Homophobic Victimisation: Understanding the Gender Prejudice faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Individuals in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal

By

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Declaration

This is to confirm that this

dissertation is my own work which

I have never previously submitted to any other university for

any purpose. The references used

and cited have been acknowledged.

Signature of candidate……. ……

On the…5th ……. day of.……July…….2024

Signature of Supervisor: 

On the 5th day of July 2024

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to every individual who has endured homophobic victimisation,

To every LGBT person remember to be proud of who you are, regardless of what society dictates, you raise that rainbow flag with pride,

To every participant in this study, thank you for sharing your experiences,

I appreciate each one of you,

To every person who accepts every LGBT individual unconditionally, thank you for making the world a better place,

To Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network, we are grateful for all your hard work in providing support for LGBT community ,

To my son Nervay Mikyle Bagwandin, thank you for being the wind beneath my wings. Without you, this would have not been possible.

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Abstract

This study focused on homophobic victimisation experienced by gay, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders living in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. In particular, the study investigated the victimisation experienced by participants based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It explored the contributing characteristics and factors that made them vulnerable to homophobic victimisation. It sought to understand the effects such homophobic victimisation had on them and to explore how participants navigate their identity to avoid further victimisation. It further explored participants' perceptions about reporting victimisation to the police.

To elicit data, a qualitative interpretive phenomenological approach was adopted. Purposive sampling was used to select 5 gay, 5 lesbian, 5 bisexual and 5 transgender participants. The researcher employed in-depth interviews as the primary source of the data collection method. The data was analysed through a thematic analysis process. This involved identifying themes from participants' responses as they emerged. The findings revealed that the participants experienced extreme bullying based on their sexual orientation. The homophobic victimisation participants have suffered were violently inflicted on them through physical assault through beatings, psychological bullying through derogatory name calling, sexual assaults and violations through physical sexual attacks, sexual harassments and sexual intimidation. Participants reported being victimised based on their same-sex attraction, gender identity and non-conformance to traditional gender role beliefs. Respondents echoed that strong cultural and religious tenets enforced traditional heteronormative behaviour through; the regulation of heterosexuality and the ostracizing of homosexuality, and contributed to their own internalised homophobia and homophobic victimisation they experience. The mental, emotional and psychological harm reported by participants demonstrated the lasting negative effects that such victimisations has on them. The findings also revealed the various strategies and coping mechanisms participants have had to adopt to prevent further victimisation. Participants' perception of reporting victimisation to the police revealed that that the fear of re-victimisation and poor police service deterred them while some participants felt it was their right to be protected by the South African Police.

This study recommends that society change the narrative of enforcing heterosexuality as the norm and be more inclusive to other sexual orientations. Globally, this can be achieved through scrapping laws that criminalise same-sex behaviour; media representation of homosexuality

should be more inclusive and not just sensationalizing reports of homophobic attacks; education sectors need to include other sexual orientations into their teaching programs; and training for people within the criminal justice system is required in order for them to treat victims of homophobic attacks with the respect they deserve.

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Concepts and Terminologies

The table below provides a list and explanation of terminologies integral to this study.

Table 1 Terminology

Terminology	Explanation
Bisexual	An individual whose principal romantic and sexual attraction is towards other and same genders or attraction to persons irrespective of gender (LGBTQIA Resource Center, 2020).
Gay	Men who have attraction or sexual relations with other men (Nath 2011, LGBTQIA Resource Center, 2020).
Gender non-conforming	Individuals who do not or challenge heterosexual norms or principal gender expectations and norms (Blondeel, De Vasconcelos, García-Moreno, Stephenson, Temmerman & Toskin, 2018)
Gender stereotypes	The shared social expectations pertaining to men and women and are used to construct their gender roles in society which include gender expressions, appearances and behaviours (Athenstaedt, 2003).
Heteronormativity	A social contract that creates the norm that humans are categorised into two distinct sex and gender binaries men/male and women/female (Vilakazi & Mkhize 2020).
Homophobia	Prejudice, subjugation and hate targeted at LGBTQIA individuals (LGBTQIA Resource Center, 2020; Lees 2017).
Homosexual	A person who has same sex attraction and sexual relations with the same sex ((Blondeel et al, 2018).
Lesbian	Women who have attraction or sexual relations with other women (Nath, 2011).
LGBTQIA	An umbrella term and abbreviation employed to refer to the community of non-normative sexuality or gender individuals as a

	whole. Each alphabet in the acronym LGBTQIA is representative of attraction or sexual relations and human diversity; L- represents lesbian (women attracted to women) G- represents gay (men attracted to men) B- represents bisexual (attraction to both men and women) T- represents transgender (gender identity differing from birth-assigned sex) Q- represents queer or questioning (exploring their sexual orientation, gender expression or gender identity) I- represents intersex (born with variations in sex characteristics) A – represents asexual (little or no sexual attraction to others) (LGBTQIA Resource Center, 2020; Blondeel et al 2018, Nath 2011).
Sexual Orientation	Refers to an individual's sexual attraction together with their emotional and affectional relations with other individuals of any sex inclusive of sexual and intimate relations (Blondeel et al, 2018).
Transgender	A person whose gender expression and identity are not in conformance to traditional and expected norms that are aligned to their sex at birth. Transgenders are inclusive of those persons who have undergone surgery for gender reassignment or any medical procedures that are gender-related, for example hormone therapy (Blondeel et al, 2018).
Victim	A person who endured harm and suffering through unlawful acts or omissions which violate or impair their fundamental rights. This harm is inclusive of emotional, mental or physical injury, emotional suffering and economic loss (Webster, 2008).
Victimisation	The outcome of deliberate action taken by a person or institution to exploit, oppress or harm another (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Webster, 2008).

Chapter 1

General orientation

1.1 Introduction

We live in societies where our behaviours, roles and identities are shaped through constructed ascribed and prescribed societal and cultural rules that we are socialised into. If these rules are not abided by or subscribed to, it is considered to be non-conforming deviant behaviour (Caraves, 2018). One of the general prevalent common rules is that an individual's gender frames their behavioural expectation, based on the guided norms of the individuals' sex. The ubiquitous heteronormative ideology denotes that there are only two autonomous opposite genders, i.e. women and men, who perform specific natural roles affiliated to their assigned biological sex. Van der Toorn, Pliskin and Morgenroth, (2020: 160) state that "heteronormativity is the lens through which the world is viewed and, importantly, through which it is evaluated and judged". This heteronormative perspective is characteristically evident in people's everyday experiences. It also reinforces heterosexuality, and all other sexual orientations are not possible or are considered taboo. This dominant gendered perspective causes prejudice and discrimination against those who are homosexual, thereby creating homonegativity towards lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgender people (Robinson, 2016; Mayeza, 2021).

Social, religious and cultural institutions propagate early heteronormative biases and the favourability of heterosexual behaviour. These early attitudes of expected gender roles and behaviour are based on biological sex. They are instilled through social agents such as parents, religion, schools and the media (Halpern & Perry-Jenkins, 2016). Attitudes regarding heteronormativity are rooted in the notion that the distinct different characteristics of males and females are supplemented by static behavioural expectations for a male and a female (Habarth, 2015). These expectations place strain on non-conforming individuals, thereby causing fear, stress and anxiety whilst creating a niche for discrimination, victimisation and gender prejudice from conforming individuals.

Throughout history, gender and gender-role non-conformance was considered deviant behaviour (Gordon & Meyer, 2007). During apartheid, the Immorality Act of 1969 in South Africa stringently prohibited acts of male homosexuality. It was legislated that sexual acts between men was considered was a criminal offence and those involved in same-sex

relationships could face imprisonment of up to two years (da Costa Santos, 2013). This strict conservative law forced LGBT individuals to conform to societal norms, whilst living their sexuality in secret (Pushparagavan, 2014). However, subsequent to the abolishment of apartheid, in 2006, South Africa became the fifth country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage, which included the protection of the right to sexual orientation (Smith, 2011; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019). Whilst legislative laws might serve as fortification for gays and lesbians, Brown and Dewitt (2018) argue that in reality, same sex orientation and the LGBT community still remain a distasteful topic in a South African context. Many South Africans, irrespective of race, gender and age, remain homophobic. Studies have shown homophobic victimisation remains rife (Mulaudzi, 2018; Mahapa, 2012; Muller & Meer, 2018; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019; Sithole; 2015; Mushome& Mushwana. 2021; Sutherland, Roberts, Gabriel, Struwig & Gordon**,** 2016, Msibi 2011).

1.2 Background to the study

Globally, laws advocating for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights have been progressive; however, countries within the African continent have been inert when it comes to rights of gender and sexual minorities (Mulaudzi, 2018). Most African countries have disappointing reputations in LGBT protection rights. Of the 69 countries that criminalise same-sex relations, 33 of these countries are located within the African continent (Reid, 2022).

Following repeated requests for LGBT protections from academics, activists, and advocates, the vital issue of widespread violence and discrimination against people based on sexual orientation and gender identity has taken centre stage in the UN Human Rights Council debate (Young-Schlee, 2023). In November 2011, the United Nations released a statement expressing grave concerns, stating that instances of homophobic and transphobic violence have been reported worldwide (UN, Human Rights Council, 2011). These acts of violence can be psychological (such as threats, coercion, and deprivations of liberty) or physical (such as murder, beatings, kidnappings, rape, and sexual assault). Driven by a desire to punish those perceived to be breaking gender norms, these attacks against lesbians, transgenders, gays and bisexuals amount to a kind of gender-based violence (UN, Human Rights Council, 2011).

When conventional societies advocate for heterosexual values to be moralised, they become the prescribed norm. Victims of homophobic violence are used as targets to root out any deviation from conformist heterosexual behaviour on the basis of deviance in order to maintain traditional social order (Zelin & Olidort, 2016). This then allows for non-conforming behaviour

to become stigmatised, thereby leading to LGBT individuals being excluded from their communities and their gender identities attacked thereby warranting a severe condemnation of their behaviour (Walls, 2008). In 69 countries around the world (Reid, 2022), it is illegal to engage in same-sex acts, and there are legal restrictions on those who challenge traditional gender conforming behaviour, hence criminalising the LGBT (Van der Toorn et al, 2020; Izutsu & Tsutsumi, 2021; Farquhar, 2021). This serves as warning to those who engage in same-sex behaviour, as well as, condones homophobic violence and victimisation. Evidence of ultimate denial of and sexual violence against same-sex relations, in the form of legislative prohibition, are evident through the strict laws imposed on non-conforming individuals in the following 11 countries featured below (Human Dignity Trust, 2023).

Table 2: Presentation of 11 countries that criminalise same-sex relations and enforce punishments

Country	Criminalisation of	Laws and acts implemented same sex	Maximum Punishment	Enforcement of law
Afghanistan	All LGBT peoples Same-sex activities between two males Same-sex activity between two women	Implementation of Sharia law after the take-over by Taliban in 2021. Article 130 of the constitution. Penal code 2017	Death penalty	In October 2022, Hamoud Sabouri was kidnapped and executed by the Taliban for being gay. A recording of his murder was sent to his family.
Iran	All LGBT peoples Sexual activity between males Sexual activity between women	Penal code 2013. Articles 233 and 234 called Livat – prevents anal penetrative intercourse between two men	Death penalty	In February 2022, two men who had been convicted of same-sex activity in 2016 were executed.
Pakistan	Sexual activity between males	Penal code 1860, Section 377 Un-natural offences. Based on Indian penal code imposed by the British colonialism.	Life imprisonment	In 2015, two men were arrested by police for entering into a secret marriage.

