstructs normative frameworks surrounding gender and sexual practices. It broadly investigates identities and desires that exist outside heterosexual norms, challenging the societal perception of heterosexuality as "natural" or "normal" (Warner, 2011). Chamane (2017) posits that queer theory provides an essential lens for understanding the lived realities of queer individuals, particularly in contexts where societal constructs and normative frameworks produce meaning and influence identity. Unlike a singular theoretical framework, queer theory is an assemblage of intellectual engagements with the intersections of gender, sex, and desire, explored through the lived experiences of queer individuals.

While queer theory originated outside the field of criminology, it has been adopted across social sciences as a conceptual framework for analysing gender and sexual diversity. Zuhridin and Young (2023) define queer theory as a philosophical approach that seeks liberation from societal norms, especially those related to gender and sexuality. It interrogates fixed categories of identity and challenges the binary constructs that have traditionally governed societal understanding of sex, gender, and desire. By emphasizing the fluidity of sexuality (Mamba, 2021) and its performative nature (Hubbard, 2022), queer theory reveals how societal norms

and values structure expectations of individuals, including their roles, behaviours, and identities.

Queer theory critiques the essentialist views of sexuality and identity, which frame them as biologically determined or fixed. Drawing from Foucault (1986), it argues that sexuality is a cultural construct used to sustain power relations, while Butler (1990) asserts that gender identity emerges through the stylized repetition of behaviours and acts. These repetitions reinforce and legitimize societal expectations, situating identity as fluid, dynamic, and context dependent. Nash and Browne (2014) emphasize that queer theory examines power relations and destabilizes established meanings, fostering a critique of normative and deviant sexualities.

Harris (2005) argues that queer theory extends its analysis beyond non-heteronormative sexualities to critique normative behaviours, gender binaries, and the sociocultural systems that perpetuate them. It identifies sexual categories and identities as social constructs, creating and sustaining societal hierarchies and inequalities. Sullivan (2003) highlights the damaging effects of internalized homophobia, particularly the societal belief that homosexuality can or should be “cured” through therapeutic or religious interventions. Awoniyi (2015) and Mader (1993) critique these interventions, asserting that homosexuality is neither a disease nor a curse but rather an inherent aspect of identity. These beliefs, often perpetuated by religious or cultural institutions, contribute to homophobia and violence against queer individuals, especially in contexts like South African townships, where churches hold significant influence (Nath, 2011).

In township communities, queer individuals frequently face stigma, discrimination, and violence due to societal norms rooted in patriarchy and heteronormativity. Studies by Pushparagavan (2014) and Schoeman (2017) highlight the role of religious and cultural teachings in shaping attitudes toward queer identities. Conservative interpretations of religious texts often pathologize or demonize homosexuality, reinforcing homophobic violence and marginalisation. These dynamics compel many queer individuals in townships to remain closeted, navigating their identities in ways that conform to community expectations to avoid discrimination and violence (Dlamini, 2006; Thoreson, 2009).

Queer theory is particularly suited to this study because it addresses the micro and macro dimensions of gender and sexuality. At the micro-level, it examines individual identity and experiences, while at the macro-level, it critiques the societal, cultural, and institutional forces that shape and regulate these identities. By focusing on the intersection of queer identities with social constructs like family, religion, and law enforcement, queer theory offers a

comprehensive lens to analyse the unique challenges faced by queer individuals in township settings (Andreas, 2020).

Moreover, queer theory aligns with queer geographic theory in highlighting the spatial dimensions of identity and discrimination. The two frameworks converge in their recognition of space and place as integral to understanding the lived experiences of queer individuals. As queer individuals navigate spaces defined by heteronormative values, they must often modify their behaviour, dress, and expressions to ensure safety and acceptance (Schaff, 2010; Ngidi et al., 2020). In this sense, queer theory complements the geographic perspective by interrogating how societal norms and power dynamics manifest spatially, creating environments that either enable or constrain queer visibility and agency.

The queer theory serves as a critical tool for challenging societal hierarchies and fostering a nuanced understanding of gender and sexual diversity. Its focus on fluidity, performativity, and the deconstruction of binaries makes it invaluable for exploring the intersectional and spatial dimensions of queer identities. This theoretical framework not only critiques societal norms but also empowers individuals and communities to resist and reimagine these structures, making it highly appropriate for this study.

### **3.3 Queer geographic theory**

Norms and cultural values play a huge role in shaping people's perceptions of homosexuality because these norms and values that are currently in place revolve around homogenous heterosexual space. Therefore, the fact that homosexuality is often seen as something that violates cultural norms reflects the lack of critical examination and understanding of it thereof. Bell and Valentine (2003) argue that space itself has no characteristics of heterosexuality however, heterosexuality is normalised based on how people act in relation to what is suitable in a particular place. Scholars argue that sexuality and identity are fluid, it is enacted based on context and where a person is geographically located (Markus & Moya, 2016). A space is assumed as heterosexual because of the everyday repetition of heterosexual relations thus making it normal. When something other than heterosexuality becomes evident, it disrupts the homogeneous heterosexual space (Markus & Moya, 2016). With the inclusion of queer rights, theorists and activists argue that to gain acceptance people who are gay, lesbian and transgender have to navigate their sexualities based on a locality of heteronormative narrative (Brown & McCartan, 2020).

According to a South African study conducted by Lynch and Sanger (2016) despite the protection of rights for the queer community, socio-economic status such as class and race play an integral part in the discrimination against gays, lesbians, and transsexual individuals. The queer geographic theory focuses on the major role of place and space in the production of sexual identities, practices, communities, subjectiveness of queer space includes its location, nature, subculture, definition and the relationship between space and social justice (Sember, 2003). This is determined by looking at spaces such as communities, finding or creating spaces in which to know ourselves and become known to others (Sember, 2003).

Lynch and Sanger (2016) contend that South African township areas are poorly resourced compared to that of urban areas. Geographically, townships are overpopulated and situated away from safe secure urban areas. These scholars argue that the culture of male patriarchy and privilege is valued in traditional communities such as townships hence when this patriarchy and privilege is threatened it creates a space for homophobia (Lynch & Sanger, 2016). Studies carried out by Reid and Dirsuweit (2017) argue that in townships black lesbian women especially those who are considered as adversaries to the black males not only because of masculine attributes but also because they are seen as competitors trying to win the affection of the women in these townships.

Markus and Moya (2010) argue that your status and social standing in society determines your identity. Giddens' (1989) hypothesizes that while identity is one's own project, from birth we are socialized into a world through our relations with other people using shared mediums such as language, race, ethnicity and cultural frameworks. We are constantly adapting to the social environment that might differ in various cultures. According to Markus and Moya (2010) although our identities are determined by us, our identities are also imparted onto us by others because we are given titles and social roles which we perform such as son, daughter, wife, brother etc. Markus and Moya (2010) contend that our identities are not fixed but rather fluid and dynamic depending on the context, place and circumstance. One's identity depends on the environment and by the people whom you are surrounded by (Markus & Moya, 2010).

The geographic queer theory requires that we pay attention to the way people perform their gender based on their location. Schaff (2010) and Ngidi et.al, (2020) argue that queer persons must constantly remold their behaviour to navigate their environment due to the stigma attached to being homosexual. Queer individuals must; adjust their dressing, act straight and behave heterosexually appropriate to be accepted in traditional township communities (Ngidi

et.al, 2020). It can be argued that it is difficult for queer individuals to live their truths or navigate who they truly are in township settings. Thus, the queer geographic theory is an interdisciplinary approach to exploring and analysing sexuality and space through the lens of queer theory and spatial analytics (Hubbard, 2022).

### **3.4 Victim precipitation theory**

The concept of *Victim Precipitation* was introduced by Marvin Wolfgang in the 1950s to describe the role a victim may play in the occurrence of a crime (Petherick, 2017). This theory posits that victims may, directly or indirectly, influence the events leading to their victimisation. Such actions are categorised as either *active* or *passive*. In active precipitation, victims are believed to provoke or instigate the crime through their deliberate actions, while in passive precipitation, victims unknowingly exhibit characteristics or behaviours that make them vulnerable to crime. For example, passive precipitation may occur in contexts involving power struggles, minority group identities, or societal inequalities, such as sexual orientation (Petherick, 2017).

Within this framework, queer individuals may become targets of violence due to perceived violations of community norms or belief systems. Such targeting often results from deep-seated societal prejudices and structural inequalities rather than any deliberate provocations by the victims themselves. As Petherick and Sinnamon (2014) note, the theory aims to provide a nuanced perspective on the victim's role in crime, countering the traditional portrayal of victims as passive and non-complicit. It highlights the multifaceted interactions between offender characteristics, victim attributes, and environmental contexts that contribute to crimes, particularly violent offenses and hate crimes (Wolfgang, 1957).

The victim precipitation theory also provides insight into the offender-victim relationship. Mufti and Hunt (2013) argue that victims can sometimes become offenders and vice versa, emphasising the complex interplay of behaviours between the two parties. Petherick (2017) asserts that analysing the dynamics of precipitation offers a comprehensive understanding of offenders' motivations and intentions, which can inform crime prevention and victim support strategies.

In the context of queer individuals, this theory sheds light on how societal biases and intolerant environments contribute to their victimisation. For instance, actions such as "outing" revealing someone's sexual orientation or gender identity without consent can expose queer individuals

to harassment or violence. Similarly, microaggressions, subtle yet harmful comments or actions rooted in bias may escalate into overt victimisation. For example, inviting a queer individual to a hostile social setting may result in name-calling, bullying, or privacy violations, highlighting the precarious social positions of queer persons in intolerant communities.

Additionally, self-expression, such as dressing in alignment with one's gender identity, can lead to negative reactions from homophobic or transphobic individuals. While self-expression is vital for authenticity and freedom, it can also increase vulnerability to violence and harassment in unsafe environments. This highlights the dual role of victim precipitation theory in understanding both victimisation and offending without excusing perpetrators or shifting blame entirely onto victims.

From a criminological perspective the theory helps identify risk factors not only for initial victimisation but also for re-victimisation. As Petherick (2017) explains, understanding maladaptive behaviours and their root causes can inform interventions to reduce harm and loss experienced by victims. This approach highlights the interconnectedness of victims and offenders, emphasizing the need to study their behaviours and interactions to fully understand the dynamics of criminal acts (Ainsworth, 2013; Turvey, 2014).

Overall, the victim precipitation theory provides a valuable lens for exploring the victimisation of queer individuals in KwaMashu Township. It highlights the importance of analysing the roles of both victims and offenders, while offering insights into the systemic factors that contribute to queerphobic violence.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In summary, queer theory is essential for understanding queer experiences and identities, particularly how they are shaped by power, discourse, and social norms. Queer geographic theory complements this by examining how space and place influence queer lives and experiences. Additionally, victim precipitation theory provides a useful lens for exploring the dynamics of victim-perpetrator interactions, particularly how certain characteristics or behaviours of queer individuals may influence their victimisation. Queer theory and queer geographic theory offer more robust frameworks for analysing systemic oppression and spatial dynamics, making them particularly valuable for understanding the structural and environmental factors contributing to queerphobic violence in KwaMashu Township.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the research methods that were used to complete and respond to the research problem and objectives. A qualitative methodology was used in this study. The chapter outlines the location where the study was conducted, the research approach, research design, and sampling and data collection methods that were used in this study. This chapter further outlines the research paradigm, ethical considerations, as well as limitations and challenges that the researcher encountered during the study.