		Criminalises carnal intercourse between men against the order of nature. Calling it carnal intercourse.		
Qatar	All LGBT peoples Same-sex activity between males Same-sex activity between women	Penal code 2004, also governed by Sharia law. The Sharia court imposes death penalty on men engaging in same-sex activity. Women receive imprisonment up to seven years.	Death by stoning	On-line activity is monitored by the government. Police make arrests based on utilisation of on-line dating apps as an entrapment tactic for men. These gay men are subjected to physical and sexual violence prior to being arrested.
Saudi Arabia	All LGBT peoples Sexual activity between males Sexual activity between women Any expression of transgender	Saudi Arabia endorses and operates under the Sharia Law. Same-sex activity is criminalised and same-sex marriage is prohibited. Interfaith and married men are subjected to the death penalty while unmarried are subjected to flogging. Transgenders are criminalised for gender expression due to strict dress code laws.	Death penalty	In 2019, 37 men were executed; of the 37, five of the men were executed for indulging in same-sex activity.
United Arab Emirates	All LGBT peoples Sexual activity between males Sexual activity between women Any expression of transgender	Operates under the Sharia law. Same-sex activity is punished by death. Federal Penal code 1987 under Article 359 prevents any male to disguise as female. This impacts the gender expression of	Death penalty	There have been no reports of consensual same-activity as per the US Department of State report, however reports of arrests and deportation of individuals

		transgenders. A fine of one-year imprisonment or ten thousand dirhams.		wearing clothing that were deemed inappropriate for their sex.
Yemen	All LGBT peoples Sexual activity between males Sexual activity between women	Penal code 1994, Article 264 on homosexuality based on the act of sodomy whether committed by a women or man. Death penalty through the act of stoning is imposed if the accused is married.	Death penalty and death by stoning	In August 2013, eight men were publicly killed by Al-Qaeda members who operate under Sharia law which imposes the death penalty for same-sex activity.
Nigeria	All LGBT peoples Sexual activity between males Sexual activity between women Any expression of transgender	Twelve northern Nigerian state levels endorse Sharia law which punishes same-sex activity through death by stoning. In other parts of Nigeria, same-sex activity is punishable by the Criminal Act code and same-sex marriage Prohibition Act 2013. This act criminalises LGBT advocacy, same-sex unions and what it terms carnal sexuality against the order of nature. The maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment.	Death by stoning	In June 2022, in the Northern state of Bauchi operated by Sharia Law, three men were sentenced to death by stoning for engaging in same-sex activities.
Mauritania	Same-sex activity between women and men are criminalised	Criminalised under Penal code 1983 Article 308. Muslim men who engage in sex with other men are punished through death. Women who	Men are stoned to death.	In 2022, the US department of state found that LGBT identities are rarely publicly identified or discussed due to the severe stigma

		engage in same-sex activity are punished through a fine and two years imprisonment.		and the legal penalty attached as well as the harassment from police, family and the community.
Sudan	Same-sex activity between men and women are criminalised	Criminalised under Penal code 1994 Section 148 for sodomy. Maximum punishment is life imprisonment after third offence applied only to men.	Life imprisonment applicable to men for sodomy on 3rd offense	The US Department of State 2020 report has not found case prosecutions and arrests under this law, however a man was arrested in 2017 and sentenced to 40 lashings and a fine for adorning women's make up and clothes.
Somalia	All LGBT peoples Same-sex activity between males Sexual activity between women	Same-sex activity is criminalised under Penal code 1962 adopted from British rule. In addition, Article 2 designates Somalia as an Islamic state of religion, meaning the adoption of the Sharia law, where same-sex activities are punished by death.	Death penalty	Militant groups such as the Al-Shabab, that operate under Sharia law, control various territories in Somalia. They impose the death penalty on those accused of engaging in same-sex activity.

Source: Human Dignity Trust, 2023.

There still remains grave concerns globally regarding violence and discrimination against people based on sexual orientation and gender identity. As Table 2 refers, three African countries, namely Mauritania, Nigeria and Somalia, impose the maximum punishment of the death penalty for same-sex engagement. Sudan imposes the maximum penalty of life in imprisonment to men who continuously engage in same-sex acts (Human Dignity Trust, 2023; Statista, 2022). Most African countries that are run as Islamic states impose strict religious

Sharia laws against same-sex relations which calls for the maximum punishment of the death penalty to be imposed (Zelin & Olidort, 2016).

As noted in the above cases, most countries that impose the death penalty for same-sex activities are governed by the Sharia law. These are Islamic states that target gay men especially; traditional militant groups that advocate for the theatrical executions serve to demonstrate the severe intolerance of homosexuality in order to preserve the regions religious climate as inhospitable to the LGBT community. Such theatrical homophobic victimisations and attacks include videos and photographs depicting punishments of homosexual men, being dragged to public spaces where they are killed, stoned to death, beheaded, thrown off a cliff or shot (Zelin & Olidort, 2016). These dramaturgical depictions of victimisation are not only reserved for countries that are governed by Sharia law but are also evident elsewhere in Africa. Callimachi (2010) relays an article on how the body of a Senegalese man was exhumed by an angry mob hours after he was buried. It is alleged that the mob suspected the man to be gay, and therefore forcefully removed his corpse from the grave, spat on it and dragged it through streets before dumping it outside his elderly parents' home. The horrific scenes were filmed and the video sold at the market. As the video went viral, it sparked panic amongst other gays who claimed that they were hunted like animals. This was not an isolated incident; four other bodies were exhumed from Senegalese cemeteries on suspicions of homosexuality (Callimachi, 2010). These inhumane acts not only instil fears in homosexuals, it demonstrates the abhorrent intolerance of homosexuals but also gross inconsideration based sexual prejudice, and homophobic victimisation, even after death.

Although other parts of the world have made great legal strides during the past three decades, in terms of the inclusivity of sexual minority rights, members of the LGBT communities still remain discriminated against (Coleman, 2019; Plummer, 2014; Mandhan & Sharma, 2023). Discussion of the issues surrounding the plight of LGBT persons is critically important (Mandhan & Sharma, 2023). Many regions worldwide have reported acts of homophobic and transphobic violence and victimisation. These reports range from minor harassments, bullying, physical and sexual assault, torture and killings. The United Nations Human Rights Office of the Commissioner (2011) contends that these violent acts, whether spontaneous or well-orchestrated, occur in various settings in both private and public spaces, and are perpetrated by range of individuals including strangers and extremist groups. This demonstrates that despite progressive laws, LGBT individuals around the world face prejudice and victimisation.

While South Africa has been commended as one of the first countries in the world to have an anti-discrimination legislation that explicitly includes protection for sexual minorities, including LGBTQ+ individuals (Mulaudzi, 2018; Lees, 2017; Nel & Judge, 2008), the contradicting reality is that South Africa's prevailing landscape is dominated by widespread violence and crime fuelled by victimisation and hate speech. Socially held stereotypes about LGBT people play a role in the perception of homosexuality as immoral (Msibi, 2011; Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013). One of these misconceptions is that homosexuality is a Western invention, which means that it is unacceptable in African society (Msibi, 2011). Additionally, there are several misunderstandings regarding homosexuality, including the belief that it is linked to mental disorders, emotional illnesses, and diseases brought on by moral depravity, that LGBT individuals seduce heterosexual people into becoming homosexual, and that same-sex behaviour is condemned by all religious groups (Vollenhoven and Els, 2013). Therefore, victimisation, violence and criminal acts directed towards LGBT individuals in South Africa are due to gender prejudice and their nonconformity to heterosexual gender norms (Nel and Judge, 2008).

It is against this backdrop that the current study explores homophobic victimisation experienced by LGBT based on their sexual orientation and seeks to understand the gender prejudice they face. The ultimate aim of the study is to uncover how homophobic victimisation and prejudices that emerge through socially ascribed gender norms, impact the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

1.3 Problem statement

To demonstrate the immense distress caused by homophobic victimisations in KwaZulu-Natal, a news article written by Makhaye (2021) highlights some of the accounts of fears faced by LGBT individuals. A lesbian woman, whose friend was raped and brutally murdered based on her sexual orientation in KwaMakhuta, revealed her fears that she might suffer the same fate. The woman claimed that she was openly threatened with intimidations of corrective rape from the men living in her community. Despite reporting these threats to the local police station, the woman alleges the police casually dismissed her claims and no cases of intimidation were opened. Another account demonstrating the same fear that Makhaye (2021) depicts is that of a 31-year old lesbian who resides in Umlazi; she claims she too was threatened with corrective rape by the men in her community. A 30-year-old gay man from Mayville expressed how he is constantly criticised, condemned and assaulted because of his sexual orientation (Makhaye,

2021). These accounts fortify Lees' (2017) description of homophobia as a perverse detest, hatred and prejudice against people who do not conform to normative gender and sexual identities. It gives a clear understanding that LGBT individuals experience negative attitudes regularly. They live in fear of being brutally harassed or murdered.

Some of the following media reported cases (see table 3) in South Africa paint a clear understanding of the many who have suffered brutal and deadly victimisation by homophobic people.

Table 3: Media reports of homophobic victimisation

Date	Victims	Victimisation	Location	Source
January 2018	Mogamat Yushree Jacob	A gay man was whipped, tortured, raped, sodomised and had faeces thrown at him at a Rehab center.	Mitchells Plain Cape Town	Serra (2018)
February 2018	Dumisani Ngcobo	Reports that he is one of 50 men who was assaulted by his church Pastor for allegedly being gay. He was beaten and shunned by the church after an annual overnight gathering.	Pietermaritzburg	Ngubane (2018)
December 2019	Portia Mtshweni	Raped, her breasts cut off and murdered. The murder scene was reported to be gruesome.	Mpumalanga	De Barros (2019)
February 2021	Bonang Gaelae	A lesbian woman whose throat was slashed, she was stabbed to death while her lesbian partner was stabbed and beaten with a rock.	Sebokeng	Igual (2021)
March 2021	Nonhlanhla Kunene	Raped, stabbed and murdered	Pietermaritzburg	Makhanya (2021)
June 2021	Anele Bhengu	Raped, stabbed and her abdomen slit open	Durban	Naik (2021)
September 2021	Sisanda Gumede	Stabbed and murdered after being called "stabane" by her cousin, who claimed	KwaMashu, Durban	Igual (2021)

		after her murder that he had removed the family curse.		
April 2022	Mfundo Ngobese	Brutally assaulted, had his teeth and leg broken. His perpetrators kept saying they hate gays whilst assaulting him.	Durban	De Barros (2022)
June 2022	Mpho Falithenjwa	14-Year-old gay boy committed suicide after being bullied by his teacher and peers for being gay.	Orange Farm	De Barros (2022)
June 2022	Emanuel Mouers	A transgender who was stabbed and murdered at a tavern after being asked why he was using the male toilets.	Cape Town	Mkentane (2022)
August 2022	Tiro Moalusi	A grade 8 student who committed suicide after being mocked about his sexuality by his teacher in class.	Soweto	Mbhele (2022)

The cases mentioned in Table 3 support Francis' (2018) argument that gender prejudice is main cause why many LGBT individuals have died brutally or suffered severe injuries physically, psychologically and emotionally at the hands of homophobic people. The psychological and emotional impacts have far damaging repercussions. This is evident in the case of a Pietermaritzburg gay couple. Pieterse (2018) reports how a gay couple, who had been engaging in sexual acts in a car at a local park in Pietermaritzburg, were accosted by two men believed to be policemen. The alleged policemen refused to allow them to cover their bodies as they proceeded to take a video and photographs of the pair. Pieterse (2018) notes how the alleged policemen can be heard in the video hurling profanities, mocking and making homophobic statements towards the very apologetic couple. After the incident was filmed by the "policemen" it was posted on social media, causing the clip to go viral, thereby exposing the identity of the gay couple. According to the article, one of the men's family renounced and disowned him as they were unaware that he was gay. The other, a teacher, was mocked and further humiliated by his students and peers. Unfortunately, the couple did not open a case of

misconduct against the police officers. The devastation of the incident subjected this gay couple to the ostracism of their peers, colleagues and family. This case emphasises the insensitivity and prejudice directed toward those who do not conform to societal gender norms. It also depicts the social, psychological and emotional trauma experienced by LBGT individuals from those who are meant to love, support, serve and protect them.

As noted in the above-mentioned cases, and as asserted by Lees (2017), homophobic victimisation is a subject that requires more addressing in terms of research. Many within the South African LGBTQ community still repress their sexuality, in fear of victimisation. This repression causes a constant navigation of their gender identities in social settings. While most academic studies focus on quantifying homophobic attitudes (Maake, 2022; Arndt & De Bruin, 2011; Sopitshi, 2016; Kraft, 2018; Rothmann, Antonie, Nell & Ellis, 2023), there are a few studies that give empirical insight into the perspectives of LGBT experience in terms of homophobia and discrimination from a criminology perspective. Carrying out this study allowed for an understanding of how LGBT are victimised and discriminated against through insights and experiences of the gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender person.

1.4 Motivation

Although criminology has developed into a pulsating and diverse field since its inception in 1870, the critique of modern criminology is that it has ignored and distorted certain social groups such as the LGBT community (Woods, 2014). Promoting the call for "queer" criminology, many authors contend that, although traditionally criminology has engaged with matters relating to gender and sexual diversity, most LGBT research has been carried out through contexts of deviance and defiance of social norms which can be controlled or cured (Woods 2014; Buist & Lenning, 2016; Dwyer, Ball & Crofts, 2016; Peterson & Panfil, 2014; Panfil, 2018). Buist and Lenning (2016) assert that queer criminology allows for the comprehension of LGBT experiences of stigmatisation, rejection and discrimination to be understood; therefore, the motivation of this study is located within the queer criminology rationale. The researcher opines that through the incorporation of queer criminology into this study, LGBT individuals will be considered as being visible members of society who can fall prey to victimisation-based sexual prejudice; as individuals who are trying to steer away from the risk of victimisation or are navigating their lives to avoid any form of victimisation or harassment; and as individuals with negative experiences with the criminal justice system (Panfil, 2018).

Sexuality is such a profound complex phenomenon. Tamale (2011) maintains that researchers should be specific to reflect the various distinctions within the contextual disposition. While most studies on homophobia are located within the discipline of sociology, philosophy and psychology, addressing homophobic attitudes, hetero-sexism and the validation of anti-gay activism at a macro level, research has been very concentrated on homophobic predictors and attitudinal measures (Lyonga, 2021; Smith, 2011; Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016; Mahomed & Trangoš, 2016; Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Netshandama, 2013). Within the criminology discipline, most studies carried out on homophobia are focussed within Western societies, which is difficult to apply to the African context (Tamale, 2011). The few South African scholars of the criminology discipline provide a comprehensive look as to why LGBT victims of hate crimes do not report violence committed against them to the police (Mahapa, 2012; Muller & Meer, 2018; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019), however, there are limited studies on how socially ascribed gender roles impact the daily lives of LGBT individuals; hence the researcher embarked on this study.

National studies conducted on homophobia are focussed on the metropolitan areas, such as Gauteng, Durban and Cape Town. However, the researcher believes that Pietermaritzburg LGBT individuals' experiences need to be investigated. The gruesome murder of 37-year-old Nonhlanhla Kunene in May 2021, a lesbian woman whose half-naked body was discovered in Edendale in Pietermaritzburg, alludes to the similar trends of homophobic violence experienced in other metropolitan areas (Geldenhuys 2021; De Barros 2021; Makhanya, 2021). In 2003, a gay and lesbian organisation was founded in Pietermaritzburg to create a safe space for LGBT individuals. The organisation has since grown into a non-government organisation focusing on support for LGBTI individuals and their families. This need for support and the creation of a place of safety for LGBT people in Pietermaritzburg depicted that homophobia is prevalent. Hence the researcher found it apt to propose Pietermaritzburg as the location for this study.

1.5 Significance of the study

The purpose of the study was therefore to obtain detailed information from gay, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders living in Pietermaritzburg on their experience of homophobic victimisation. It entailed face-to-face in-depth interviews with participants who were selected through purposive sampling. The information from participants was then thematically analysed and presented in this study. Recommendations, based on information from this study, are

presented in order to assist in various sectors such as further research, law enforcement agencies as well as victims of homophobic abuse, and to create an awareness within communities and families.

The dissemination of the research results will help educate and benefit various stakeholders such as policy makers, the criminal justice system, South African police, and non-governmental organisations. The results will help to inform people about the existence of sexualities that exist outside of the heteronormative narrative. Individuals would be able to acknowledge the existence of sexual diversity and the fact that defying conventional gender norms is not immoral nor forbidden. This can be accomplished by addressing and rewriting the narratives about the inflexible boundaries of conventional gender norms and roles by future researchers and other scholars.

1.6 Aim of the research

The aim of this study was to explore how homophobic victimisation and prejudices that emerge through socially ascribed gender norms, impact the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

1.7 Research Questions

i. What types of victimisation are experienced by LGBT individuals?
ii. What are the characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic victimisation?
iii. What are the factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation?
iv. What are the effects of homophobic victimisation on the LGBT individual?
v. How do LGBT individuals navigate their gender identity to avoid victimisation?
vi. How do LGBT individuals feel about reporting the victimisation to the police?

1.8 Research Objectives

The following objectives were formulated in order to fulfil the research aim and the research questions of the study:

i. To recognise the types of victimisation experienced by LGBT individuals.
ii. To explore the characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms, that make LGBT individuals to vulnerable to homophobic victimisation.
iii. To explore factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation.

iv. To understand the effects of homophobic victimisation on the LGBT individual.
v. To understand how LGBT individuals navigate their identity to avoid victimisation.
vi. To understand how LGBT individuals feel about reporting the victimisation to police.

1.9 Explanation of objectives

The first objective was created to recognise the types of victimisation experienced by LGBT individuals. It sought to provide evidence of the types of victimisation that participants have endured based on their sexual orientation. This objective was to establish the kinds of homophobic abuses participants have experienced. The importance of this objective was to understand the extent and context of the victimisation as it leads to the establishment of prevention measure that align with the challenges or types of victimisation that the community is experiencing.

The second objective of this study was to explore the contributing characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms that make LGBT individuals prone to homophobic victimisation. This objective was formulated to understand how the standardized comprehensions about gender are socially constructed and to find out how non-conformity to these socially constructed gender norms negatively impacts the LGBT participants. In order to change the narrative about rigid gender norms, this objective sought to understand what the perceived digressions from social gender norms are, and how they cause LGBT individuals to become vulnerable to homophobic victimisation.

The third objective was formulated to explore factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation through exploring the participants perceptions of why they are considered vulnerable targets of homophobic victimisation by perpetrators. This objective sought to explore why participants felt perpetrators commit homophobic victimisation against them through understanding the factors that reinforce the heteronormative narrative thereby causing them to become susceptible victims of homophobia. The importance of this objective was to note what factors negatively influence people's mindset regarding homosexuality so that these factors can be addressed to prevent future victimisation.

Objective four was formulated to understand the effects that homophobic victimisation have on LGBT individuals. This objective was to get an understanding of how the homophobic victimisation impacted their lives and their over-all wellbeing. Any traumatic experience

affects a person life, the lifelong aftermath thereof remains, and the way in which one handles the trauma is subjective (Swart, 2014). Therefore, this objective was to gain an insight to how they deal with it. It serves to educate people, policy makers, NGOs and other LGBT people on the negative effect of homophobia so that people can be more inclusive and accepting, and policy makers and the criminal justice system can impose harsher penalties and make relevant policy changes. NGOs will gain an insight into the effects on LGBT people, to accommodate these effects. It will help with supporting other victims.

Objective five was formulated to understand how LGBT individuals navigate their identity to avoid victimisation. The objective was to gain an understanding of how participants prevent further homophobic victimisation. It was created to gain knowledge of the extremes that participants have to go through in order to avert homophobic victimisation. It served to demonstrate that participants are always at risk of homophobic victimisation and therefore have find ways to prevent them from falling prey to homophobic people. This objective sought to understand the alternative measures that participants took to protect themselves from victimisation. This will help NGOs and policy makers better understand the plight of LGBT victims.

The final objective was created to gain an understanding how participants felt about reporting homophobic victimisation to police. This objective sought to find out if the LGBT participants reported the victimisation they experienced to the police and if it was not reported, it sought to gain an understanding why it was not reported. The objective was to gain knowledge about the participants' perceptions of the reporting of victimisation to police and how they felt about reporting any further victimisation. It is important to note that SAPS members are human beings and members of society, some may have been raised with the same strong cultural and religious beliefs attached to gender norms that influence homophobic perpetrators. Therefore, through exploring the participants perspectives and experiences with the police, this objective sought to understand if SAPS member are able to set aside their beliefs when carrying out their duties of serving and protecting LGBT victims. This objective will benefit in understanding the reservations that participants have about reporting victimisation and will assist the criminal justice system and policy makers to implement effective measures to ensure that LGBT victims do not experience secondary victimisation.

1.10 Overview of research methods employed in this study

In order to address the problem and research objective, the research approach that was employed in this study was a qualitative research approach. This method was used to produce rich in-depth data regarding the experiences of homophobic victimisation endured by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals in Pietermaritzburg. Many studies of homophobia quantify negative attitudes towards LGBT individuals whilst other studies quantify the occurrence of homophobic victimisation and hate crime; most studies are focussed on school and tertiary levels (Rothmann et al, 2023; Francis, 2017; Francis, 2021; Msibi & Jagessar, 2015; Brown, 2018; Sopitshi, 2016). However, this study sought to expound qualitative data for a deeper comprehension of the experiences of homophobic victimisation and to understand the impact of the prejudice faced by LGBT individuals.

1.10.1 Design of the study

A phenomenological design was utilised in this study. A phenomenological study describes the meanings that individuals assign to certain phenomenon through their lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The phenomenon of homophobic victimisation was under investigation in study. Hence, this design allowed the researcher to concentrate on describing commonality in the experiences of participants. In this study, the researcher sought to explore how socially ascribed gender roles impact the lives of LGBT individuals and also sought to understand their lived experience of homophobic victimisation. The utilisation of a phenomenological design allowed the researcher to find commonalities of homophobic experiences based on socially ascribed gender role prejudices. It also allowed for the extraction of in-depth data.

1.10.2 Sampling

Data was not collected from the entire LGBT population in Pietermaritzburg, instead samples were purposively selected. The total number of samples was twenty (20) comprising participants of the LGBT community in Pietermaritzburg. The sample population comprised five individuals who identified as lesbian, five individuals who identified as gay, five individuals who identified as bisexual, and five individuals who identified as transgender. The 20 participants had to satisfy the following prerequisites: They had to identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. They had to have experienced homophobic victimisation and live in Pietermaritzburg. Participants were recruited from Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network in Pietermaritzburg.

1.10.3 Data Collection

The study employed in-depth interviews as the integral data collection instrument. This approach allowed the researcher to gain in-depth data based on participants' narratives of their experiences of homophobic victimisation. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with each participant; this allowed them to narrate their experiences freely, openly and without coercion. Using this technique also allowed the researcher to ask further questions and probe participants responses whilst obtaining clarity for questions and responses for both the participants and the researcher. Interview sessions lasted for 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the participant's responses.

1.10.4 Data analysis

Data analysis is the procedure of systematically examining, organising interpreting and representing the information collected from participants to gain more knowledge about the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In this qualitative data analysis, themes were recognised and recorded from the transcripts, and the context in which words were used was also noted (Dilshad & Latiff, 2013). Using thematic analysis as the prevailing technique, the researcher was able to understand the experiences, views or behaviours across data collections of the study (Braun & Clarke 2012). It entailed examining data in order to recognise, analyse and report recurring themes.

1.11 Structure of dissertation

Chapter 1 – Introduction and Background

This chapter introduces the research topic, *Homophobic Victimisation: Understanding the gender prejudice faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender individuals in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.* By providing background information and a research problem statement, it further explains the significance of the study and why understanding how gender prejudice impacts the lives LGBT individuals is important. This section elucidates the aim of the research – how socially ascribed gender roles cause homophobic victimisations and the impacts thereof. The research objectives this study aims to fulfil are discussed followed by the research questions that necessitate how these objectives will be met within the criminology discipline under the sub discipline of victimology.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter provides a summarised description of studies that have already been undertaken. It discusses critical studies that have already been carried out, in regards to homophobic victimisation. The literature review highlights arguments raised by other scholars; it elucidates the similarities and differences in their findings as well as their scholarly perceptions on the issue. The researcher provides evidence of what other researchers have left unresolved, thereby providing the rationale of filling the gap of research as well as building onto existing knowledge.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework

Chapter 3 explains the theoretical frameworks that this study encapsulates based on concepts and theories that have previously been developed from prior tried, tested and published knowledge. Each theory, namely, the queer theory and the target congruence theory, is explained in detail. Furthermore, it explains how these theories are integrated into this study in a theoretical context as they provide a basis for the data analysis and interpretation within this study.

Chapter 4 – Research Methodology and Design

A description and justification of the research methods used in this study is provided in chapter 4. In this case the qualitative approach is discussed. It delivers an explanation of why an epistemological paradigm was chosen and further discusses the appropriateness of the adoption of the phenomenological design. The research site and the sample size are discussed. The chapter elaborates on sampling techniques of non-probability sampling together with how the samples were selected through purposive sampling. It then explains the recruitment strategy and details the data collection methods using one-on-one interviews.

Chapter 5 – Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter presents the data analysis, and how the data was systematically examined, organised, interpreted and represented, based on the information collected from participants. This section presents the voices and experiences of the participants in this study. It also presents information relating to the objectives of this study based on the themes derived from the data. The findings are represented and reported.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study. It provides an overview of the research and reinforces how the conclusions were drawn. Evidence that the research questions guiding this study are answered is provided. The conclusion of the study discusses the significance of the study and provides recommendations for further studies.

1.12 Conclusion of chapter one

This chapter introduced the research topic, *Homophobic Victimisation: Understanding the gender prejudice faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender individuals in Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal.* It provided background information and a research problem statement which indicates that homophobic violence is still rife and demonstrated that LGBT people in Kwa-Zulu fear of homophobic victimisations based on the recent brutal attacks of gays, lesbians and transgenders. This chapter further explained the significance of the study and why it is important to understand how gender prejudice impacts the lives LGBT individuals. This section elucidated the aim of the research – how socially ascribed gender roles cause homophobic victimisation, and the negative effects it has on LGBT participants. This chapter presented the research objectives this study aimed to fulfil; the types of victimisations, the causes and factors that influence homophobic victimisation and the impacts thereof, through exploring the experiences and perspectives of LGBT participants. In order to effectively establish preventative measures against homophobic victimisation, research questions were presented in this chapter, to necessitate how these objectives would be met within the criminology discipline under the sub discipline of victimology. It further presented an overview of research methods employed in this study and the structure of this study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by referring to existing and relevant literature to the study. Essential to all research projects and research disciplines is a review of prior and relevant literature, in order to provide an overview pertinent to the research problem or a particular issue (Snyder, 2019). This literature review provides a summary and synthesis of previous research conducted on gender and how it influences homophobic victimisation both nationally and internationally. It provides a summary of how homosexuality is perceived within the African continent. It furthers aims to provide information on the types of homophobic victimisation experienced by LGBT individuals and evidence on why LGBT individuals do not report victimisation to the police, whilst providing supporting knowledge, thereby preventing duplication by the study. This chapter also provides a brief summary of the research carried out on homophobic victimisation, thereby providing justification for this study as well as giving credit to the esteemed authors (Kothari, 2004). This literature review seeks to add value to the context of existing literature by providing an account, review and evaluation through the use academic journals, scholarly articles, books, government reports and news articles. It provides broad definitions of concepts used that are integral to this study whilst also incorporating international literature in comparison to South African literature. This chapter aims to seek how the negative attitudes toward non-conforming individuals contribute to the discrimination, victimisation, abuse and violence against them. It is from this perspective that this chapter reviews relevant literature pertaining to this study's aims and objectives.