#### 4.2 Research approach

Flick (2019) notes that qualitative research is used to describe a variety of techniques in research that fits with description and detailing experiences. Although most current qualitative researchers working with empirical data understand what goes into conducting qualitative research, a clear definition addressing its primary aspect remain unknown (Mkhize, 2018). While a variety of definitions of the term qualitative approach have been suggested, this study used the definition suggested by Bhandari (2020) who saw qualitative research as a research method that involves gathering, and analysing non-numerical data such as texts, audio, and videos, to better understand ideas, opinions, or experiences. This study used a qualitative approach based on its appropriate approach to studying behaviour, lived human experiences, feelings, and societal perceptions (Van Manen, 2016). Therefore, this approach relied more on the shared experiences and perspectives of the people being studied which was of vital significance to ensuring validity of the research findings. The qualitative approach was adopted as it is suited for studying sensitive issues such as queerphobic violence, also the researcher was able to gain a deeper insight of queerphobic violence and victimisation against queer community in terms of understanding queer perceptions on violent crimes against them in township communities.

#### 4.3 Research paradigm

This study adopted an interpretive paradigm. Donoghue (2006) argues that with an interpretive paradigm, the researcher seeks to understand the meanings and interpretations individuals

assign to their experiences and social contexts. Interpretive assumes that reality is subjective, multiple and socially constructed (Nottingham, 2024). Hence, individuals can only understand someone's reality through their own experience of reality which may be different from another person's reality which is shaped by the individual's historically or social perspective. The interpretive paradigm was suitable for this study because the researcher was interested in understanding the perspectives and lived experiences of queer people regarding violent crimes in townships.

#### **4.4 Research Design**

To employ an open and flexible approach, the study adopted exploratory design. Research design is a plan to answer a set of questions (McCombes, 2019). A research design is a framework that includes the methods, and procedures to collect, analyse and interpret data. In other words, research design describes how the researcher will investigate the central problem of the research. Exploratory research design is a methodology that explores research questions that have not previously been studied in depth. It is often used when the issue that the researcher is studying is new, or the data collection process is challenging in some way (George, 2023). Exploratory research design was suitable for this study as the study aimed to explore a phenomenon that is under researched in South Africa. There is little research exploring queerphobic violence and victimisation against queer individuals in South African townships. There is scant research conducted regarding the experiences of violent crimes against queer people residing in the townships. An exploratory research design is well-suited for studying the experiences of violent crimes against queer people because it allows the researcher to examine a relatively under-researched and complex issue.

#### **4.5 Profile of KwaMashu Township**

The research was conducted in KwaMashu Township, which served as the study area. KwaMashu is a location for predominantly the black African community and was established in 1959 in terms of the Black authority Act 1951. It is one of the biggest townships in South Africa, situated 35 kilometers from the Durban Metropolitan in ward 45 of the district municipality. This township is made up of 13 formal settlements and plus or minus 9 informal settlements. KwaMashu has been known as one of the most unsafe areas in Durban (KZN Department of Health, 2019). Residents of KwaMashu have to cope with issues of high rates of sexual abuse, violence, crime, and high rates of HIV. The study was motivated by the rising

number of gender-based and homophobic violent crimes reported against queer individuals, leading to a climate of fear within the queer community in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal.

KwaMashu is bordered by Newlands East to the South, Newlands west to the west, Ntuzuma to the north, Phoenix to the north-east, Mount Edgecombe to the East and Durban North to the South-east. Below is a map, showing the location of KwaMashu where the study was conducted.

**Figure 4.1: Map depicting the location of KwaMashu Township in Durban**



**Source: Google Maps (2023)**

#### **4.6 Research sample**

A population refers to any collection of specified groups of people or non-human entities such as objects, educational institutions, time units, and geographical areas drawn by researchers (Etikan and Bala, 2017). This study used the KwaMashu area, and the population were the queer community members residing specifically in KwaMashu K section. As Dworkin (2012) cited in Mkhize (2018:67) argues that unlike in quantitative study, qualitative sample size is normally small because qualitative research methods are often concerned with gathering an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon or meanings which are often centred on the how and why a particular issue, process, situation, subculture, scene or set of social interactions occur.

Therefore, 15 participants (queer self-identifying sexual minorities) were selected, because this smaller sample size allowed the researcher to collect comprehensive, nuanced information from each participant who firsthand experienced violent crime in KwaMashu township, had experience working with queer community. The researcher purposively selected a sample of people who would have knowledge about the topic. Therefore, the results of this research may not be regarded as a representative of larger queer community population because the sampling size was too small (Mkhize, 2018 cited in Sibanyoni 2018: 125).

#### **4.7 Sampling techniques and recruitment strategy**

This study adopted the non-probability sampling technique method. In a non-probability sample, individuals are selected based on non-random criteria, and not every individual has a chance of being included. Non-probability sampling techniques are often used in exploratory and qualitative research (Macomber, 2015). A purposive non-probability sampling method was used in this study. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling is a form of non-probability sampling where researchers rely on their own judgment when selecting members of the population to participate in their research (Macomber, 2015). By focusing on participants who truly align with the study's goals, purposive sampling ensures the research is both meaningful and impactful, particularly in studies addressing sensitive or marginalized communities.

Snowball sampling was also employed in this study. As Parker, Scott and Geddes (2019) assert that snowball sampling is one of the most prevalent methods of sampling in qualitative research, central to which are the characteristics of networking and referral. The researchers usually start with a small number of initial contacts (seeds), who fit the research criteria and are invited to become participants within the research. The agreeable participants are then asked to recommend other contacts who fit the research criteria and who potentially might also be willing participants, who then in turn recommend other potential participants. Therefore, this technique was used because the members of queer community were difficult to locate. Through snowballing the target sample size was reached.

This study had a total number of 15 participants, 12 participants were from the queer community and 3 participants were the Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation members. The participants were identified and selected because they were had to be the victims of violent crime, have had experience with working with queer community i.e. providing psychosocial

support and counselling to queer individuals and knowledgeable about the topic. The participants had to meet the criterion as follows.

Furthermore, Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria were as follows:

A separate recruitment letter for queer participants was as follows:

1. The participant identifies freely as a member of the queer community based in KwaMashu.
2. The participant is over the age of 18.
3. The participant has been a victim of violence or hate crimes in KwaMashu.
4. The participant is open about their sexuality.

Inclusion criteria for the local organisation members were as follows

1. The participant is an employee of the local organisation.
2. The participant has 6 months or more of professional experience working with queer individuals in KwaMashu.
3. The participant is not a social worker or psychologist at the local organisation.

In selecting these 15 participants, the researcher employed a non-probability sampling method. Therefore, two sampling techniques were employed to select the participants, namely: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The purposive sampling technique obtained 9 participants who agreed to take part in the study. 9 participants were located by the assistance of the Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation, due to the sensitive nature of the study, 6 participants declined to take part in the study. Therefore, this means that 6 participants were recommended by the initial 9 participants to the researcher. All participants were African, Black queer individuals.

Notably, only three participants were identified as gay, and twelve participants were identified as lesbian. The queerphobic violence and victimisation in townships could have discouraged some potential participants, particularly those who identified as gay, transgender, and bisexual from participating in the study as they are still in closet or may have feared victimisation. This was identified as a limitation of the study. Additionally, the queer community includes people with other sexual orientations not only queer individuals who identify as gay and lesbian. However, this study was limited to gay and lesbian participants. The limitation means that only lesbian and gay participants were interviewed, and not representatives of the general population

that compromised of all walks of life. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be regarded as representative of the broader queer community population because sampling size was too small.

In terms of recruiting the participants, the researcher requested the Director of Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation to assist in identifying queer individuals who have been victims of violent crimes and have experience working with queer community. Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation is an organisation based in KwaMashu community which services queer communities by providing psychosocial support services to victims of gender-based violence. The researcher attended a meeting with the Director of Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation where she explained the nature and purpose of the study. The participants were then selected by the Director of Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation, after the selection process, then the researcher was introduced to the potential participants that were selected by the Director of Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation. The researcher was then getting access to the participants and briefed them about the topic, aim and the purpose of the study, and asked interested participants to voluntarily participate in her study. The researcher explained to the participants that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any time should they feel uncomfortable participating during the period of the study. Those who agreed to take part in the study were guaranteed that the information they provided would not be used against them and their identities would be protected throughout the study.

#### **4.8 Data collection Method**

According to Simplilean (2023), data collection can be defined as a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem, test the hypothesis and evaluate the outcomes. Data for this study was collected using unstructured interviews, the reason for this approach was to gain in-depth data based on the participants' narratives of their experiences pertaining to the research topic. Interviews were conducted in a setting that was suitable for the participants. Some participants were interviewed in the Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation office, others were interviewed telephonically because they were not comfortable to share their experiences of victimisation in person. In unstructured interviews, the researcher does not ask short, standardised questions of each participant. Instead, they rely on open-ended questions, which are questions that welcome longer answers than a simple "yes" or "no". In this case, the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions and allow participants to expand on their answers.

According to Feddy (2003), open-ended questions allow participants to express their opinions without being influenced by the researcher. In this study, the researcher prepared a list of questions that was used to guide the interview. This guide ensured all participants received the same questions, and these were designed to gather participants' comments (Kenton, 2014). The interview was conducted in two languages namely, IsiZulu, and English depending on participants' preferences. The researcher briefed the participants about the topic of research, the aim, and the purpose of the study before conducting the interviews. Before each interview commenced, the researcher requested for permission to audio record the conversation. Eight participants gave consent to be audio-recorded. The participants' narratives were also meticulously recorded in writing by making summary notes to capture key insights and perspectives shared by the participants during the in-depth interviews. During the interview, all the participants were freely expanding on the topic, with the researcher directing the flow of questioning and probing for more information without influencing the participants. The interviews were approximately 45 minutes long, the interviews were conducted in English; however, some participants were comfortable sharing their experiences in IsiZulu. Before analysing data, the narratives were translated into English by the researcher using orthographic verbatim translation. This was done because the researcher is fluent in both languages

#### **4.9 Data analysis**

Data was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). "This method of analysis minimally organises and describes data set in (rich) detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). The researcher followed the six steps of thematic analysis prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The researcher firstly, familiarized herself with the data by reading thoroughly the transcriptions and listening to the recordings several times to develop a thorough grasp of all the data. Secondly, the researcher scrutinized the data several times, and coded notable features of the data in a methodical way. Thirdly, related codes were grouped together to form broader themes that reflected recurring patterns or concepts. Fourthly, the researcher checked the themes that had been generated for accuracy and relevance in relation to the data they are based on. In this stage the researcher took a thorough back-and-forth approach that includes review, assessment, comparison, and inquiry. The fifth step was defining and naming themes. This step involved coming up with a succinct and easily understandable names for each theme.