2.2 Victimisation of LGBT individuals based on non-conformity to gender norms

Most cultures endorse and uphold heteronormative behaviour; this includes conformance to socially accepted gender roles (Duncan, Aguilar, Jensen & Magnusson, 2019). When a person's behaviour or the expression of their gender does not align with their biological sex, they are considered to be nonconforming (Van Beusekom, Baams, Bos, Overbeek & Sandfort, 2016). These individuals are considered to be defying standardised gender norms (Kitzinger, 2005). Gender norms, according UNICEF (2020), are informal rules that comprise of collective shared beliefs which characterise and categorise expected behaviour based on gender identities within social contexts. Gender norms are internalised and plays an integral part in gender stereotyping. Traditional gender norms reinforce the idea that there are only two genders, male

and female with separate social behavioural roles for each sex. Non-conformance to these expectations associated with their assigned sex at birth and gender behaviour, leaves LGBT vulnerable to homophobia. This can lead to discrimination and homophobic victimisation. The perceived defiance to the regulated prescribed and ascribed social gender behaviour often perpetuates negative attitudes and victimisation from homophobic heterosexual people towards gender non-conforming individuals. One of the main notions surrounding the dominant hegemonial social gender norms is that, it is based on the postulation that only opposite biological-sexed persons can be attracted to one another, meaning that women can only be attracted to men and men only attracted to women. Hence, someone who is attracted to the same sex is seen as deviant (Kitzinger, 2005). Therefore, negative attitudes towards homosexual people often leads to them being marginalised and discriminated against, based on their sexual orientation and the sexual stigma attached to homosexuality.

South Africa has progressive laws passed in 1994 providing constitutional protection based sexual orientation (Davis & Snyman, 2005) which allowed previously disadvantaged people to enjoy the basic human rights. Multi political party backing after apartheid, saw the Bill of Rights enshrined in the new constitution on 8 May 1996, catapulting South Africa as the first country globally to reference sexual orientation as a basic human right that was to be safe-guarded against discrimination. However, this new legislation, saw many firm submissions of opposition, against the clause of sexual orientation, from religious organisations such as the KwaSizabantu mission in Kwa-Zulu Natal which called for a moral condemnation of homosexuality because it was considered unnaturally perverse and going against the will of God (Dunton & Palmberg, 1996). Regardless of the oppositions, ten years later in 2006, South Africa became the fifth country globally, to officially recognise and legalise same-sex marriages through the Civil Union Act No. 17 of 2000 (Mkhize, 2018). However, discrimination against homosexual people based on sexual orientation and gender expectations, still persists (Smith, 2011; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019). Because of such discrimination, LGBT individuals become vulnerable victims of homophobic violence and are rejected by their communities. Violence perpetuated against them includes assault, bullying, harassment, rape and loss of lives (Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019; Chakraborti & Garland 2012; Pace, D'Urso & Fontanesi, 2020).

LGBTQ people not only belong to the distinct community of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people, but also to a diverse global population each with its own characteristics, such as age, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, geographic location, religion and culture

(Graham, Berkowitz, Blum, Bockting, Bradford, de Vries & Makadon, 2011). The community of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals is not uniform. The abbreviations LGBTQIA+ serves to categorize people according to the shared experiences of facing discrimination in society due to their gender identity, sexual orientation, or gender expression (Muller & Meer, 2018). Although this is useful for analysing the effects of marginalisation, it's crucial to remember that not everyone who falls within this broad category will necessarily have the same experiences. Individual experiences vary widely within the demographics covered by the term. Thus, when variations in colour, age, ability, religion, culture, socioeconomic level, and geography are also taken into consideration, the populations represented by each individual letter in the acronym are even more complicated and diversified (Muller & Meer, 2018). These characteristics determine how gays, lesbians and transgender people experience life.

The commonality shared by the LGBTQ community is that they have been historically marginalised based on their sexuality and non-conformance to heteronormatively. Multiple studies illustrate that LGBT individuals in various societies and communities face a higher pervasiveness of victimisation and violence being committed against them as opposed to their gender conforming heterosexual counterparts (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2010; Messinger & Koon-Magnin, 2019; Chakraborti & Garland 2012; Pace, et al., 2020). They are considered as the "other" because they do not conform to society's traditional gender roles and expectations, hence the increased risk of victimisation (Judge & Nel, 2008). Therefore, LGBT nonconformity provides a foundation for prejudice, biasness, discrimination and violence (Graham, et al., 2011). Various societies play an integral role in the victimisation or the acceptance of LGBT individuals through institutional legislation which either criminalises or decriminalises historic homosexual laws.

There is empirical evidence of societies that validate homosexual intolerance (see Table 2). Not only has this empirical evidence explained these conventional societies' bigotry laws towards homosexuality, it displays sexual prejudice against LGBT people. These criminal laws that punish same-sex behaviour have instilled growing fears of victimisation and violence towards non-conforming individuals, forcing them to live under duress and compulsion. Although some societies are blatant about their stance and their same-sex intolerance, many progressive societies have endorsed same-sex marriage.

2.2.1 Timeline of countries that have decriminalised same-sex relations highlighting socio-cultural and political resistance

While some societies discriminate and prohibit LGBT behaviour (see Table 2), progressive societies have decriminalised same-sex relations that were previously considered criminal offenses. Research conducted by Masci, Sciupac and Lipka (2019) provides an overview of the countries which have advanced their laws in terms of the inclusion of same-sex relations and LGBT relations, thereby offering LGBT people protection of their rights such as the recognition of same sex marriages and the adoption of children by same-sex couples (see Table 4 below). Although many countries have adopted advanced democratic laws that have strengthened measures that advance protection of LGBT individuals through the decriminalisation of same-sex unions and the scrapping of sodomy laws that advance protection of LGBT individuals, failure to enforce these laws incites further violence because many groups and individuals within these countries still remain homophobic. Hence, Ungar, (2000) argues the decriminalising of same-sex relations has not led to the total elimination of homophobic violence or victimisation due to the resistance from citizens, for instance although the Netherlands was the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage, there was a strong resistance and opposition from conservative Christian and Muslim communities not to have same-sex marriage legalised (Masci, Sciupac & Lipka, 2019). Netherlands citizens strong resistance is exemplified in a study conducted by Keuzenkamp and Bos (2007) which found that negative attitudes towards LGBT individuals and homosexuality in the Netherlands was much higher among citizens who held strong orthodox religious beliefs; these included many older adults and the youth.

It is not only general citizens who resist homosexuality but officials who are tasked with enforcing the law, for instance, although Australia made great strides in the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2017, those who are meant to uphold the law, serve and protect were caught making homophobic slurs. A recent news report in Victoria, Australia, conveyed how a police officer made damaging and derogatory homophobic slurs about a gay man who allegedly reported family violence. The homophobic comments were made by the officer to his colleagues and although he was initially dismissed from the Police Force, he was soon reinstated and his penalty reduced to a fine. The officer's dismissal was overturned after being reviewed by the Victorian Police Registration and Service Board, saying it was harsh considering that the police officer showed genuine remorse for his utterances (Josh, 2024). Despite this being an isolated incident, this news report demonstrates that one of the challenges

that make it difficult to enforce laws against discrimination of same-sex relations, is that regardless of the Australian progressive law endorsing same-sex relations, strict penalties are not handed down to those who commit the violations, which is noted through the unwillingness of the Australian criminal justice system to not set a precedence for the incitement and intolerance of hate speech toward LGBT individuals. Meanwhile in Brazil, irrespective of progressive laws being passed 2013, homophobic killing was on the increase. Santos and Sposato's (2019) study revealed that in 2016 alone, 343 LGBT individuals were murdered; a further 445 LGBT people died in 2017 as a result of homophobic discrimination; 387 were murdered for being gay and 58 committed suicide due to the non-acceptance from society.

The table below highlights how some socio-cultural and political institutions are not welcoming to same-sex laws. Therefore Table 4 not only seeks to provide a basic time-line of all countries, it aims to display the resistance to these laws by providing a brief history and opposition / resistance from various groups within these countries (Masci, Sciupac, & Lipka, 2019).

Table 4: Countries that have decriminalised same-sex relations displaying opposition / resistance from various socio-cultural and political institutions

Country	Year	History	Opposition / Resistance
Netherlands	2000	First country to legalise same sex marriages.	Conservative Christian and Muslim continue to oppose law.
Belgium	2003	Allowed same-sex marriage and the adoption of children.	None
Canada	2005	In 2003 only 9 of the 13 provinces legalised same-sex marriage; however, in 2005, a law was passed for the nationwide legalisation.	Conservative party tried to challenge laws however were unsuccessful.
Spain	2005	Same-sex marriages legalised with same requirements and expected results as heterosexual marriages.	Laws were condemned by Catholic Spanish bishops and Vatican officials.
South Africa	2006	Same-sex marriage is legalised in line with the constitution's undertaking of equal rights. Officiants have a choice not to conduct same-sex marriages.	Zulu Monarch upholds the immorality of homosexuality.

Norway	2008	Legalised gay marriages, couples allowed to adopt and have artificial inseminations.	Opposed by Christian Democratic Party and Progress Party.
Sweden	2009	Same-sex marriages. Church clergy allowed to officiate gay marriages.	None
Iceland	2010	Gay couples permitted to marry and adopt children.	None
Portugal	2010	Same-sex marriages permitted.	Gay couples not allowed to adopt children.
Argentina	2010	First Latin American country to legalise same-sex marriage.	Law opposed by the Catholic and Evangelical Protestant churches.
Denmark	2012	Permits same-sex marriages and adoption of children.	No member of the Evangelical Lutheran required to perform the wedding.
Uruguay	2013	Second Latin American country to legalise same-sex marriages.	None
New Zealand	2013	First country in the Asian-Pacific to allow same-sex marriages as well as adoption of children.	None
France	2013	Same-sex marriages and adoption of children allowed.	Opposed by the country's conservative party and there's been several anti-gay protests in Paris.
Brazil	2013	The National council rules in favour of same-sex marriages.	Opposed by the Social Christian Party.
England and Wales	2013	Permission granted from Queen to pass a bill that legalises gay marriages.	Same-sex weddings are not permitted within Church of England.
Scotland	2014	Members of Parliament voted in favour of legalising same-sex marriages. Allows churches and religious groups the option of conducting same-sex ceremonies.	Opposition was received from both of Scotland's largest churches, the Scotland Church and the Roman Church.
Luxemburg	2014	Legislation was approved for same-sex marriages and the adoption of children. Law was championed by the openly gay prime minister, Xavier Bettel.	None
Finland	2015	Same-sex marriage Bill was passed due to a public petition which received 167000 signatures.	None

Ireland	2015	Gay marriages legalised due to referendum where 62% of voters voted in favour.	Opposed by some Catholic leaders
Greenland	2015	World's biggest island passes Bill on same sex marriages.	None
United States	2015	Gay marriages made legal throughout the country 11 years after Massachusetts.	None
Columbia	2016	Same sex marriages are legalised.	Law was voted in by 6 to 3 votes in the Constitutional court
Germany	2017	15th European country to legalise gay marriages.	Law was voted in by a 393 to 226 in Parliament
Malta	2017	Same-sex marriage is unanimously voted for in Parliament and legalised.	Opposition from the Catholic Church
Australia	2017	Legislation passed to allow gay couple to marry.	Voted in by Australian public by 62% to 32% margin
Austria	2019	Same-sex marriage is legalised.	None
Taiwan	2019	First country in Asia to permit same-sex marriage.	None
Ecuador	2019	Same-sex marriage legalised.	None
Northern Ireland	2019	Same-sex marriage legalised by UK Government after the suspension of Northern Ireland Government.	None
Costa Rica	2020	Gay marriages legalised.	None

Source: Masci, Sciupac and Lipka, (2019)

Even though the above-mentioned countries show a progression of laws are inclusive of same-sex marriages, the opposition and resistance, mostly from religious movement, towards same-sex marriage demonstrate, that although these progressive laws have been constitutionalised, people still discriminate against and victimise LGBT individuals based on their as sexual orientation. Of the 31 countries mentioned in Table 4, eighteen countries have shown resistance and opposition to same-sex relations, from either socio-cultural or political institutions. Evidently, despite liberal laws protecting same-sex unions, these are met with strong disapproval. The notable cases and studies in Australia, Netherlands and Brazil show that some people still are homophobic, ultimately leading to the victimisation of LGBT persons.