Lastly, the final themes were described and linked to the research questions, supported by quotes from the participants.

#### **4.10 Data verification**

In qualitative research, verification refers to the tools used during the process of research that incrementally contributes to ensure reliability and validity. According to Moleong (2017) to conduct research that is scientifically inclined there should be an examination technique for validity of the data. Authors suggested adopting new criteria for determining reliability and validity, and hence ensuring rigor, in qualitative inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As such Guba and Lincoln (1985) substituted reliability and validity with the parallel concept of "trustworthiness," containing four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

##### **(i) Credibility**

Credibility refers to the extent to which the research account is believable and appropriate. This is done in line with reference to the level of agreement between participants and the researcher (Childs, 2019). In this research credibility was ensured through interrogation, whereby the researcher went back to the participants to give them the opportunity to reflect on their original narratives and confirm that they reflect their true experiences.

##### **(ii) Transferability**

Transferability is established by providing readers with evidence that the research study findings could be applicable to other situations, contexts, intervals and populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, the researchers enhanced transferability by doing a thorough task of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research based on the experiences and perceptions of violent crimes against queer people in township communities.

##### **(iii) Dependability**

Dependability refers to the consistency and reliability of the research findings as well as the degree to which research procedures are documented. It allows for someone outside the research to follow, audit, and analyse the research process (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). In this study, the external auditor was the supervisor who guided the process of research. Also, the

researcher did a follow-up and asked for the clarity from the participants to confirm the participants' answers.

#### **(iv) Confirmability**

Confirmability is the last criterion of trustworthiness that a qualitative researcher must establish. This criterion denotes the level of confidence that the research findings are based upon participants' narratives and words to avoid potential researcher biases. Confirmability verifies that the findings are shaped by participants views than views of the qualitative researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). This was achieved by submitting the draft proposal to the supervisor to review and give comments. The researcher reflected on and captured participants' responses accurately without altering any view expressed.

#### **4.11 Ethical consideration**

Bayens and Robertson (2011) define research ethics as moral principles that serve as rules of conduct and behavioural expectations about the right conduct towards research participants. The researcher adhered to the following ethical considerations while conducting this study:

The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal research ethics committee (HSSREC/00007050/2024; annexure C). Informed consent forms (see annexure B) were produced, and participants were asked to sign before participating in the study.

My first meeting with the Director of Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation alerted me to the risks attached when queer sexual minorities participate in research. Such participation adds another layer of homophobic bullying, such as name calling by the people who are intolerant of queer individuals when the interview would be conducted in the public spaces. The participants become a group that meets at a particular time and place, creating a perceptible pattern. They become visible and often targets of homophobic bullying by becoming a group. To minimise the risk of homophobic bullying, the researcher allowed them to choose a place where they would feel safe and comfortable to conduct interviews. Therefore, they suggested that they would feel safer if the interviews were conducted in the organisation office, since it the only safe place haven. The researcher then used Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation office as a venue for conducting the interviews. This minimised the level of victimisation and violence that the participants might encounter.

Therefore, all interviews were conducted discretely to ensure that participants feel comfortable and free to express their views. In addition, the study was voluntary, and the participants had the right to withdraw at any time. In considering anonymity and confidentiality in this study, the researcher kept the participants anonymous by using codes to protect their identities.

#### Positionality statement

I came into the study as an ‘outsider’ as someone who do not share similar experiences with my participants. Being an outsider who don’t live in their world, I informed them about my sexual orientation and how I am interested to learn more about their sexual orientation and experiences, I believe this made them feel comfortable to express themselves freely and share their experiences with me. For example, one may think it would be difficult for a heterosexual person to engage with queer self-identifying individuals that such group would not trust or want someone who is not from their group or community. But I was warmly welcomed. As Mullings (1999:337) suggests that “making the wrong assumptions about situatedness of an individuals’ knowledge based on perceived identity differences may end access to crucial informants in a research project”. This serves as a reminder that new researchers should not make assumptions about other’s perspectives and world view based on their own misconceptions of them. I made sure that I became the outsider and allow them to share their experiences without influencing or judging but remaining neutral.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

This chapter discusses and reflects on the research design and detailed methodology used in this study. The study was grounded within the interpretivist paradigm and qualitative research design. The data collection techniques, techniques used in the selection of participants and data analysis were chapter. discussed. Using these methods and techniques, participants were competent and comfortable to share their experiences and voicing out their opinions regarding violent crimes against queer individuals in townships. Lastly, the ethical issues that were considered throughout the study were discussed.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research design and methodology. This study is located within an interpretivist paradigm. In the context of this study, it entailed conducting research with a marginalised group (queer self-identifying sexual minorities) to understand their experiences of queerphobic violence and victimisation in township communities. The data that are presented in this chapter were collected from queer participants. The researcher used in-depth interviews to collect data from the participants while they responded to questions on their experiences of violence and hate crimes. Furthermore, in reporting the data, P is used for participant and the letters of the alphabet are used as a naming criterion. By way of illustration, the first participant is referred to as PA, the second is PB, and so forth. This was done to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

#### 5.2 Participant's demographic information

Table 5.1. provides the respondents' profile and briefly describes the demographics of the sample of participants. All the queer individuals were enrolled as queer community members in KwaMashu Township. Table 5.1 indicates adult participants who participated in the interviews and key informants. The table shows the demographic information of the selected participants by presenting their codes, age, race, sexual orientation and their occupation. A total of 15 participants participated in the interviews as key informants. Three of these participants were selected from the Imvelo Yesizwe organisation, because the Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation works specifically among queer community by providing psychosocial support services. Also, it was ideal opportunity to conduct this study using the Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation members as the sample because they were highly knowledgeable about the topic under the study. The other 12 participants were from the queer community who have been the victim or witnessed the violence and hate crime. It should be noted that ethnicity/race was not an inclusion criterion, but it was recorded as a matter of interest and perhaps to guide future studies to include a more representative sample. All participants were African, Black queer individuals. Notably, only three participants identified as gay. The queerphobic violence and victimisation in townships could have discouraged some potential participants, particularly those who identified as gay,

transgender, and bisexual from participating in the study as they are still in closet. That was identified as the limitation of the study as it is discussed in chapter four.

**Table 5.1: Demographic data of participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Sexual orientation (self-identifying)</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>Participant 1</b>	<b>PA</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation</b>
<b>Participant 2</b>	<b>PB</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation</b>
<b>Participant 3</b>	<b>PC</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Imvelo Yesizwe Organisation</b>
<b>Participant 4</b>	<b>PD</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Queer community</b>
<b>Participant 5</b>	<b>PE</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Queer community</b>
<b>Participant 6</b>	<b>PF</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Queer community</b>
<b>Participant 7</b>	<b>PG</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Queer Community</b>
<b>Participant 8</b>	<b>PH</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Queer community</b>
<b>Participant 9</b>	<b>PI</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Queer Community</b>
<b>Participant 10</b>	<b>PJ</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Gay</b>	<b>Queer community</b>
<b>Participant 11</b>	<b>PK</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>African</b>	<b>Lesbian</b>	<b>Queer Community</b>

Participant 12	PL	23	African	Gay	Queer Community
Participant 13	PM	25	African	Lesbian	Queer Community
Participant 14	PN	21	African	Gay	Queer Community
Participant 15	PO	26	African	Lesbian	Queer Community

Source: Researcher

The following table depicts the themes and subthemes that emerged from the study. The responses are presented verbatim.

**Table 5.2: Themes and subthemes**

Main Themes	Subthemes
Challenges of queer individuals in township communities	
The role of religion in influencing perceptions of queer people	
The available support and interventions that seek to address queerphobic violence	A. Lack of grassroots organisations or community groups that supports queer individuals B. Challenges to accessing gender affirming social welfare service in the townships
Navigating safety and the fear of victimisation	
Intervention strategies to combat queerphobic violence and victimisation of queer community	A. Training for healthcare service providers B. The need for police officials to be sensitised C. Department of Education D. The link between community attitudes toward sexual minorities to report cases of violence

Source: Researcher

## 5.3 Interpretation and Discussions

### 5.3.1 Challenges of queer individuals in township communities

In township areas the impact of the discrimination is different from suburban because non-conformity to traditional gender roles is poorly understood. The cultural conservativeness in township areas causes homophobia. Queer people have different homophobic experiences which can range from verbal, physical, emotional, and mental abuse. Queer individuals experience various forms of harassment and abuse from their peers within these communities (Lee & Quam, 2013). The lack of social cohesion towards queer people do not provide a safe environment for these individuals. Considering the context where this study was conducted, the findings revealed that queer individuals were prone to experiences of hostility and discrimination which included but not limited to verbal, emotional and physical abuse because of their sexual orientation. To support this finding, the excerpt below accurately captures how participants experienced the forms of abuse and society consider the queer community as deviant because they do not conform to traditional gender roles:

*“It is the confusion of identity because they grow up in a society that had only female and male sexual identities. When they come out of the closet as they grow up, they are considered deviant by the entire community”.* **Excerpt 1, PB**

Other participants had this to say in support of experiences of hostility and discrimination

*“...sometimes when you are walking down the streets you always being called with offensive names such as **isitabane [gay]**, one day another mother once said to me she wanted to sleep with a gay man and experience how it feels to be intimate with a gay man, so yeah, ultimately she will end up saying she got raped, she has been giving me problems lately. In such cases I don't respond to their hate speech, to avoid further victimisation.”* **Excerpt 2, PF**

For other participants it was difficult to express themselves authentically, particularly in environments where societal norms and prejudices dominate. One participant explained that he felt compelled to suppress his true identity and conform to heteronormative behaviors to avoid discrimination, harassment, or even violence:

*“Some of the challenges I have experienced is sometimes I cannot be truly myself because when I pass by a group of boys sometimes, I have to act straight to avoid unwanted attention.”* **Excerpt 3, PJ:**

The narratives of participants suggests that there was systemic exclusion and lack of inclusivity in healthcare settings, particularly for queer individuals. Healthcare systems failed to provide gender-affirming care, which respects and supports individuals' gender identities. This lack of inclusivity leads to the denial of essential sexual health resources, such as free lubricants and condoms, that are crucial for safe sexual practices. One participant expresses her dissatisfaction with the poor service delivery within the service sector.

*“Healthcare settings continue to exclude and produce non gender affirming healthcare, this further leads to queer communities being denied access to free lubricants and condoms.”* **Excerpt 4, PE**

Another participant below described how she feels about awareness programs aimed at educating community about homosexuality.

*“In my community, I always host awareness programs about sexual orientation, rights, and responsibilities of queer individuals, but some of the community members do not attend any of these functions, they always say we won't attend izinto zezitabani (derogatory name for queer individuals). Yeah' it is not easy because we are being deprived to give them knowledge about our nature, they always go against us no matter how good we are doing.”* **Excerpt 5, PC**

Ging and Neary (2019) note that homophobic bullying includes name-calling, physical violence, sexual harassment, or online bullying as well as social segregation of people who identify as queer. These findings correspond with those of Ging and Neary (2019), who reported that, queer individuals experience homophobic bullying of aggravation because their behaviour is non-compliant with typical gender stereotypes. Richard (2006) also asserts that since same-sex relationships have been legalized in South Africa people are still struggling to accept the differences in lifestyle and sexual preferences, therefore the reported cases of violent attacks and exclusion of queer persons from societies.

In South Africa, lesbians from the African township communities are more prone to fall prey to corrective rape due to the cultural environment. According to Morrissey (2013), black lesbian women are at risk of violence because much of the prevailing discourse in South African black societies denotes that lesbianism is forbidden and same sex desire is not acceptable in South African culture. This is shown in excerpt 6.

*“In our community a queer person is seen or regarded as a lost person, being victimised is my daily treatment. Immediately when I go to shopping centre or any public space, I would hear someone says cruel words, give me names. One day I was confronted by the group of boys threaten to hurt and rape me for the purpose of correcting my sexuality”.* **Excerpt 6, PO**

The above finding is supported by the victim precipitation theory as it theorises that, in passive precipitation, a victim may unknowingly exhibit some characteristics that can prompt an attack. For instance, queer individuals and people of different sexual orientation may provoke the occurrence of a crime because they are believed to violate the belief system of a given community (Petherick, 2017). The current research found that township communities are rooted in heteronormativity belief, whereby they perceive homosexuality as not normal and thus result in negative reactions towards queer individuals including being exposed to violent crimes such as hate speech and assault. This view correlates with the queer geographic theory which argues that sexuality and identity are fluid, sexuality is enacted based on context and where a person is geographically located. A space is assumed as heterosexual because of the everyday repetition of heterosexual relations thus making it normal. When some sexualities other than heterosexuality becomes evident, it disrupts the homogeneous heterosexual space (Markus & Moya, 2016).

### **5.3.2 The role of religion in influencing perceptions of queer people**

As Berry (2013:40) explains that “society members in generally are not educated about homosexuality, once they discover that someone is queer, their attitude changes and they start discriminating queer individuals. Illiteracy and lack of awareness amongst community and family members resulted in them being less informed about other sexual identities”. This is illustrated by the following response.

*“Some people do not understand that it is normal to have feelings that oppose the gender that one was assigned at birth. They think that someone who identifies herself as a lesbian or gay that person automatically has sickness or is possessed with demonic spirits. One of my neighbours happened to call me by Isitabane’s name, I asked her what that meant, but she failed to answer me. This showed that they do not understand the sexual orientations that exist outside heterosexuality.* **Excerpt 7, PA**

*“One of my neighbours happened to call me by Isitabane’s name, I asked her what that meant, but she failed to answer me. This showed that they do not understand the sexual*

*orientations that exist outside heterosexuality. Also, my friend who identifies as a lesbian was forced to undergo certain traditions; her family members cut her with a razor blade in her skin. Her mother claimed that she wanted to eject homosexuality in her.”* **Excerpt 8, PC**

The finding that illiteracy and lack of awareness amongst community and family members resulted in them being less informed about other sexual identities is supported by the queer theory which states that most people in society internalise the mindset that sexuality is defined in terms of sex or gender of object choice with the belief that homosexuality can be cured with medication and through therapeutic interventions (Sullivan, 2003). Considering the findings above, being labeled as a social reject promoted gender-based violence among sexual minorities. People in society often reject sexual minorities due to the belief that identifying as queer is either a form of demonic influence or an illness, and that homosexuality can be cured. This belief plays a major role in shaping the perspectives of people particularly heterosexuals towards the queer community. According to Awoniyi (2015) both traditional and western therapies do not change one’s sexuality because homosexuality is not a disease nor is it a curse therefore none of these remedies are effective. A study by Orok and Tunc (2022) revealed that when queer people live their gender identities openly, they are exposed to stigmatisation, rejection, and loss of reputation. They further state that queer people in their study had experiences of marginalisation leading them to be perceived as either ‘sick’ or dangerous.

Additionally, religious influences within the community continue to condemn and demonize the existence of queer individuals, fuelling acts of hate crimes and normalizing discrimination. The study found that churches are some of the institutions in the community that remain resistant and promote queerphobic. Mamba (2021:34) asserts that “in some church denominations it is believed that homosexuality is a sin and there are biblical verses in support of this”. The participants described their experiences in church and the attitude they got from religious people. There were also biblical quotes and verses that were used to criticise homosexuality. This is illustrated by the following response.

*“The main religion of our home is Shembe, when I grow up, I used to go to church but now I am no longer going there. Pastors used to preach against our sexuality, emphasising the sin of homosexuality when I am in the church, because I am an openly feminine gay, so I am easily identified by anyone who knows a queer person. My friend also experienced the same thing in his church, and he told me that he stopped going to*

*church because of the discrimination he received from the church. And they always quote certain biblical verses that preach against homosexuality”.* **Excerpt 9, PL**

This view corresponds with that of Pushparagavans’ (2014) who contends that most Christians reject homosexuality based on bible teachings and verses such as one which states “Leviticus 18:22 do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable, Leviticus 22: New Testament”. This view is supported by other scholars who argue that “African opponents of homosexuality often cite religion, particularly Christianity and Law as the reasons for their justifications for rejecting homosexuality. While Specific passages in the Bible seem to condemn certain homosexual acts, The Bible itself is a foreign document in much of Africa” (Msibi, 2018:69).

Queer individuals experience homophobia and judgement from their community because community members and some of their family members lack understanding and awareness about their sexuality. Some believe that homosexuality is a matter of personal choice not that some people are born like that. This is shown in the following excerpt 10 and 11.

*“We are always othered and regarded as misfits due to our sexuality, I am a victim of homophobia, I was victimised and discriminated against because of my sexuality and living my truth as a black queer man”.* **Excerpt 10, PJ**

*“My child was assaulted and expelled from her father’s home because they believed that I am the one who influenced her to be a lesbian, since I am also her biological mother, however who identifies herself as a lesbian... I was blamed for not raising her (my child) in a proper and acceptable way which is aligned with societal norms or beliefs. Also, I was assaulted by my brother; he slapped me because he was against my sexuality”.* **Excerpt 11, PH**

This view correlates with Lee and Quan (2013) which state that queer individuals in township areas are being judged and discriminated against as they perceived to be deviating from the societal norms and principles. Therefore, this has ultimately resulted in situations whereby queer individuals are being less acknowledged and ostracised in their communities. This perspective concurs with Sithole’s (2019) view, that queer individuals are being judged and less recognised because queer identities are not included in African books. This highlights the limited understanding of homosexuality, which contributes to many African people holding negative views toward homosexuality and sexual minority groups.

### **5.3.3 The available support and interventions that seek to address queerphobic violence**

Some participants mentioned that in their community there is a shortage of organisations that provide health and psychosocial support services to queer individuals. The few organisations that exist in the community and provide services to queer individual are not getting any financial assistance from government to fund these organisations. KwaMashu Township is one of underdeveloped townships that lacks resources aimed at catering needs of the queer community. As Reid (2003) argued that queer individuals need each other to cope and try to contest discrimination. Therefore, the subtheme emerged were challenges to accessing gender affirming social welfare service in township and lack of grassroots organisations that support queer individual and financial support.

### **5.3.4 Challenges to accessing gender affirming social welfare service in the townships**

Section 27 of the constitution declares that everyone has the right to access health care services and the right to basic education as guaranteed in section 27 and section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa respectively. However, queer communities have relatively limited access to valued and essential social resources such as education and health care services, housing, income, leisure activities and work. Service providers often show negative emotions towards queer communities (Cele, 2015). Healthcare practitioners in both hospital and clinics exhibit discriminatory behaviors towards queer communities. There is a high report of secondary victimisation experienced by queer community in police stations (Report: eThekweni LGBTI Sector, 2023). Arguably the policies and professionalism towards queer community is poor. This notion is supported by the following responses.

*“The general lack of information on gender and sexuality amongst healthcare professionals compounded by the continued lack of or limited availability of hormonal therapy violates the right to access to healthcare as well as it affects the queer individual mental wellbeing negatively which often leads to suicide. Nurses and other health practitioners continue to degrade and discriminate queer persons in their various settings. If possible, government must at least employ queer communities’ members that are well-versed with the queer community needs, and who understands queer community lifestyle.” Excerpt 12, PE*

Other participants describe their experiences in the police stations and negative attitudes from the police officers. They highlighted the ill treatment they are getting from the officers and poor

service because they want to assist them based on the assumption they have about homosexuality.

*“Sometimes you get secondary victimization at the police station, when you got there, they judge you first without hearing your concern or report because you are from the queer community. However, when you come escorted by members from other organizations that advocacy for queer individuals, they promptly give you assistance, if I could just rate them out of 10, I would give them 7, they do their job, but there is a huge gap because they also lack understanding of sexual orientation and sexuality diversity.”* **Excerpt 13, PB**

*“Uhm... at the police stations they give us attitudes, I once go there to report a homophobic crime, then I was not attended until I left the police station. Then, one day again I visited the same police station wearing a mask that symbolises that I am from the queer community. When, I entered the door, one of the police officers shouted that, hey’ give that lady assistance they are suing us Manje, so yeah, I was then offered an assistance because of that.”* **Excerpt 14, PC**

Another participant was quoted showing her disappointment with the service she received from the police officers.

*“I was assaulted by a guy in a club when I went to the nearest police station to report that case, police officers advised me to come back the following day because I was drunk by that time. When I came back the day after, the day they proposed that I should come back on, they told me that there is no evidence that I was assaulted. Hence there were bruises on my face, they went on saying that I must sit down with a guy and resolve this, because they are not going to open a case against him. I, then did as they advised and withdrawn the case.”* **Excerpt 15, PG**

The above findings correspond with Mkhize (2022:33) who assert that “Queer sexual individuals are excluded from activist movements and national campaigns against gender-based violence (GBV). Organs of the State do not record violence perpetuated against queer sexual individuals based on sexual orientation, gender identity or performance. The media reports and represents queer individuals as only victims of violence”. The findings revealed that most of the programs conducted in communities often exclude queer communities from participating. The South African Police Services in townships are ineffective and often take long to respond to community crisis that pertain to queer communities.

Mamba (2021:69) also asserts that “services providers lack professionalism in public institutions more especially when rendering support services to queer people. They use their own beliefs and assumptions which negatively influences the lives of queer people”. Bullrough (2019) state that most people lack knowledge about homosexuality and their attitudes towards queer people is based on assumptions and beliefs.

### **5.3.5 The lack of organisations or community groups that support queer individuals and financial support**

Lack of organisation or community groups that support or advocate for queer community’s rights and needs significantly affect queer individuals' ability to live their sexuality freely, as societal structures continue to resist change and promote queerphobia. Sithole (2019) cited in Mamba (2021: 57) argue that the fear to become upfront in supporting homosexuality in a cultural preservative community like KwaMashu usually becomes a factor contributing to the lack of resources. This is illustrated by the following responses.