Additionally, to further demonstrate the lack of the implementation of these progressive laws for the inclusivity of LGBT individuals through the legalisation of same-sex marriage, research

to establish sexual orientation discrimination and hate crimes against LGBT was conducted on behalf of the two of the most influential nations, the United States and the European Union, during 2016 and 2012, respectively. The Centre for American Progression, CAP, undertook a study in the United States, and Fundamental Rights for the European Union (FRA) in Europe. In attempt to analyse and examine the social and legal rights of LGBT persons living its member states, both organisations were tasked to collect data to provide an insight on the extent and volume of hate crimes and victimisations experienced by LGBT people. These studies depict similarities in their overall presentation.

Both surveys displayed that LGBT persons continue to feel discriminated against (Singh & Durso, 2017; Eurosurveillance 2013). Both surveys showed that based on their sexual orientation, participants have experienced frequent discrimination or have been harassed. In order to avoid homophobic victimisations, the United States' study indicated that LGBT people frequently make substantial changes to their everyday lives to avoid sexual prejudice (Singh & Durso, 2017), while LGBT people in the European Union chose not to be open about their sexual orientation in their everyday social environments (Eurosurveillance 2013). The homophobic victimisation and discrimination in both studies revealed an extensive and significant threat to the well-being of LGBT individuals for instance survey results in the United States showed that amongst those who suffered gender identity or sexual-orientation discrimination, respondents reported that their psychological well-being was affected, while others reported to be affected physically and some reported the negative environmental effects from their community and neighbourhoods (Singh & Durso, 2017). A large majority of European respondents reported that they were attacked or threatened with violence because they were perceived to be LGBT (Eurosurveillance 2013). In Europe, the findings uncovered public spaces such as and government offices, bars, restaurants or hotels have also been volatile spaces especially for transgender individuals (Eurosurvelliance, 2013). Similarly, in the United States, transgenders reported being harassed or discriminated against through receipt of unequal service treatment or physical attacks in public places (Singh & Durso, 2017).

In order to gain more insight and to determine the progressiveness and effectiveness of the enshrined LGBTI rights and protections, a more recent report conducted across America in 2022 by the Centre for American Progression (CAP). Medina and Mahowald (2022) contend that the most significant and noteworthy findings from CAP's 2022 survey is that seven years later, LGBTQI+ people still endure substantially higher rates of discrimination and victimisation than non-LGBTQI+ people. Similarly, in a follow-up survey conducted by

Fundamental Rights for the European Union (FRA) in 2019, shows very little progress over the years, LGBT individuals still experience harassment and discrimination. The European survey revealed a 1% decrease from the previous study for instance 58% LGBT respondents experienced threatening or offensive harassments in 2019 (EU-LGBTI, 2020) as opposed to 59% who reported the same in the survey conducted in 2012 (Eurosurveillance, 2013). Responses to not living openly gay in everyday life showed an increase of 5% for instance 53% of respondents in 2019 survey reported (EU-LGBTI, 2020), while 48% of the respondents reported the same in the previous study (Eurosurveillance, 2013). The astounding findings in the American study, showed an increased amount of LGBTQI respondents conveyed making conscious efforts to their daily lives to prevent victimisation and discrimination based on their gender identity, sexual orientation or intersex. This included changing how they dressed, not divulging their personal relationships and the avoidance of medical offices and law enforcement agencies (Medina & Mahowald, 2022). This also alludes to fact that despite such elaborate and progressive laws in terms of endorsing same-sex unions, homophobic violence in first world countries is still common. Another distressing note is the increase in the concealment of sexual identities by LGBT people in daily life. This is done to fit into and be accepted in mainstream society. The Fundamental Rights for the European Union (FRA), reported, the slow progress in law implementation is not only depicted in the studies carried out but also through the witnessed attacks on the LGBT communities such as the attacks of gay prides, the acceptance of anti-gay ideologies and fines being imposed for gay friendly advertisements (EU-LGBTI, 2020).

2.3 Global concerns regarding discrimination and violence against LGBT communities and individuals

The crucial concern of universal violence and discrimination against people based on sexual orientation and gender identity has become a dominant argument in the United Nations Human Rights Council after numerous calls from various scholars, activists and advocates for LGBT protections (Young-Schlee, 2023). These grave concerns were first published by the United Nations in November, 2011 which stated,

> "Homophobic and transphobic violence has been recorded in all regions of the world. Such violence may be physical (including murder, beatings, kidnappings, rape and sexual assault) or psychological (including threats, coercion and arbitrary deprivations

> of liberty). The attacks constitute to a form of gender-based violence, driven by a desire to punish those seen as defying gender norms" (UN, Human Rights Council, 2011:1).

A follow-up report in 2014 substantiated these concerns (UN, Human Rights Council, 2014). The alarming reports culminated in the appointment of an independent expert, Vitit Muntarbhorn of Thailand, to investigate the grave concerns raised by United Nations Human Rights Council. The mandate of the independent expert was to evaluate, raise awareness and monitor protection against violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity, as well as to address the exacerbated forms of violence endured by individuals based on the sexual orientation and gender identity globally (UN, Human Rights Council, 2016).

The independent expert findings thus far have shown similar traits in countries evaluated since 2017. In Argentina, the first country to be evaluated, it was revealed that although progressive policies and laws were implemented, it was noted that institutional discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation was still prevalent. This is due to institutional discrimination and violence being so deeply engrained in the societal history. The findings alluded to poor access to the justice system by victims and impunity for offenders. Transgender violence and vulnerability were also highlighted (UN, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2017). In Georgia, it was established that despite the government's commitment to end violence against LGBT, the implementation of protection laws fell short. Common themes of harassment, bullying, beatings and exclusion from families and other social settings were prevalent (UN, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2018). LGBT individuals reported predicaments of either leaving their country or choosing to stay. If the latter was chosen, they would either suppress their gender identity or reveal their true selves and face possible violence or discrimination (UN, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2018).

Similarly, in Ukraine, the findings were that societal stigma caused Ukrainian LGBT persons to suppress their gender identity and sexual orientation as a key to their survival. Although there were no reports of significant acts of violence, the promotion of LGBT hate and violence by extremist groups was reported be concerning (UN, Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2019). It is evident that although these three countries are in different spectrums of the world, Argentina, Ukraine and Georgia are first world countries, the criminal justice system does not prioritize the rights and the safety LGBT individuals living there. It shows the

commonality of social stigma against LGBT people, and that institutionalised victimisation is deeply engrained in these countries' history.

Although the promotion of LGBT hate and threats are noted as concerning by the United Nations reports, some fundamentalist groups provide actual footage of violent punishments being committed against those who do not conform to the heterosexual norm. Video footage by some extremist groups show how gay men are punished by being thrown off buildings (Zelin & Olidort, 2016). Photographs have been posted and circulated on the internet of teenage boys in Saudi Arabia being hanged for engaging in homosexual behaviour (Stewart, 2017). In Syria, a militant extremist group took a young teenage boy into custody after he was accused of engaging in homosexuality; the young boy was thrown off a building the next day. (Laver, 2016). In the Islamic state known Daesh, the public are sometimes forced by extremist groups to attend the execution of many Iraqi and Syrian men who have been accused of sodomy (Laver, 2016). It was reported that a Syrian transgender woman was hanged by her breasts by these militant extremist groups (Laver, 2016). Such brutal victimisation serves not only as a stark warning to the LGBT population but also to instils fear of punishment.

Whilst gender identity and sexual orientation protection evaluations continue globally through the mandate of the United Nations, the discrimination and violence against LGBT individuals continues to plague various societies and countries. The devastating effects of these violent acts and victimisation impact LGBT persons. Evidence of this is contained in a study conducted amongst middle and high school learners in Utah, United States. Using a large representative sample, McGraw, Docherty, Chinn and Mahoney (2023), study showed that LGBTQ youth were more prone to suicidal thoughts and behaviours as opposed to their heterosexual counterparts. The study revealed depression, self-harm, substance abuse, suicidal notions and attempts amongst LGBTQ participants were closely linked to low parental closeness and higher family conflict. The findings suggest family dynamics and religious affiliation indirectly lead to suicidal thoughts and behaviours (McGraw et al, 2023).

The numerous calls for more protection of LGBT individuals against violence and discrimination from scholars, academics, activists and the United Nations Human Rights Council indicate that although same-sex relations are decriminalised, globally, perceptions of intolerance to non-conformance to heterosexual norms is still evident in many regions of the world. The standardisations and normalisation of heterosexuality positions homosexuality as non-existent, intolerable and therefore taboo (Bravewomon, 2018). Judge and Nel (2008) argue

that sexual stigma surrounding homosexuality is so rooted in socio-cultural and political systems that it casts LGBT individuals as the other; this "otherness" positions them as transgressors because they do not conform to societal gender norms. The normalisation of heterosexuality on an institutional and personal levels place homosexuals at risk because it allows for them to become targets of victimisation through intimidation, abuse, violence and discrimination (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Vasquez, 2019; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019; Abaver & Cishe, 2018; Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015; Haynes, Schweppe & Garland, 2023). Such intolerance, attacks, discrimination and victimisation negatively impact the lives of the LGBT person (Katz-Wise & Hyde 2012; Herek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002; McGraw et al., 2023). While progressive laws have been passed in various countries to avoid discrimination and victimisation based on sexual orientation, gender prejudice is still rife (Coleman, 2019; Mandhan and Sharma, 2023).

2.4 African perceptions of homosexuality

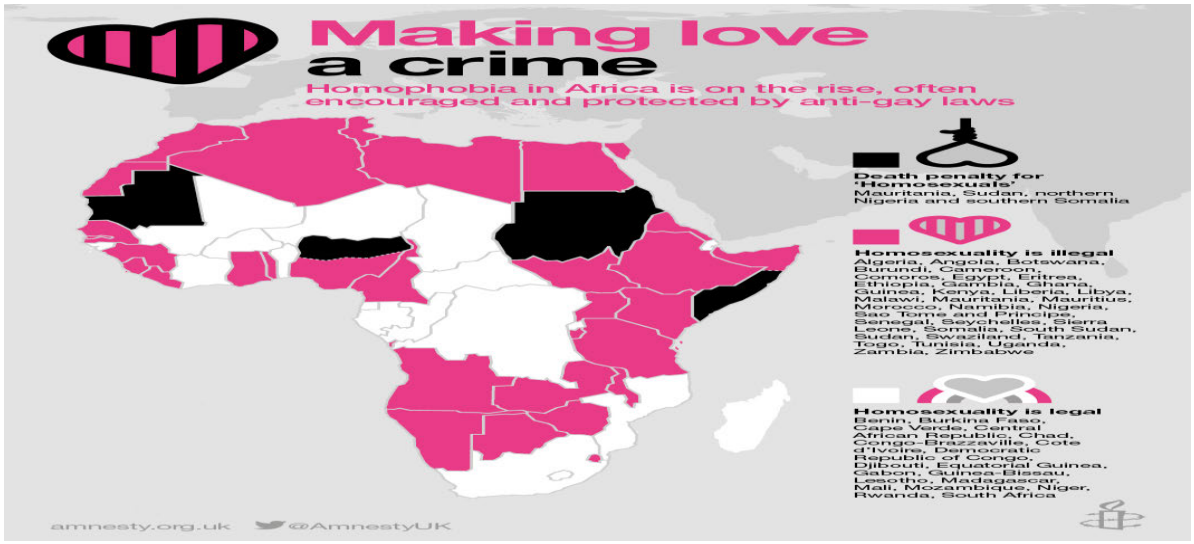
Although there still remains grave concerns globally regarding violence and discrimination against people, based on sexual orientation and gender identity, Africa as a continent is no different; 33 African countries consider homosexuality punishable through imprisonment, and six countries within Africa are stepping towards tightening anti-homosexual laws, these countries include Namibia, Kenya, Ghana, Niger, Tanzania and Uganda (Maunganidze & Cohen, 2023). Homosexuality, in most African countries, is strongly prohibited due to political, cultural, religious and legal reasons (Sabao, 2023).