*“The lack of specialized psychological services. As a result, substance abuse, suicide, and other related illnesses exacerbate this need for specialized psychosocial services. The current services are generic and often produce a system of exclusion”.* **Excerpt 16, PF**

Other participants emphasized the same point from a financial perspective:

*“It is no secret that the organization’s that advocate for queer rights in eThekweni do not have any financial capacity to run its integral operations. There is currently no budget in place to offer or implement any type of intervention. Without a source to fund the many projects that not only focus on sensitisation but also on food security, we are faced with the challenge of being a structure with good ideas and plans but no financial muscle to implement”* **Excerpt 17, PC**

*“Compared to other sectors we are one of the sectors who seem least important when it comes to the issue of financial support. This is not a good reflection of how seriously our leaders take the issues of queer community”.* **Excerpt 18, PB**

*“In our community we have one organisation that support queer community but there is no funding for this organisation, as much as this organisation plays a crucial role in providing psychosocial services and advocacy for queer’s rights but it is not stable financially”.* **Excerpt 19, PE**

Another participant commented on the shortage of organisations that advocate for queer community.

*“There is no organisation in our community that we as queer individuals we can go and feel free to report some of the challenges that we are experiencing. Sometimes, we are going through so much suffering, but we do not have a safe place that we can go to and get support like counselling on how to address certain challenges like, discrimination or hate speech, we end up bottling things up”*. **Excerpt 20, PI**

It can be argued that KwaMashu Township is an underdeveloped community with insufficient resources to meet basic needs. This study found that, in addition to the scarcity of grassroots organizations, the community also faces financial constraints, which leads to a lack of support groups or services catering to the queer community.

### **5.3.6 Navigating safety and the fear of victimisation**

The victim precipitation theory by Holyst (1969), hypothesises that a lack of caution is also viewed as a contributing factor to victim precipitation and two types of “carelessness” can be identified: Incidental and permanent. Incidental carelessness is when the victim creates a dangerous situation for themselves at the moment when the crime was committed. Whereas permanent carelessness refers to the victim exposing themselves to danger through the people they associate with or through their surroundings (Holyst, 1969). Most of the participants claimed that their peers sometimes do not want to acknowledge the actions they take that can put them in danger and lead to victimisation. For example, some queer individuals associate themselves with people they do not like but pretend as if they accept them and get along with them. They also expose themselves to dangerous places. The following statements were shared by the queer individuals advising their peers to take care of themselves first and have discipline when it comes to their behaviors that sometimes contribute to their victimisation.

*“You can’t say you know you are the most wanted in society, and then you go and get along with everyone who don’t conform to the way you are and how you were created, collect yourself after all”*. **Excerpt 21, PB**

*“Other queer individuals like to use social media in a wrong way even if they are warned about its dangers but there are still those who use it, apps like dating apps, I would like to warn them to stop using it”*. **Excerpt 22, PJ**

: *“Others are reckless, they go out with guys at night and drink with them, I mean the same guys who always frankly say well that want to rape you. If you go out with them, then what do you expect, sometimes truth be told, some of us are raped by people who know them and always show that they will turn on them one day”*. **Excerpt 23, PC**

Participants believed that at some point they expose themselves to dangerous situation, they become friends with people who end up victimising them. They suggested that every queer person must be accountable for their actions that could possibly expose them to victimisation.

*“Another thing we need to learn is that if we are accepted that we are living this life, it does not mean that we should not do our duties, like house chores because they are not related to gender, but some of us do that because they want to boss up because she says she is a lesbian or gay man and will not do the house chores. That is another problem that leads to assault at home because you are now acting up and disrespecting the house rules”*. **Excerpt 24, PH**

*“To make sure that I protect and keep myself safe all the time, I avoid going out at night, I only drink with my friends and I stay home most of the time, I don't wander because it is not safe out there, we are being killed, discriminated and people don't like us”*. **Excerpt 25, PF**

The above experiences narrated by the participants correlate with the victim precipitation theory which argues that victim precipitation helps in understanding the dynamics or relationship between victims and offenders. Mufti and Hunt (2013) state that victim precipitation helps us understand that any attempt to understand crime will be incomplete without understanding the full gamut of behaviors done by both parties, and any characterisation of the offender-victim dyad as black and white will be incorrect. In addition to this theory, victim precipitation provides a deeper understanding of victimisation and offending.

Petherick (2017:263) offers a similar assertion in understanding the full gamut of behaviours done by both victim and offender, stating that “identifying and understanding the root cause of maladaptive behaviors can be useful in providing primary, secondary, and tertiary intervention so as to reduce or eliminate the harm or loss experienced by victims”. According to Ainworth (2013:3) when we attempt to understand crime patterns, it is necessary to focus not only on why a person commits a crime, but also on victim selection criteria and victim behavior. In most cases, victims play a unique role that cannot be ignored, and dynamics of a criminal act

cannot be fully understood by only studying the perpetrator (Turvey, 2014) It can be argued that there are characteristics between victims and offenders which need to be studied to understand how victims and offenders come to be.

#### **5.4 Intervention strategies to combat queerphobic violence and victimisation of queer self-identifying individuals**

The scarcity of queer friendly services such as queer support groups and social spaces such as queer night clubs and is slowing down the process of normalising other sexual identities that exist outside heterosexuality in the community. In addition, lack of professionalism which includes denial of health services and a judgemental attitude by service providers has a negative impact on queer individuals. “Service providers discriminate queer individuals because they are not professionally trained on how to provide services to the queer community” (Mamba, 2019:67). This is supported by the queer geographic theory which posits that the scarcity of resources and opportunities has often led to heightened social tensions, while the lack of state intervention and policing has allowed violence to become a pervasive aspect of daily life. This environment fosters a cycle where violence is not only a response to systemic inequities but also becomes embedded in the social fabric of township life, further entrenching the marginalisation and difficulties faced queer people (Lynch & Sanger, 2016).

Participants were asked if they had any ideas that they would like to add in relation to the research topic that might be helpful to combat queerphobic violence and victimisation of queer community. All the participants highlighted that educating people in the community about homosexuality could lead to a better understanding of it, reducing both violence and queerphobia. They emphasized that, although feelings may differ, LGBTQ+ individuals are fundamentally the same as others and live in the same way. Therefore, the subthemes emerged were public institutions; healthcare practitioners and police officers training, the Department of Education, and cooperation in the community if there is an organisation that celebrates or represents the promotion of the right of the queer community and the role they play in the development of the community as well as grassroots organisation that support queer community in terms of providing psychosocial support and counselling services.

##### **5.4.1 Training for healthcare service providers**

Some of the participants suggested that if healthcare workers are trained to treat all patients equally, provide them with the help they need, and understand how to accept the queer

community without discriminating against them it would be beneficial. As Mucherah, Owino and McCoy (2016) argue that lack of knowledge and lack of exposure to diversity contribute highly to queerphobia. It was revealed that often health care providers show negative attitudes towards queer individuals. Rounds (2013) argue that queer individuals in most cases receive substandard treatment or assistance from the health care workers and sometimes nurses make fun of them when they disclose their sexuality. Some healthcare workers would focus on a person's sexuality instead of rendering them services because they are not knowledgeable about homosexuality. This is illustrated by the following responses.

*“The Department of Health needs to investigate the issue of community clinic and try to sensitise healthcare professionals and ensure that queer communities are given due service, or the Department of health should partner with queer organisations to offer sensation training to health care professionals”*. **Excerpt 26, PE**

*“The Department of health needs to priorities specialised health care services for queer individuals”*. **Excerpt 27, PB**

*“I wish government can at least offer the health care workers, particularly nurses’ workshops or proper training on how to treat patients equal despite any gender falls under. They are too judgmental and have negative perception of queer persons.”*  
**Excerpt 28, PI**

Arguably, queer individuals experience secondary victimisation in health settings due to their sexual orientation, service providers tend to ask them ridiculous questions about homosexuality, such as how they engage in sex (Rounds 2013 cited in Mamba, 2021). Mamba (2021:37) assert that “people in the service sector are old, lack professionalism and knowledge about the special needs for queer people as well as what is expected of them when assisting people under queer community. Furthermore, some of the service sector providers have a phobia and have judgemental attitudes toward sexual minority groups”.

#### **5.4.2 Grassroots organisation that supports queer community**

“The lack of support groups and recognition within the community has made it challenging for queer individuals to openly express their sexuality due to oppressive structures and a lack of support” (Mamba, 2021:57). This study revealed that only a few grassroots organizations or community groups are actively working on the front lines to address the challenges faced by the queer community and provide development programs that empower queer individuals to

exercise their rights. It was reported that there is shortage of grassroots organisations in townships, particularly in KwaMashu where the study was conducted. These organizations are needed to provide accessible support for queer individuals seeking to report cases or receive counselling. The participants highlighted the need for the sectors that caters for queer issues and address discrimination against queer community. This notion is supported by the following responses.

*“The need for faith-based sector to be sensitised on queer issues and to discourage discrimination and hate speech”*. **Excerpt 29, PE**

*“I wish, my lord that we can find an organisation that we can go to and report when we encounter problems and abuse, which is difficult to report anywhere because of the lack of acceptance since we live in monogamous relationships. That’s all I can ask is that we have a place where we can be heard about our problems as well”*. **Excerpt 30, PF**

Another participant had this to say in support of the same sentiments.

*Another thing that might be helpful in combating queerphobic violence and victimisation of queer community is interventions in terms of implementing awareness programs that will educate people about homosexuality. We do not have support that advocate for our rights and empowerment. We need to be united in society so that there is humanity, and children grow up so well*. **Excerpt 31, PN**

This study found that queer community members are not only facing the issues of violence and victimisation, but they are underprivileged community in the township areas, they are not being supported with the essential services that caters for their basic needs. As Butter and Astbury (2005) cited in Mamba (2021:36) assert that “the main challenge faced by the queer community in South African communities is the lack of resources that will enhance the knowledge on the lifestyle of sexual minority groups, which includes support groups as well as the internet access and technology”

#### **5.4.3 The need for Police officials to be sensitised**

The mode in which the Criminal Justice System (CJS) deals with the cases of queer community demonstrate that there is “violation and contradiction of South African laws on queerphobia and human rights conventions” (Williams, 2017:12 cited in Mkhize, 2018:33). In addition, Mkhize (2018) argued that if the crimes reported by queer community members are not taken

seriously by the police, resulting in no arrests or prosecutions, it will discourage queer individuals from reporting abuse and lead to mistrust in law enforcement. Some of the participants commented that although they were getting help from the police, but it was not enough because the help was associated with elements of discrimination which shows that the police are not well trained to conduct their duties. Exploitation and abuse of queer people by law enforcement erodes confidence and breaks down trust with police officials (Sears, Hasenbush and Mallory, 2013). This is illustrated by the following responses from the interview.

*“There is a continued need for police officers to be sensitised on how to intervene in queer cases”.* **Excerpt 32, PB**

*“The South African police services need to be re-trained and sensitised on how to manage queer communities’ cases. The station commander needs to properly enforce adherence of police officer to their code of conduct when managing such cases”.*

**Excerpt 33, PC**

*“There is a high report of secondary victimisation experienced by queer persons in the police stations, because they are being judged and laughed-off by the police officers who are intolerant of queer community”* **Excerpt 34, PA**

This finding is supported by the Daily Maverick (2021) which reports that queer community members are faced with secondary trauma if they go to government institutions to report crimes as officials insist on addressing them according to the gender they were assigned at birth. As Mkhize (2018: 47) assert that “if the police are not showing any interest in dealing with the cases reported by queer victims, or if there is no proper follow-up on the reported cases resulting in the case being dropped or not updating the victim about it, it may also lead to them being sceptical to report the crimes, or not to report them at all”.