A clear example is Cameroon's strict enforcement of its prohibition of same-sex relations, under section 347 of its penal code, which carries a five-year prison term; it saw the arrests of at least 27 people at the beginning of 2021. The Cameroonian government's harsh law enforcement on victims of same-sex behaviour demonstrates that LGBT rights are violated because, irrespective of being victims of mob justice violence, 11 of the 27 people were incarcerated for suspected gender non-conformity and consensual same-sex conduct (Reid, 2022). Additionally, Cameroon police raided the offices of an HIV treatment centre and arrested 13 people on charges of homosexuality; all those arrested were verbally and physically attacked by the police. One of them, a transgender woman, reported that police referred to them as devils and abnormal humans (Human Rights Watch, 2021). This confirms that the Cameroon government prioritises the illegality of non-conformity and same-sex behaviour over human rights.

The utterances of those governing these African countries has also set the stage for victimisation against homosexuality, clearly depicted when two Zambian men were arrested in 2017 for privately engaging in consensual sex in their hotel room. Deemed a form of torture globally, forcible anal examinations were imposed on both men after their arrests. The men were convicted in 2019 and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment under the colonial-era sodomy laws, for engaging in sex "against the order of nature" (Iqual, 2019). Then-President Edgar Lungu stated that he will not permit equal rights for gays as it went against the country's cultural and Christian views (Iqual, 2019). Although the pair were granted a presidential pardon in May 2020 amid international pressure, Zambia's strict stance on LGBT rights still stands firm. President Lungu's predecessor, President Hakainde Hichilema, maintains the same ideology. In response to an anti-LGBTQ protest, Hichilema reiterated that the Zambian government will not support same or intersex rights based on the country's values that are deeply embedded within the Christian faith (Itai, 2022).

Egypt's stringent same-sex laws come under fire and are condemned by the UN Human Rights Council as the country persists on torturing, detaining and arresting LGBT individuals. In Nigeria, the strict religious Sharia law still applies. In July 2021, five men were arrested in the Kano State by religious militants and detained for same-sex conduct (Reid, 2022). These examples clearly paint a bleak discriminatory picture toward Africa's LGBT community whilst also creating alcoves for condoning and promoting homophobic victimisation.

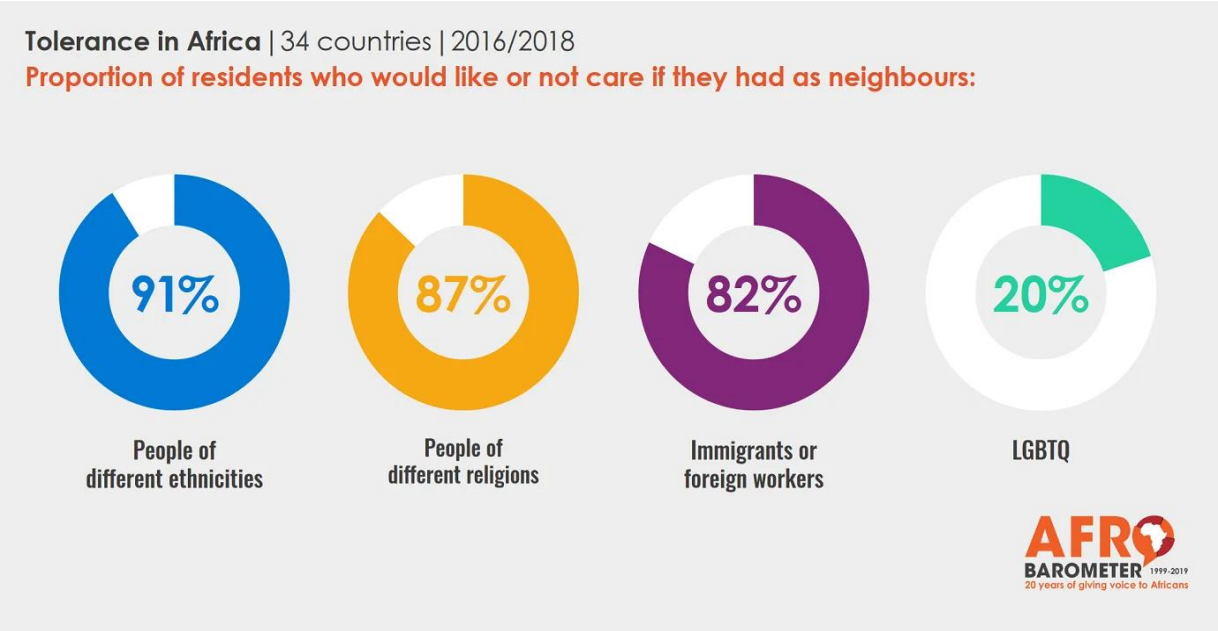
Figure 1: Illustration depicting the mapping of African countries with anti-gay laws



Source: Amnesty International UK (2018)

Figure 1 depicts the map of African countries with antigay laws, as noted, the death penalty was still imposed as at 2018 in four countries whilst most countries in Africa still consider homosexuality illegal (Amensty International UK, 2018). To further demonstrate Africa's negative perception toward LGBT individuals, Howard (2020) reports that in an attempt to study "togetherness" in African societies, Afrobarometer collected data during 2016 to 2018. The aim of the study was assessing Africans' tolerance toward other ethnic groups, religions and other nationalities. The study also included the tolerance of individuals of a different sexual orientation or sexual identity. The study conducted across 34 African countries revealed that while Africans show high levels of tolerance toward people of other ethnicities, different religious groups and people of different nationalities however only a small percentage of African citizens are tolerant of LGBT individuals (Howard, 2020). This demonstrates that while the African society is welcoming and accepting towards different ethnic and religious communities and nationalities, there is a strong resistance towards the LGBT community, homosexuality and sexual minorities. The findings of the study revealed that African people are biased and blinkered in terms of the inclusivity of LGBT communities because only 20% of people with the African society are tolerant of same-sex individual. This intolerance resonates with Epprecht's (2013) and Sabao's (2023) arguments that homonegativism is embedded in African society through religious, cultural and legal belief systems.

Figure 2: Illustration depicting the little African tolerance toward LGBT persons



Source: Howard (2020)

2.5 The South African perception of LGBT

Van Vollenhoven and Els (2013) and Msibi (2011) argues that socially held misconceptions about LGBT individuals contribute to the deeming of homosexuality as being morally wrong. These misconceptions include homosexuality being by product of Western culture thereby condemning it in an African context (Msibi, 2011). A further misconception about homosexuality is that it is related to mental disorders, emotional illnesses and diseases caused by moral depravation, LGBT people seduce their heterosexual counterparts into becoming homosexuals and the last misconception is that all religious groups rebuke same-sex behavior (Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013). An innovative survey carried out in South Africa regarding the perceptions that South Africans have on homosexuality and gender conformity by Hamann and Boullard (2017) conducted in the region of Gauteng in South Africa to determine the quality of life, showed that 14% of the residents supported violence against LGBT individuals which amounts to 1, 26 million people in Gauteng alone. Another survey conducted by Sutherland et al (2016) showed that only 56% of the residents supported equal rights for LGBT citizens whilst the remaining 44% were not in support. A further 70% believed that homosexual sex and breaking gender norms was "disgusting" (Sutherland et al, 2016; 37). The results revealed 51% of South Africans accepted that gays should enjoy the same human rights as all other South African residents. An astounding 72% of South African deemed same-sex relations as morally wrong. These survey results reinforce the arguments raised by Van Vollenhoven and Els (2013) and Msibi (2011). It further demonstrates that although South Africa boasts such innovative progressive laws, some people in South Africa remain opposed to the acceptance of LGBT people based on religion and culture.

Disturbingly, *The Progressive Prude* survey by Sutherland et al (2016) showed that 450 000 people in South Africa admitted to physically attacking women who publicly behaved and dressed like males while 240 000 South Africans attacked men who were publicly effeminate, in 2015. Three million people in South African stated a possibility of perpetrating violence against gender non-conformance in the imminent future (Sutherland et al., 2016). A further South African study carried out by OUT (2016) showed that 55% of the study's participants voiced their fears of discrimination based on their gender identity and sexual orientation. In the 24 months prior to the survey, 44% of the participants suffered discrimination in their daily lives owing to their sexual preference. The majority were from KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. Further, 41% of participants knew of persons who were killed based on their sexual

orientation. The study also alluded to the deterioration of self-esteem after participants had been discriminated against based on their sexual orientation and gender identity.

2.6 How gender influences homophobic victimisation

Gender is studied through various disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and cultural studies, and the researcher finds it integral to draw on these disciplines in order to better understand homophobic victimisation within queer criminology. It was helpful to put gendered philosophies and notions into the perspective of this study. Discussing gender aided in providing an insight into gendered societies from a criminological and victimological standpoint and from a queer criminological perspective; it assisted in highlighting LGBT individuals as victims and not as aberrant rebels who are deviant and defiant of heterosexuality.

2.6.1 The social construction of gender

In order to understand the victimisation and prejudice faced by LGBT individuals, Ryle (2011) contends that is important to understand the historic social categorisation of gender and the ascribed and prescribed roles is important. During the industrial revolution, men traded their labour for paying wages while women stayed at home and took care of familial and household duties. This became the concept of a family. This gave men the opportunity to exercise arrangements within their family unit, which become a social norm. The dichotomous concept of family was reinforced through various institutions (Law, 1988). Women were taught to be sensitive and nurturing while men were taught to be ambitious and instrumental (Ryle, 2011). It was moral for woman to be the homemaker and the man the provider (Law, 1988). The rise of Feminist movements allowed for homosexuality to become possible through advocating for gay and lesbian rights. Homosexuality was gravely condemned because it challenged the sharp difference of the meaning of gender and the categorisation of roles. One of the reasons it was previously condemned was because homosexuality threatened the family unit and men's power because there was procreation through homosexuality and women in same-sex relationships were no longer sexually available to men and no longer considered subordinate to men. Furthermore, men who were seen as effeminate or women who were seen as masculine were in direct violation of the prescribed gender norms (Law, 1988).

Gender socialisation is a process through which people develop and learn how to enact their gender through internalising gender roles and norms. This is done through interaction with fundamental socialisation agents, such as their family, social institutions and other key networks institutions (John, Stoebenau, Ritter, Edmeades, Balvin & Unicef, 2017). The

socialisation process occurs when a person is taught how become a successful member of a particular society through acquiring and adapting their behaviours, skills, values and standards in line with those revered within that society. Cultural and social role expectations are generationally transferred through lifestyles, behaviours and beliefs that are suitable to that community and society (John et al., 2017). Through the process of gender socialisation, males and females are informed of the different acceptable behaviours and values linked to their biological sex (Hoominfar, 2019; Guys-Evans, 2023). How a woman should behave and act is scripted through a society or community's prescribed gender norms and roles. The gendered world came to be because research has shown that almost all societies have assigned different values and roles to men and women. In essence, gender then becomes a social construct based on masculinity and femininity (Hoominfar, 2019). The enforcement of a gendered social structure advocates for men's privilege and easy access to power and other resources thereby creating gender oppression (Everett, Limburg, Homan & Philbin, 2022). Acceptance for those who do not adhere to gender role expectations based on their biological sex is therefore considered a deviance from the gendered social structure; therefore, their acceptance is hardly possible, as their non-conformity to gender role expectation is seen as abnormal. For example, as Schippers (2007) highlights, being attracted to the same sex is considered a deviance because it threatens the natural complementary of desire between men and women; when a man displays hegemonic feminine behaviors and characteristics, including wanting to be a desire for other men and vice versa for women, they become targets for sexual stigma and victimisation.

The cultural African ideal on gender roles is based on a woman's docile subservience and her submissive role to her husband whilst serving as wife and a mother is valued (Reid, 2019). Men are revered as the head of the household and final decision makers in the household. Brouard and Visser (2010) reveal that while masculinities are fluid, the dominant masculinity in South Africa is that of an assertive heterosexual one. Men and women conform to their roles in society against the backdrop of community expectations and standards based on heterosexual behaviour and relationships (Brouard & Visser 2010; John et al., 2017; Rudman & Glick, 2021). Compromising these expectations and standards through homosexual behaviour places the LGBT community at risk for discrimination and stigmatisation because the heteronormative order is disrespected, which influences homophobic victimisation. Mulaudzi (2018) maintains that the particularised African gendered roles advocate for heterosexual African patriarchal societies.