#### **5.4.4 Department of Education**

Department of education introduced Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012 intended to enlighten teachers about what they should teach in class and how they should assess learners. CAPS mandates the teaching of Life Orientation (LO) subject in the senior phase (grades 7 to 9) and Further Education Training phase (FET) (grade 10 to 12) to address the matters of diversity and sexuality. LO, for instance covers certain topics particularly, *Development of the self in society, Health, social and environmental responsibility,*

*Constitutional rights and responsibilities, Physical Education and lastly, World of Work* (Mkhize, 2022). The curriculum covers matters concerning sexuality under the topic of *Development of the self in society*, while diversity is addressed under the topic of *Democracy and human rights* in both phases. However, there is a gap in the visibility and representation of queer sexual minorities in teaching materials and practice (Mkhize, 2022). This notion is supported by the following responses from participants.

*“The Department of Education need to introduce information related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) into orientation curriculums and try to use the ‘infusion’ approach”*. **Excerpt 35, PE**

*Heteronormative schooling context and the culture of queerphobia in schools denies learners their right to education, dress code in schools is used to police learners’ sexuality which is a major contributor to queerphobic bullying*. **Excerpt 36, PM**

Another participant was quoted sharing the challenge he experienced in school based on his sexuality:

*“... I got my privacy invaded in schools’ toilet four times by the old boys who wanted to see the genitals I have, since I am feminine gay”*. **Excerpt 37, PL**

As Francis (2017) cited in Mkhize (2022:38) found that “South African schools are heterosexual and one of the epicenters of compulsory heterosexuality and heteronormativity”. These findings correspond with of Mayeza and Vincent (2019) who found that sexuality education is still taught from a ‘gendered, heteronormative and moralistic approach’. For example, female and learners are being taught that girls must “preserve their ‘virginity until marriage’, while male learners are not taught to ‘abstain or preserve their sexual innocence’. teachers tend to advance heterosexuality with little or no mention of diverse gender and sexuality” (Maye & Vincent, 2019: 479 cited in Mkhize, 2022:37). Participants commented that if schools taught about gender differences and feelings, it would be easy for everyone to learn about homosexuality from a young age because this is something that a person is born with. Also, teachers must be adequately trained to teach sexuality education.

#### **5.4.5 The link between community attitudes towards sexual minorities and motivation to report cases of violence**

Queer individuals prefer not to report crime committed against them because they fear for their safety and that of their family and friends. The lack of support from community and family was

also highlighted as one of the reasons for unreported crimes because this would mean disclosing their sexual orientation and being ostracised for it (Murphy & Barkworth, 2014). In addition, victims of crime always require support from different structures, which include the police system, family, friends, and community. However, this is not always the case. Secondary victimisation is experienced in the police system, and it may also include how the community at large responds to the case of victimisation of sexual minority groups (Mkhize, 2018). Below excerpts highlight the lack of support from community and family members in terms of lack of interests for community members to attend queer events and also not being supportive when the queer individuals host awareness programs in the community.

*“Parents need to learn and understand about the queer community so that they don’t have a hand in abusing their sexual minority children, because they are their parents if they don’t accept them therefore, it would be easy for others to be wary and abuse them. The major problem is that parents don’t want to attend campaigns and events organised by queer community to teach them about their lifestyle and nature”.* **Excerpt 38, PD:**

*“People are so judgmental, yet they don’t want to attend any events that will educate them about queer community, sometimes they don’t want to listen to you when you are trying to explain to them about homosexuality, the only thing they do is to call us with derogatory names. I remember when I was telling the father of my child about being a lesbian, at first, he thought I was convincing him to believe that there are persons who are born with the feelings that oppose their gender; however eventually he understood and learned to accept his child who is a lesbian. So, if other people could do like him, they can learn more about sexual identities. I don’t want to lie; I was very happy that someone was eager to learn about us. I mean, like, if we can be heard just for once, maybe people may have a better perception of homosexuality”.* **Excerpt 39, PH**

Other participants had this to say in support of the same sentiments.

*“Most of the community members do not want to associate themselves with us, even when we have campaigns or meetings they don’t attend. Some of them always claim with homophobic tone that they won’t attend any of our events, then you end up asking yourself what they want, because they are not interested in knowing us when we try to show them who we are”.* **Excerpt 40, PC**

*Society needs to be educated about homosexuality, and the way they perceive sexual orientation because that is a major factor contributing to victimisation, they perceive*

*us queer persons in a negative way that results in a secondary victimisation. Excerpt 41, PK*

Most of the participants mentioned that most of the parents and community members do not want to attend campaigns and events organized by members of queer community about homosexuality and sexuality. Murphy and Barkworth (2014) concurs with these findings by asserting that queer participants also reported secondary or re-victimisation by social institutions because of their lack of empathy toward them. The lack of support from the community in the cases of victimisation of queer individuals is highlighted as one of the contributing factors in promoting queerphobic violence and victimisation of queer individuals because they are being neglected by the society.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter reports on the findings of the study. Research has shown that violence is constantly present in South African communities, particularly township communities. The findings suggest that the township where the participants reside is deeply rooted in patriarchy and reinforces heterosexual norms, which normalize queerphobic violence. The findings also suggest that the queerphobic violence against the queer community occurred in various settings in the township, with the little support or interventions from the family, police and society. The major themes were developed and supported by relevant literature and theory, highlighting the experiences of queer individuals as the study explored queerphobic violence and the victimization of this community. The findings suggest that queer individuals are victimised based on their sexuality or sexual orientation, and that people in the community must be educated about homosexuality to curb the crimes committed against queer community.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, this study was conducted with the aim of exploring the queerphobic violence and victimisation of queer self-identifying sexual minorities in KwaMashu Township. The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on this study and also present the recommendations and conclusion.

#### 6.2 Overview of the study

The study was conducted based on the problem statement which was outlined in Chapter One. The study attempted to obtain the understanding of the perception of queer minorities on the queerphobic violence and victimisation committed against them. To achieve this aim, four objectives were formulated that underpinned the data collection efforts:

1. Explore the nature of victimisation incidents committed amongst queer sexual minorities in the KwaMashu community,
2. Explore the perceptions queer minorities on the queerphobic violence committed against them in KwaMashu,
3. Explore how the available support and interventions seek to address queerphobic violence in KwaMashu,
4. Explore how queer sexual minorities navigate their safety in KwaMashu.

The findings indicate that queer individuals were discriminated, and socially excluded by society due to their sexuality regardless of how respectful they can be. Such unfair treatment was a result of lack of knowledge about sexual orientation that exists outside heterosexuality and negative perceptions of homosexuality held by community members. This chapter provides an overall summary of the entire study, it also provides the summary of the research findings as well as recommendations. The researcher also discusses some limitations of the study as well as suggestions for future research. This chapter concludes by a recommendation for future research and a conclusion.

### **6.3 Summary of the study**

This study was divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduced the research topic: “A criminological exploration of queerphobic violence and victimisation of self-identifying queer sexual minority at a selected township in KwaZulu-Natal” by presenting a general introduction of the entire dissertation. This chapter further provided a comprehensive background of the study, the research problem statement, as well as outlined the aim of the study, the objectives that served as guide to the study, and the research questions that the study aimed to explore. This chapter also presented the significance of the study and defined relevant concepts that were used in this study.

The second chapter presented an overview of the literature that has been conducted by other scholars in relation to the “Queerphobic violence and victimisation of self-identifying queer sexual minority”. Upon reviewing the existing literature, the review revealed that violent and hate crimes committed against queer people in township communities persist for no other reason than their ‘different’ sexual orientation. This chapter highlights that the causal factors contributing to queerphobic violence against the queer community remain speculative and there has been insufficient attention and a lack of studies exploring how sexual identities influence the proliferation of violence against queer individuals.

The third chapter introduced and described the theories which guide this research study. This chapter discussed theoretical framework used to generate and analyse data in this study. The researcher used three theories that are appropriate to help in understanding queerphobic violence and victimisation committed against queer individuals in township contexts. This chapter critically discussed in detail the queer theory, queer geographic theory, and the victim precipitation theory that guided the framing of the analysis and discussion of this study.

The fourth chapter showed the path the researcher took to address the research problem and objectives. Qualitative methodology was used in this study to collect data. This study was located within the interpretivist paradigm, to critically understand queer individuals’ experiences of queerphobic violence and victimisation in township communities. This chapter outlined the location where the study took place, the research paradigm, research approach, research design, and the methods of sampling and data collection that were used for the purpose of this study. This chapter further outlined the ethical considerations, as well as limitations and challenges that the researcher came across during the study. The queer community includes

people with other sexual orientations not only queer individuals who identifies as gay and lesbian. However, this study was limited to gay and lesbian participants.

The fifth chapter included the analysis and discussion of the findings. The findings suggested that queer individuals are characterised by queerphobic violence. According to participants' narrations, violence against queer individuals occurred in various settings in the township, with little support or intervention from community and service providers, who were themselves often perpetrators of the aggression. Such violence included hate speech (name-calling), bullying, and physical assault.

Finally, the concluding chapter summarises the main findings of the research project and proposes recommendations based on the findings.

## **6.4 Research questions**

To achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

### **6.4.1 What is the nature of victimisation incidents committed amongst the queer sexual minorities in the KwaMashu community?**

The findings suggest that the lives of queer individuals are characterised by queerphobic violence. According to participants, violence against queer individuals occurred in various settings in the township, with little support or intervention from community and service providers, who were themselves often perpetrators of the aggression. Such violence included hate speech (name-calling), bullying, and physical assault.

### **6.4.2 What are the perceptions of queer minorities on the violence committed against them in KwaMashu community?**

The findings from this study suggest that community members are not educated about homosexuality. Once they discover that someone identifies as a queer person their perspective changes and they start perceiving queer individuals in a negative way. The reason for this change is that most people in the society are socialised to believe and internalise the mindset that sexuality is defined in terms of sex or gender of object choice, whereas sexuality is a spectrum and does not hold a finite number of identities (Culture Ally, 2024). Lack of knowledge and awareness among community and family member resulted in them being less informed about other sexual identities that exist outside heterosexuality and their attitude towards the queer community assumes and believe that the only acceptable sexuality is

heterosexuality. Therefore, this finding concurs with previous studies that mentioned that heteronormativity, as a socially constructed concept, trivialises queer identities while upholding the supremacy of heterosexuality. Across these studies, homosexuality is consistently portrayed as a societal threat highlighting the urgent need for education, advocacy, and systemic change to combat the entrenched stigma and violence faced by queer individuals in South Africa.

#### **6.4.3 How do available support and interventions seek to address queerphobic violence in KwaMashu?**

The findings suggest that there is little or no support from the township community that advocates for queer individuals' right and awareness. This study found that there is shortage of organisations that provide health and provide psychosocial support services to queer individuals. The few organisations that are available are not getting any financial assistance from government to fund them and thus is highlighted as one of the contributing factors to queerphobia.

#### **6.4.4 How do queer sexual minorities navigate their safety in KwaMashu?**

The findings from this study suggest that despite their heterosexist township contexts, queer individuals are often able to navigate the space and negotiate the relationship they have in their community. They not only avoid certain spaces, but they also educate society about homosexuality by creating dialogues and awareness programs. However, they are notable incidental carelessness that some of the queer individuals create that contribute to their victimisation.

#### **6.5 Final Conclusions: Contribution of this study to the existing knowledge**

The purpose of this study was to understand the queerphobic violence and victimisation of queer individuals in township communities, and to collaborate with them to suggest potential strategies to curb the crime against them. In summary, the findings suggest that townships are rooted in heterosexuality and there is a lack of knowledge about other sexual identities which result in queer individuals being discriminated and social excluded from their residential communities. Also, there is a lack of dedicated organisations and interventions to support the queer community in addressing and combating violence and victimization directed towards them. The participants recommended engaging the government to conduct training workshops for service providers to raise knowledge and awareness on queer-related issues. The need for

support groups and queer organizations in townships was highlighted, along with the importance of involving parents in intervention efforts.

The study also contributes to the emerging research on the experiences of queer individuals in townships. From the findings, it was revealed that, while the experiences of queer individuals in townships are often marred by violence, these individuals are resilient and committed to bring unity in the community by educating society members about the diversity of sexuality. Understanding queer individuals as not only victims, but as also agentic and able to understand their own lives and what needs to change to ensure their safety is essential.

### **6.6 Recommendations for further studies**

Community members, particularly those who discriminate against and victimise the queer community based on their sexuality need to be educated about homosexuality. Education and awareness would play a significant role in ensuring that people understand and embrace the existence of other sexual identities. As seen from the data collected, in schools, curriculum is recommended as the best way to understand and recognise other sexual identities. Community cooperation in implementing awareness programs about the diversity of sexualities can help dispel assumptions and challenge internalized beliefs about homosexuality.

Further studies should be conducted to explore and gain a deeper understanding of how queer individuals navigate their sexual identities and resist negative experiences.

Also, future studies should be conducted to target the community members and understand why they do not embrace queer people. In addition, future studies may fill the gaps in this study by focusing on entire population or other groups of queer community as this study was limited to gay and lesbian group and other groups within the queer community were underrepresented. Quantitative research approach is recommended for future studies to get a nuanced and rich data from the entire queer community.

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## ANNEXURES

### ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ENGLISH)

#### Interview Schedule for the organization members

English Version

#### Demographic questions

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Race:
4. Residential:
5. Language:
6. Years of professional experience in this organization:
7. Position:

#### Questions

1. Tell me more about your organisation? What historical background does it have? Why does it focus on queer people only?
2. According to your understanding, how would you describe a queer person?
3. What are some of the existing cultural and traditional discourses that you think influence the attitudes of the community negatively when dealing with issues affecting queer people?
4. What are the pre-existing challenges experienced by queer people in KwaMashu and how do they overcome those challenges?
5. What are some of the structures in the community of Kwa-Mashu that still remain resistant, and promote queerphobic violence?
6. How are queer people protected by law enforcement against homophobic crimes?
7. How effective is the role played by law enforcement agencies in the protection of queer people?
8. Have there been any notable challenges in working with queer people?
9. What are some of the policies and legislation that guide your practice in this community?
10. What types of violent crimes are committed against queer people in KwaMashu?

11. What are some of the hotspot areas or sections in KwaMashu that are deemed unsafe for someone who identifies under the queer community? If possible, can you briefly tell me why these spaces are considered as hotspot areas?
12. What do you think are contributing factors to queerphobic violence?
13. What are preventative measures for queer people who have experienced queerphobic violence?
14. Is there anything you would like to add in relation to the research topic that you think might be helpful?

### **Translated Interview IsiZulu Version**

#### **Imininingwane yakho**

1. Iminyaka:
2. Ubulili:
3. Uhlanga:
4. Indawo yokuhlala:
5. Ulimi:
6. Iminyaka usebenza kule organization:
7. Isikhundla:

#### **Imibuzo**

1. Ngitshele okwengeziwe ngenhlangano yakho? Inasiphi isizinda somlando? Kungani igxile kubantu bothingo kuphela
2. Ngokuqonda kwakho, ungamchaza kanjani umuntu owuthingo?
3. Amasiko nezinkolelo zendabuko zinethonya kanjani isimo sengqondo ngobulili obubodwa?
4. Ngicela ukusho izinselelo ezibhekene nabantu abawuthingo KwaMashu nokuthi bazinqoba kanjani lezo zinselelo?
5. Uma zikhona, yiziphi izinhlobo zomphakathi KwaMashu ezisinqinile, futhi ezigqunguzela udlame lwezinkani?
6. Isebenza ngempumelelo kangakanani indima edlalwa yizikhungo zomthetho ekuvikeleni abantu bothingo?
7. Abantu bothingo bavikelwa kanjani abomthetho emacaleni okucwasa?
8. Ingabe kube khona izinselele eziphawulekayo ekusebenzeni nabantu abawuthingo?
9. Yiziphi ezinye zezinqubomgomo nemithetho eqondisa ukusebenza kwakho kulo mphakathi?
10. Yiziphi izinhlobo zobugebengu obunodlame obenziwa kubantu bothingo KwaMashu?
11. Ucabanga ukuthi yini ebangela udlame lokucwasa abantu abathandanayo ngobulili obubodwa?
12. Yiziphi izinyathelo zokuvikela abantu abawuthingo abake babhekana nodlame lokucwasa?
13. Ingabe kukhona ongathanda ukukwengeza mayelana nesihloko socwaningo ocabanga ukuthi kungasiza?

## **INTERVIEW SCHEDULE For QUEER PEOPLE**

English Version

### **Demographic questions**

1. Age:
2. Gender:
3. Race:
4. Residential:
5. Language:

### **Questions**

1. With your understanding, how would you describe a queer person?
2. Have you ever experienced victimization in Kwa Mashu based on your sexuality?
3. How do you perceive your lifestyle and nature as a queer person?
4. Which societal norms, religions, and traditions do you belong to?
5. What is your sense of belonging in a community? Do you think township communities are a safe space for queer communities? And if no, why?
6. What impact do you have as a queer person in the KwaMashu community on how society views homosexuality?
7. If there is one thing you would like to change in society, what could it be?
8. If any, What are the pre-existing challenges you have experienced as a queer individual in KwaMashu and how did you overcome those challenges?
9. If any, violence what are some of the structures in the community of Kwa-Mashu that still remain resistant, and promote queerphobic?
10. Do you think there are any grassroots organizations or community groups that are working on the front lines to address these issues and support queer people in terms of development programs that empower queer people to exercise their rights? If yes, what kinds of programs and services does this organization offer to the community it serves? in KwaMashu specifically.
11. What types of hate crimes are committed against queer people in KwaMashu?
12. How do queer people navigate their sexual roles in KwaMashu?
13. Is there anything you would like to add in relation to the research topic that you think might be helpful?

## **Translated Interview IsiZulu version**

### **Imininingwane yakho**

1. Iminyaka:
2. Ubulili:
3. Uhlanga:
4. Indawo yokuhlala:
5. Ulimi:

### **Imibuzo**

1. Ngokwakho ukuqonda, ungamchaza kanjani umuntu owuthingo?
2. Wake wahlukumezeka ngenxa yobulili bakho emphakathini wakwa Mashu?
3. Abantu bothingo bayibona kanjani indlela yabo yokuphila nemvelo?
4. Yiziphi izinkambiso zomphakathi, izinkolo, namasiko abakuzo?
5. Uyini umuzwa wabo wokuba ingxenye yomphakathi? Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi imiphakathi yasemalokishini iyindawo ephephile kubantu bothingo? Futhi uma kungenjalo, kungani?
6. Njengo muntu wothingo emphakathini waKwaMashu unamuphi umthelela endleleni umphakathi obuka ngayo ubulili obubodwa/ obufanayo?
7. Uma kunento eyodwa ongathanda ukuyishintsha emphakathini, kungaba yini?
8. . Yiziphi izinselelo oke wabhekana nazo njengomuntu wothingo KwaMashu? Futhi bazinqoba kanjani?
9. Uma zikhona, yiziphi izinhlelo zomphakathi KwaMashu ezisaqinile, futhi ezigugquzela udlame lwezinkani?
10. Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi zikhona yini izinhlangano noma izinhlangano zomphakathi ezisebenza phambili ukubhekana nalezi zinkinga nokweseka abantu bothingo mayelana nezinhlelo zentuthuko ezinikeza abantu bothingo amandla okusebenzisa amalungelo abo? Uma kunjalo, hlobo luni lwezinhlelo namasevisi le nhlangano ehlinzeka ngayo emphakathini ewusebenzelayo? KwaMashu ngokukhethekile.
11. Yiziphi izinhlobo zobugebengu obunenzondo obenziwa kubantu bothingo KwaMashu?
12. Abantu bothingo baziphatha kanjani ngobulili babo KwaMashu?
13. Ingabe kukhona ongathanda ukukwengeza mayelana nesihloko socwaningo ocabanga ukuthi kungasiza?

## ANNEXURE B: CONSENT FORM LETTERS (ENGLISH & ISIZULU)

### INFORMED CONSENT

It's a pleasure to meet you,

My name is Ayanda Buthelezi a registered master's Student in Criminology and Forensic Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College Campus in the School of Applied Human Sciences and Discipline of Criminology and Forensic Studies. My student number is 218046585, email address is [REDACTED], and cell phone number is [REDACTED]

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the **'A Criminological Exploration of queerphobic violence and Victimization of self-identifying queer sexual minority at a selected township in KwaZulu-Natal'**. This study aims to understand the factors that lead to queerphobic violence in KwaMashu, identify the types of hate crimes committed against queer individuals in KwaMashu, and explore how the available support and interventions address queerphobic violence in KwaMashu and explore the ways in which queer individuals navigate their safety in KwaMashu.