2.6.2 Homophobia and sexual prejudice

Herek (2004) affirms George Weinberg's introduction to the term homophobia, it was first used in late 1960's to confront the orthodox tradition way homosexuality was viewed. The term homophobia sought to assist society to shift focus and pay attention to the antigay stigma and prejudice experienced by those homosexual individuals. Historically, homosexuality was considered a mental disorder however the American Psychiatric Association Board Directors later ratified the decision to no longer consider homosexuality as being mental condition. This saw a positive shift in the how homosexuals were seen in both the medical and social sciences fields (Herek, 2004). However, the stigma surrounding homosexuality still remains rife today. Lees' (2017) explanation of homophobia is that it is a perverse abhorrence, hatred and prejudice against people who do not conform to normative gender and sexual identities serves to fortify the sexual stigma attached to homosexuality. This is exemplified by Mushome and Mushwana's (2021) study that was conducted in rural communities in South Africa, revealed that participant attitudes on homosexuality was conveyed through hatred, and the LGBT persons were likened to wild animals. The study showed that participants have the notion that gays should be arrested and not allowed the same rights as non-homosexual people. Individuals whose gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation transgress from the heterosexual norm experience intimidation, abuse and sometimes even murder (Ewing et al., 2020). This reinforces the idea that prejudice affecting LGBT individuals is motivated by hate. Criminal acts motivated by sexual prejudice or hate, based on sexual orientation, are committed against people, society, groups or organisations based on the group affiliations, identification or belonging (Dick, 2009; Chakraborti & Garland 2012). Perpetrators of these acts of violence strive to degrade, demean and dehumanise people whom they perceive as different (Haslam & Murphy, 2020). Overt prejudice causes oppression and becomes entrenched in socio-cultural and political processes, which in turn involve and affect all those who interact with these institutions. This allows for individuals to become vulnerable to victimisation based on their "otherness" (Judge & Nel, 2008). Ngidi, Ramphalile, Essack, and van Rooyen (2020) found that in South Africa and Namibia, in order to navigate public spaces, queer participants had to adapt their gender performance and dress code. These included acting straight and dressing in heteronormative appropriate ways that did not make visible their gendered identities (Ngidi et al., 2020).

2.6.4 Victimisation based heteronormativity, compulsory heterosexuality and patriarchy

Sexual minorities deliberately look for acceptance and progress within specific organisations because heterosexual relationships are valued more highly by the majority in society (Robinson, 2016). Heteronormative constraints place LGBT identities in formidable positions because when generalised social identities or behaviours are seen as the norm, being one's, authentic self becomes challenging. Being seen as non-conforming runs the risk of LGBT people being seen as deviant or aberrant, hence some LGBT people are forced to hide their gender identities in order to enjoy the privilege that is afforded in a heterosexual society (Chakraborti & Hardy 2015; Dick, 2009; Haynes, Schweppe & Garland, 2023; Ngidi et al., 2020). The challenges of hiding their identity place considerable pressure on LGBT, emotionally, psychologically and physically.

Mayeza (2021) argues that the dominant discourse in South African society is pre-dominantly heteronormative, heterosexual relations are the ideal while same-sex is considered wrong. LGBT individuals are faced with having to salvage their authentic identities, through challenging heteronormativity. This signifies their claiming their identities through coming out to friends and family about their sexual orientation and gender identities (Craig, & McInroy, 2014). The coming out process in itself could be met with rejection (Carastathis, 2013), which could lead to victimisation and other discrimination from their heterosexual counterparts (Mampane, 2020; Vasquez, 2019; Mkhize & Sibayoni, 2019; Abaver & Cishe, 2018; Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015; Haynes, Schweppe & Garland, 2023). The impacts of the rejection lead to further trauma and distress of the LGBT (McKenzie, 2018; Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Herek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002).

Heterosexuality is a socially constructed convention formed to serve as a structural directive of sexuality and gender hierarchies which favour men and heterosexuals (Francis, 2021). In order for patriarchal power to be maintained, heterosexuality has to be policed, protected and normalised (Bhana & Chen, 2020). Compulsory heterosexuality is a political tool used to subjugate and oppress women; it eliminates the ability to choose one's sexuality and makes women subservient to men. These political tools include violent structures that ensure women's loyalty and sexual availability to men, imbalanced economic structures where women are financially exploited and forced to marry men, and cultural propaganda portraying heterosexual relationships as the fundamental objective (Rich, 1980; Ferguson, 1981; Everett et al., 2022). This creates marginalisation and the exclusion of other sexes from society. Mulaudzi, (2018) argues that homosexuality is viewed as unsuitable mainly because it defies and challenges a

patriarchal society. Homosexuality is considered as disrupting and dislocating the dominant hetero-patriarchal order.

South Africa is a patriarchal society (Sathiparsad, Taylor & Dlamini, 2008; Mulaudzi, 2018). Patriarchal systems are deeply engrained in the principles of male dominance, male control, identification and male centeredness. Patriarchy reflects an ideology that men have superior control of women and all others. This preserved ideology is shared through various socio-cultural institutions such as religion, educational institutions, media, culture and social structures (Woods, 2019). Patriarchy favours male interests (Sathiparsad et al., 2008). This highlights that women and all other sexes are considered subordinate whilst male dominance is acceptable.

Homosexuality is seen as a threat to heterosexual patriarchal order, hence heterosexuality has become deep-rooted in upholding South African men's masculine gender identity. To avoid being seen as homosexual, the typical South African man must portray himself as maintaining his manhood; this portrayal and maintenance of manliness includes engaging in detrimental ritualised behaviour that includes public displays of violence against other genders inclusive of butch lesbians and gay men (Ried, 2018). Butch lesbians, because they present themselves in a more masculine way, are seen as threats because it questions what it is to be a man in South African society (Lock Swarr, 2012). They threaten the high social value that men place on being a man and the hierarchal benefits attached to it. Men consider the butch lesbian as a restriction to sexual access to women, thereby contributing to the disruption of the patriarchal order. This intimidation and threat of the patriarchal order leads to violence perpetuated against butch lesbians (Nath, 2011; Nel & Judge, 2008). In hetero-patriarchal societies, LGBT and gender non-conforming persons, just by being in existence, are considered to be contravening gender norms (Ewing, Brown, Mkhize & Msibi, 2020). Gay, lesbian and transgender persons who allegedly destabilise or disrupt the patriarchal order through their non-conformance to traditional gender roles, behaviours and stereotypes are chastised through discrimination and victimisation as a mode of social control (Judge and Nel, 2008). An example is the brutal murder of Diego Jacobs in Cape Town. Jacobs was previous harassed about his openly queer identity by a man who is said to be his former neighbour. The male perpetrator uttered homophobic slurs before brutally murdering him with a knife (Itai, 2024). This case shows that in order to uphold gender role expectations, gender norms are used to dehumanise and violate non-normative persons (Ewing et al., 2020). Gender non-conformance and perceived

challenges to privileged patriarchal systems and gendered norms leaves LGBT individuals vulnerable to hate crimes and victimisation.

Stigma grounded on gender identity is aligned to the workings of a gendered society where only two genders based on masculinity and femininity are possible. Sexual stigma is expressed through violence and discrimination against individuals if their sexual orientation differs from society's shared beliefs of heterosexuality, and homosexuality is seen as unacceptable, invalid and is condemned (Blondeel et al., 2018). The ripple effect of sexual stigma is that those who do not conform to society's notion of gender norms experience negative attitudes and violence towards them; they in turn internalise these negative societal values, which results in internalised homophobia. This has damaging effects on them which may result in self-harm, and vulnerability to violence (Lee, Chang, Tsai & Yen, 2022; Bryant, 2008).

The findings of a quantitative study in Italy by Baiocco, D'Alessio and Laghi (2010) established the interconnectedness of internalised homophobia and binge drinking amongst the gay and lesbian youths. A qualitative study carried out in Western Cape, South Africa by McKenzie (2018) revealed that internalised homophobia was a core theme for lesbian women abusing alcohol. The condemnation is based on sexual stigma that is amalgamated into a society's social ethos, and the stigma is created and enacted by various institutions within that society such as the criminalisation of and punishments for those who engage in homosexual behaviour (Blondeel et al, 2018).

2.7 Homophobic victimisation

Homophobic victimisation as a phenomenon is fast gaining attention amongst Western scholars; the dominant heteronormative ideal encourages victimisation based on non-adherence to society's compulsory gender norms (Chakraborti & Garland, 2012; Pace, et al., 2020). Victimisation denotes being mistreated, from a moral, physical, sexual or psychological viewpoint, which allows for attention to be placed on the victim's experience and the consequences, together with the impact of the vulnerability they have suffered (Muratore, 2014). Homophobic behaviour is associated with multiple forms of victimisation, such as homophobic aggressions that can be verbal physical or relational; such incidences of homophobic victimisation often have negative impacts on the victims (Poteat, 2017).

In order to understand homophobic victimisation, it is important to understand that mainstream society is regulated by ideological heterosexist systems, and anyone whose sexual orientation does not align with heterosexism is considered the sexual minority. The standardisation of

heterosexism both on an interpersonal and institutional level concedes to violence, harassment and discrimination towards sexual minorities (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). Living in a dominant heterosexist society causes LGBT people to experience double victimisation. Firstly, various studies show that they experience verbal, physical and sexual abuse (Mampane, 2020; Vasquez, 2019; Mkhize & Sibayoni, 2019; Abaver & Cishe, 2018; Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015; Haynes, Schweppe & Garland, 2023). Secondly, the impacts and trauma of such victimisation leads to negative self-worth, shame and embarrassment, together mental and psychological stress (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Herek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002).

Heterosexuals or individuals whose biological birth sex aligns with their gender identity are less likely to become victims of crime than LGBT people (Vasquez, 2019) because factors of heteronormative culture are adhered to (Warner, 1993). Masculine and feminine behaviour based on gender roles, expression, norms and performance that are prescribed and ascribed to for males and females, such as dress, appearance and behaviour, are adhered to (Kate-Wize & Hyde, 2012). Transgressors of these societal systems are victimised, therefore LGBT people are more prone to be victimised based on their non-conforming sexual orientation and gender identity (Bates, 2022).

A quantitative study carried out in Illinois, United States, showed that LGBT individuals reported being victimised at some point in their lives as opposed to heterosexual or cisgender people. The victimisation they experienced included acts of violent crime (Vasquez, 2019). These findings revealed that, not only are LGBT people more prone to victimisation but they are also at greater risk of experiencing frequent victimisation and more aggressive and violent victimisation (Vasquez, 2019). A research report conducted by Chakraborti and Hardy (2015) in England, found that homophobic and transphobic victimisation was considered normal by transgender participants. The normalisation of victimisation was due to the frequency in which they experienced various forms of harms. Transgenders are exposed to more substantial amounts of victimisation (Kate-Wize, Rosario & Tsappis, 2016); this includes more labelling, intimidation and harassment on a daily basis whilst carrying out their daily routines, hence victimisation becomes normal (Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015). For other gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals, the levels of victimisation depended on their lifestyle and identity features. For example, those whose gender representation, based on appearance and dress, was recognisably more trans or more gay, experienced increased levels of victimisation (Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015; Haynes, Schweppe & Garland, 2023).

As noted, people who identify as gay, bisexual and lesbian are at a higher risk of homophobic victimisation. However, Herek, Cogan and Gillis (2002) argue that many LGBT people feel that their experiences of victimisation have to be physically and emotionally brutal and malicious in order to warrant police intervention. Some do not report their victimisation because they blame themselves for the victimisation against them Homophobic victimisation occurs through various forms of harm such as physical acts, offensive descriptions, name calling, bullying and labelling (Poteat, 2017; Abaver & Cishe, 2018; Mampane, 2020), and it also includes social exclusion and seclusion (Pace, D'Urso & Fontanesi, 2020; Poteat, 2017). The impacts of homophobic victimisation cause high levels of anxiety, strain and undue pressure on victims (Pace, D'Urso & Fontanesi, 2020).

2.8 Types of victimisation

Victimisation against gay and lesbian individuals includes homophobic verbal aggressions such derogatory name calling. Other types of victimisation consist of sexual violations as well as physical abuse (UNESCO, 2016). LGBT youth are more prone to these types of victimisation from peers, acquaintances and community members and in everyday settings (Davis, Tucker, Dunbar, Pedersen & D'Amico, 2021). Research conducted by Davis et al. (2021) showed that unwelcome sexual gestures, comments and jokes and other types of verbal sexual harassment scored high among young LGBT adults. These types of victimisation take place within school, social and community settings.

2.8.1 Homophobic bullying, verbal aggression, threats and the risks of suicide

Verbal aggression victimisation is linked to homophobic bullying (Davis et al., 2021; Espelage, Valido, Hatchel, Ingram, Huang & Torgal, 2019; Espelage, Basile & Hamburger, 2012). Homophobic bullying can include verbal, physical and electronic aggression as well as violence. Disparaging name-calling and labels such as "homo" and "fag" or condescending phrases directed at LGBT individuals are forms of gender- harassment (Espelage et al., 2019). These disparaging labels and phrases serve not only as a form of victimisation for LGBT individuals but also as an enforcement of one's heterosexual status. They also send a stern warning to others to not digress from socially-endorsed gender behaviour, whilst serving as gender role enforcement (Espelage et al., 2019).

Similarly, within the South African context, denigrating and often pejorative offensive terms and labels are used to describe LGBT individuals. Studies reveal that name calling such as "*faggot", "stabanie"* and *"nkonkoni"* were frequently used by homophobic people to

humiliate, abuse and discriminate against gay, lesbian and transgender people (Mkhize & Sibayoni, 2019; Msibi, 2012; Sithole, 2015). In study of LGBT students at a rural university conducted by Mavhandu-Mudzusi and Ganga-Limando (2014), all participants mentioned that they had been stereotypically labelled with derogatory names such as double adaptor, wrong turn, Adam and Steve.