I am interested in investigating your experiences and perception of queerphobic and Victimization of queer community members. Your participation in this study entails consenting to participate in the interview. Before participating in this study please note the following:

- ❖ Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person but reported only as a population member opinion.
- ❖ The interview may last for approximately 45 minutes depending on your preference.
- ❖ The interview will be conducted in two languages namely IsiZulu and English depending on your preference.
- ❖ Participating in this study is voluntary and you are allowed to withdraw in the middle of the interview if you feel uncomfortable or do not want to continue.
- ❖ The study may involve the following discomforts, you may feel triggered as a result of participating in this study, and however psychosocial support services such as counseling will be provided to you during or after this study.
- ❖ Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- ❖ When the researcher writes the report, your identity name will not be used.
- ❖ Your participation is purely for academic purposes only and there are no financial benefits involved.
- ❖ The researcher requests to use an audio recorder for the purpose to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

**Research Office, Westville Campus**

**Govan Mbeki Building**

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

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## **DECLARATION OF CONSENT**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (**Full names of Participant**) have been informed about the study entitled: **“A Criminological exploration of queerphobic violence and Victimization of self-identifying queer sexual minority at a selected township in KwaZulu-Natal”**. by Ayanda Buthelezi 218046585

- I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.
- I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.
- I have been informed about any available psychosocial support services if injury occurs to me as a result of study-related procedures.
- If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study I understand that I may contact the researcher at 0 [REDACTED]
- If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 – Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Witness

Date

(Where applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Translator

Date

(Where applicable)

## IFOMU LOKUVUMA

Usuku:

Kuyintokozo ukuhlangana nawe

Igama lami ngingu-Ayanda Buthelezi obhalisiwe ongumfundi we-Masters kuCriminology kanye nezifundo zeForensic eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal, eHoward College Campus ophuma eSikoleni se-Applied Human Sciences kanye ne-Discipline of Criminology and Forensic Studies, inombolo yami yomfundi ithi 218046585 kanye nekheli le-imeyili lithi [REDACTED]. inombolo kamakhalekhukhwini ithi 0 [REDACTED]

Uyamenywa ukuthi ucabangele ukubamba iqhaza ocwaningweni olubandakanya ucwaningo **'Iwe-A Criminological Exploration of queerphobic violence and Victimization of self-identifying queer minority elokishini elikhethiwe KwaZulu-Natal'**. Lolucwaningo luhlose ukuqonda izinto eziholela odlameni lwezimbangi KwaMashu, ukuhlonza izinhlobo zamacala enzondo enziwa kubantu bothingo KwaMashu, kanye nokubheka ukuthi ukwesekwa okutholakalayo nokungenelela kubhekana kanjani nodlame lwezimbangi KwaMashu kanye nokuphepha kwabo KwaMashu.

Ngithanda ukuphenya okuhlangenwe nakho kwakho kanye nombono wakho we-queerphobic kanye Nokuhlukunyezwa kwamalungu omphakathi othingo. Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kuhlunganisa nokuvuma ukubamba iqhaza kunhlolokhono. Ngaphambi kokubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo sicela uqaphele okulandelayo:

- Ukugcinwa kuyimfihlo kwakho kuqinisekisiwe ngoba lokho okufakile ngeke kufakwe kuwena mathupha kodwa kubikwe kuphela njengombono welunga labantu.
- Inhlolokhono ingase ithathe cishe imizuzu engama-45 kuye ngokuthi uthanda kangakanani.
- Inhlolokhono izoqhutshwa ngezilimi ezimbili okuyisiZulu nesiNgisi kuye ngokuthi uthanda kangakanani.
- Ukubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo kuwukuzithandela futhi uvunyelwe ukuthi uhoxe phakathi nenhlolokhono uma uzizwa ungasathandi ukuqhubeka.
- Ucwaningo lungase lubandakanye lokhu kuphatheka kabi okulandelayo, ungase uzizwe ungapatheki kahle ngenxa yokubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo, nokho izinsizakalo zokwesekwa kwengqondo ezifana nokwelulekwa zizohlinzekwa kuwena phakathi noma ngemva kwalolu cwaningo.
- Noma yiluphi ulwazi olunikeziwe ngeke ulusebenzise ngokumelene nawe, futhi idatha eqoqiwe izosetshenziselwa izinjongo zalolu cwaningo kuphela.
- Uma umcwaningi ebhala umbiko, igama lakho kamazisi ngeke lisetshenziswe.
- Ukubamba kwakho iqhaza kwenzelwe izinjongo zemfundo kuphela futhi azikho izinzuzo zezezimali ezihilelekile.
- Umcwaningi ucela ukusebenzisa isiqophi sokulalelwayo ngenhloso yokuqinisekisa ukwethembeka kocwaningo.

Uma kunezinkinga noma imibuzo/ukukhathazeka ungasathandi noma umcwaningi lapha kule nombolo kamakhalekhukhwini 0 [REDACTED] noma I-imeyili :

[REDACTED], Okanye ushayele i- UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, kuleminingwane elandelayo:

EZOKUPHATHWA KWEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO EKOLISHI LEZESINTU  
ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI

Ihhovisi LezoCwaningo, iKhempasi i-Westville

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Ucingo: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

I-imeyili: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

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#### UKUVUMA

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Amagama aphelele obabambe iqhaza) ngazisiwe mayelana nocwaningo olunesihloko esithi: “A Criminological exploration of queerphobic violence and Victimization of self-identifying queer minority elokishini elikhethiwe KwaZulu-Natal”. Olwenziwa ngu Ayanda Buthelezi 218046585

- Nginikezwe ithuba lokuphendula imibuzo mayelana nocwaningo futhi ngibe nezimpendulo ngokwaneliseka kwami.
- Ngizazisa ukuthi ukuhlanganyela kwami kulolu cwaningo kungokuzithandela futhi ngingahoxa noma nini ngaphandle kokuthinta noma yiziphi izinzuzo engivame ukuba nelungelo lokuzithola.
- Ngazisiwe mayelana nanoma yiziphi izinsiza ezitholakalayo zosizo lwengqondo nenhlalakahle uma ngilimala ngenxa yezinqubo eziphatelene nokufunda.
- Uma ngineminye imibuzo/okungikhathazayo noma imibuzo ephathelene nocwaningo ngiyaqonda ukuthi ngingathintana nomcwaningi ku- [REDACTED].
- Uma nginemibuzo noma ukukhathazeka mayelana namalungelo ami njengomhlanganyeli wocwaningo, noma uma ngikhathazekile ngendawo ethize yocwaningo noma abacwaningi ngingaxhumana:

EZOKUPHATHWA KWEZENQUBONHLE KWEZOCWANINGO EKOLISHI LEZESINTU  
ESIKOLENI SEZIFUNDO NGENHLALO YOMPHAKATHI

Ihhovisi LezoCwaningo, iKhempasi i-Westville

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Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Ucingo: 27 31 2604557 – iFeksi: 27 31 2604609

I-imeyili: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Ukuvuma okwengeziwe, lapho kudingeka khona

Ngiyavuma ukuthi kwenziwe lokhu:

Kuqoshwe ingxoxo yami/yeqembu

YEBO/CHA

\_\_\_\_\_

Ukusayina kobambe iqhaza

\_\_\_\_\_

Usuku

\_\_\_\_\_

Ukusayina Kowufakazi

\_\_\_\_\_

Usuku

\_\_\_\_\_

Ukusayina Kohumushayo

\_\_\_\_\_

Usuku

(Uma kunesidingo)

## ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



10 July 2024

Ayanda Nomfundo Buthelezi (218046585)  
School of Applied Human Sc  
Howard College Campus

Dear AN Buthelezi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00007050/2024

Project title: A criminological exploration of queerphobic violence and victimisation of self-identifying queer sexual minority at a selected township in KwaZulu-Natal

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Full Committee Reviewed Protocol

This letter serves to notify you that your response received on 03 July 2024 to our letter of 13 June 2024 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.**

**PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.**

**Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.**

**This approval is valid for one year until 10 July 2025**

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours faithfully



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)/nng

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee  
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building  
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000  
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587  
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

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## ANNEXURE D: GATEKEEPER'S APPROVAL LETTER TO CONDUCT THE STUDY AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT



03 October 2023

Dear Ayanda Buthelezi

**Re: Permission to collect data and Agreement to Provide Psychosocial support (Imvelo Yesizwe)**

It gives us great pleasure to write this letter of support for the research study about Gender Based Violence: A Criminological exploration of queerphobic violence and Victimization of non-heterosexual bodies at a selected township in KwaZulu-Natal. This is a much-needed topic and will make a huge contribution to our township society.

Our organisation is based in KwaMashu community, which is under the District AIDS council of eThekweni, its services queer communities and provides psychosocial support to victims of gender-based violence. The organisation is registered under the Department of Social Development in term of Section 12 (A-O) of the Non-profit Organisations Act, 1997 (Act 71 of 1997). Our core vision is to service the needs of queer communities and to design and implement intervention to reduce queerphobic violence in KwaMashu. Before the beginning of your study, you are required to being along your ethical clearance from your academic institution.

In the duration of your research, you will be guided by Miss Nzuza who will assist you with finding the required participants. Our intern and staff will also be alerted about your study and will also form part of your study participants.

It is in our interest to collaborate with you on your project at no cost to you. Should you be interested to know more about our Institute, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We look forward to meeting you.

Kind regards,

Smangele Nzuza + [REDACTED]



**social development**  
Department:  
Social Development  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

FAX : (031) 337 0674  
Telephone/ Ucingo /Telefoon : (031) 336 8704 P. O BOX 1503  
Enquiries / Imibuzo / Navrae : Ms NGN Zondi Durban  
E-mail : [REDACTED] / 4000  
Celiwe.Zondi@kznsocdev.gov.za

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**Re: Letter of Support to provide psychosocial support**

It gives me great pleasure to write this letter of support for the research study titled: A Criminological exploration of queerphobic violence and Victimisation of non-heterosexual bodies at a selected township in KwaZulu-Natal. This is a much-needed topic that will make a huge contribution to society.

Imvelo Yesizwe Projects is a registered NPO under the Department of Social Development in term of Section 12 (A-O) of the Non-profit Organisations Act (71 of 1997). It is situated in KwaMashu Township South of Durban where it is supported by our designated social worker (Mrs Zondi) employed by the Department of Social Development, who has an MOU that allows them to provide Psychosocial services, Educational Programme at centre. Our services and offices are accessible and free to everyone who seek them.

As requested, we have made preparation and plans to offer psychosocial support as some of the participants are part of our victim empowerment programme that is facilitated by our GBV social worker. It is in our interest to collaborate with you on your project at no cost to you. Should you be interested to know more about, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Director of the NPO Miss Smangele Nzuzo.

*Kind regards,*

CELIWE ZONDI  
SOCIAL WORKER  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
SACSSP PRACTICE NUMBER: 1025980

## ANNEXURE E: LANGUAGE EDITORS' CERTIFICATE



Mufasa Research Consultancy

SERVING WITH DISTINCTION

10 December 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

**Re: Editor's Letter**

**A CRIMINOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF QUEERPHOBIC VIOLENCE AND VICTIMISATION OF SELF-IDENTIFYING QUEER SEXUAL MINORITY IN KWAMASHU TOWNSHIP**

Below is the scope considered during language editing of the above titled dissertation:

- Grammar check
- Sentence construction
- Spelling check
- Punctuation
- In-text referencing
- Formatting/document layout

As a professional editor, I pledge that the above aspects of the dissertation were, to the best of my knowledge, meticulously and correctly done at the time the work was sent to the candidate. However, I am not responsible for any corrections that were made after the editing process finalised.

Yours faithfully,



Venencia Nyambuya (PhD)

PhD in Media & Cultural Studies: UKZN (RSA)  
Master of Arts in Media & Cultural Studies (Cum laude): UKZN  
Bachelor of Science **honours** in Media & Society Studies: MSU (ZIM)  
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Address: 7 Chartham House, 180 Brand Road, Glenwood 4001, Durban, South Africa