These pejorative and offensive labels are indicative of the hurt and humiliation that LGBT individuals endure. The denigrating name-calling serves not only to embarrass them but also to victimise and categorise them. Mavhandu-Mudzusi and Ganga-Limando's (2014) study showed participants experienced victimisation in the form of verbal threats, both sexual and death, intimidation, as well as physical assault. Sexual threats were, in most cases, made against lesbians by male students. Their study found the occurrence of death threats reported in interviews with all participants. These threats were perpetrated by fellow students through online social network mediums.

While most LGBT individuals find that contemporary society is more accepting of their gender identity and sexual orientation, they still feel unrecognised and stigmatised due to bullying and harassment. The stressors range from those emanating from institutional and individual levels. These lead to mood disorders and nervousness, with dangerous consequences such as attempted suicide and substance abuse. LGBT individual were more likely to commit suicide compared to heterosexuals (Tuite, Rubenstein & Salloum, 2021; Johns, Lowry, Haderxhanaj, Rasberry, Robin, Scales, Stone & Suarez, 2020). This is evident in four suicide cases in South Africa: Mpho Falithenjwa, a 14-year-old boy committed suicide after being bullied by his teacher and peers for being gay (De Barros, 2022); Tiro Moalusi, a grade 8 learner, committed suicide after being mocked by a teacher in class for being gay (Mbhele,2022); Lukhanyo Jongqo, a 14-year-old, committed suicide after being harassed, intimidated and bullied by his classmates for identifying as gay (Roxburgh, 2022); in Gauteng, 12-year-old Sibusiso Mbatha committed suicide after he was bullied by his teacher for being gay (Sowuba, 2023).

2.8.2 Sexual victimisation

Corrective rape as a form homophobic sexual victimisation which targets lesbian women is fast becoming a growing concern. Doan-Minh (2019) describes corrective rape as rape committed by a heterosexual man as a form of punishment against lesbians or gays. It also serves to rectify, cure or remedy their homosexuality. Although the term corrective rape was coined in South Africa, corrective rape has been reported in other countries such India, Jamaica, USA,

Cameroon and Zimbabwe (Geldenhuys, 2021; Gaitho, 2021). Jain (2015) reports that 15 cases of corrective rape have been reported in Telangana, India, through a crisis intervention team. The perpetrators of corrective rape are known to the families or are family members themselves, and are selected to cure the homosexual. Similarly, Geldenhuys (2021) reports that in Jamaica, corrective rape perpetrators are known to the victims and are selected by family members to cure homosexuality. Gaitho (2021) adds that the corrective rape case of Eudy Simalane brought to light other cases of rape that seeks to cure homosexuality in other countries such as Jamaica, USA, Cameroon and Zimbabwe.

Many South African heterosexual men consider lesbianism as a threat to their masculinity and a threat to their power (Kooran, 2015). Corrective rape is used a form of brutal sexual punishment by African men toward black African lesbians for infringing on traditional gender norms, whereby men violently rape the women to cure their homosexuality (Mieses 2009; Martin et al., *2*009). While South Africa boasts progressive advancements in its constitution and laws, Gaitho (2021) ascertains that Black lesbians are not privy to these advancements. Black lesbian women are still vulnerable and targets for corrective rape as the cases in Table 5 indicate.

According to the 2008 South African Human Rights Commission, *Report on the public hearing on school- based violence,* corrective rape in schools nationwide has become an increasingly growing phenomenon amongst learners. Male learners are of the impression that if they sexually attack female lesbian learners, they are able to correct their homosexuality (South African Human Rights Commission, 2008). Geldenhuys (2021) analogously depicts corrective rape as a "weapon of war" and further states, "during times of war, rape becomes a tool to break the morale of the defeated side. The fear of corrective rape remains a tool to subordinate non-heterosexual and gender non-conforming individuals" (Geldenhuys, 2021; 27). Corrective rape is a forceful discriminatory act which violates the victim's rights whilst being used a means to oppress, dominate and control. This further reinforces the intimidation, powerlessness and vulnerability of the victim based on their sexual orientation and sexual identity. Doan-Minh's (2019) study on corrective rape and homophobic violence found that offenders admittedly violated victims, not because of their obstinate hatred toward homosexuality but rather to target the lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender individual's encroachment on and resistance to hegemonic gender norms. According, Nath (2011), men feel threatened by lesbian relationships because their patriarchal order is intimidated; hence, they become aggressive and abusive toward lesbians, especially if she is a butch lesbian.

The term "corrective rape", first coined in South Africa, stemmed from the rapid increase and prevalence of rape committed against South African lesbians, to cure them of their sexual orientation or lesbianism (Di Silvio, 2010; Brown, 2012; Van De Schyff, 2016). It was following the 2008 attack of Eudy Simelane, an openly lesbian activist and famous South African soccer star, whose brutally murdered body was discovered after she had been gang-raped and stabbed 25 times, that the expression corrective rape was coined in South Africa (Doan-Minh, 2019). During the trial, the conservative judge refused the use of the term lesbian and probed the prosecutor for an alternate word instead. The judge made no mention of hate crime during the trial and sentencing, and instead stated that Simelane's sexual orientation had no bearing in the case. Only two of the five perpetrators were sentenced in Simelane's case. Many authors believe that Simelane's murder trial against those responsible could have set a cautionary precedent for future corrective rape perpetrators (Doan-Minh, 2019; Gaitho, 2021).

Below are more cases where the South African legal arenas failed Black lesbian women across the country from 2008 to 2018 (Brodie, 2019). Table 5 shows how the criminal justice system proved futile in solving the cases of South African lesbian women who died at the hands of their murderers. The perpetrators of these criminal acts are still at large; this not only proves ineffectiveness on the side of South African legal arenas but generates panic and fear amongst the South African lesbian community.

Table 5: Arrest details of South African Lesbian women who have died due to hate crimes

Date	Victims	Victimisation	Arrest details
May 2008	Khanyiswa Hani	Murdered, throat slit, stabbed and her teeth were bashed out	No suspects arrested
June 2008	Sibongile Mphelo	Raped, mutilated and killed. Her vagina and part of her leg was cut off	No suspects arrested
June 2009	Girlie Nkosi	Stabbed to death in a nightclub	Killers not found
November 2010	Ncumisa Mzamelo	Set alight and killed in abandoned toilet. Her body was so badly decomposed that dogs were feeding off her bones. She could only be identified through dental records	No arrests were made

June 2012	Phumeza Nkolonzi	Shot in full view of her mother	No arrests were made
June 2012	Sana Supa	Shot 3 times at her gate	No arrests were made
June 2012	Hiendrietta Thapelo Morifi	Raped, her throat slit and stabbed with a braai fork	2 men were arrested but released on lack of evidence
August 2012	Mandisa Mbambo	Stabbed, raped and beaten	No information of arrests
November 2012	Sihle Sikoji	Stabbed with a spear by 5 gang members	No arrests made
April 2013	Patricia Mashigo	Beaten or what appeared to be stoned to death	No arrests made
December 2015	Pascalina Melamu	Her breasts, eyes and vagina were cut out and her body set alight	Four suspects were arrested but no record of being charged
March 2016	Lucia Naidoo	Was stabbed to death on her 19th birthday	No arrests made
April 2017	Nonki Smous	Burnt to death	3 men were arrested however released
May 2017	Bongeka Phungula and Popi Qwabe	Two friends who had been raped and killed. Their bodies were found in separate locations.	Suspect was arrested but due to lack of evidence, he was released.

The reality that the term corrective rape was first coined in South Africa and that corrective rape is not included in the legislative responses indicates that: the benefits of progressive laws are not experienced as there is a gap in their implementation. The severity of oppression of South African lesbians through socio-cultural institutions leads to crimes such as corrective rape (Brown, 2012; Gaitho, 2021; Gontek; 2009). The disposition on corrective rape lies with the community to either excuse it or ignore it; corrective rape presents a serious danger to the continuance of human rights (Brown, 2012).

It is not only women who are raped based on their sexual orientation. Mgolozeli and Duma's (2019) study on rape experienced by men indicated that one of the subtypes of gang rape, a rape committed by two more people, was corrective rape. Mgolozeli and Duma (2019) explain that when rape is perpetrated by a gang, the intent is to correct the victim's behaviour, which may include their wearing female attire and representation as a female. The study included a participant's description of how the perpetrators relayed to the victim that he was being raped because he dressed like a woman and they wanted to correct his behaviour. Another incident of gang rape of a gay man in 2007 was documented by Louw (2014). The study detailed how the perpetrators of gang rape became more violent when they found out that victim had male genitals and was presenting as a female. The victim was even threatened with genital mutilation.

2.8.3 Physical assault

Those who do not conform to heterosexual behaviour or those whose gender identity does not align with societal norms are predominantly susceptible to violent punishments (Bates, 2022; Abaver & Cishe, 2018; Mampane, 2020). Key findings from Vasques' (2019) study in Illinois showed that LGBT individuals are 4 times more likely to endure aggressive violent victimisation compare to heterosexuals, 6 times more likely to endure violence against by someone they know, and 2.5 times more likely to encounter violence perpetrated by a stranger. Flores, Stotzer, Meyer, and Langton (2022) hypothesises that LGBT individuals in general experience a greater rate of hate-motivated violence based on the bias-motivation of their sexual orientation and gender. Their study of the United States' national crime victimisation survey noted that 32% of LGBT victims experienced physical injury due to homophobic victimisation.

Physical assault in general is dehumanising, however the physical victimisation of LGBT people is more pronounced through its brutality, ruthlessness, multiple stabbings, strangulation,

mutilations, gunshots and eventually killings (Mahapa, 2012). This is clearly noted in Table 3 and Table 5 of this study. This is also evident in the case of 19-year-old Thabiso Motaung from Cape Town, a member of the LGBT community, who was filmed being brutally beaten, stripped naked and sexually abused. Pictures and videos of her genitals and the assault were circulated on social media platforms. The three female perpetrators threatened to burn her home as well (Duba, 2023).

2.9 Factors that influence homophobic victimisation

The harms and impacts caused by hate based on sexual orientation differs from any other crimes. Lantz and Kim (2019) argue that effects of these harms are three dimensional: firstly, there is increased emotional and psychological impact on the victims as opposed to other crimes; secondly, the harm goes beyond the victim thereby negatively affecting the larger community and those associated to the victim; finally, the aim of such crime is to create a threat of further violence against the community, group or persons to which the victim is affiliated (Lantz & Kim, 2019). As noted in Tables 2, 3 and 5, accounts of homophobic victimisation are brutal and torturous, and these attacks are ruthless and cruel. Abroad, a study conducted by Flores (2023) disclosed that LGBT persons are nine times more likely to be victims of violent crime as opposed to heterosexual people. According to the South African OUT (2016) research, 44% of participants experienced sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination in their daily lives. Whilst most research in South Africa is concentrated and conducted at school and tertiary settings, factors that influence homophobia need to addressed.

2.9.1 The “un-African-ness” of homosexuality

A major condemnation of homosexuality in Africa is that is considered “un-African” (Msibi, 2011; Reygan & Lynette, 2014; Jaji, 2017). The African continent as a whole has been sluggish in the recognition of LGBT individuals, with the exception of South Africa. Most African elites inclusive of religious, community and political leaders, assert that homosexual practices are a Western import (Hairsine, 2019; Reygan & Lynette, 2014; Pichon, 2019). While South Africa may be the exception by offering protection to LGBT individuals, other African countries such as Uganda, Namibia, Tanzania and Kenya support discriminatory laws that target non-conforming individuals. These discriminatory laws are based on the premise that non-conforming gender identities were brought to Africa through Western colonisation and are contradictory to African values, therefore making them “un-African” (Pichon, 2019; Kaoma & Kaoma, 2018; Mwikya, 2014; Jaji, 2017).

Although, South Africa might be the exception, in regards to its progressive laws, the researcher considers that South Africa must be included in the "un-African" debate as part of LGBT discriminatory realities and experiences. The narrative surrounding homosexuality as un-African has become commonly accepted and utilised as a means to justify homophobic actions and behaviour (Mulaudzi, 2018). Sexuality is not just steered through the physical biology of the body but has been expressively driven through socially constructed legal, religious and cultural institutions. The sentiments of the "un-Africaness" of homosexuality are re-enforced and produced through various political, legal, religious and cultural platforms (Tamale, 2014).

African governments' stance on same-sex relations has been the polar opposite to those of the Western countries. Africa's homophobic wave is considered an African resistance to Western efforts to be inclusive and to influence homosexuality in Africa (Ibrahim, 2015; Pichon, 2019). In a fight for social justice and amidst the widespread of homophobia in Africa, Pichon (2019) argues LGBT advocacy is challenging because, despite having some legal recognition, LGBT groups' freedom of expression is often opposed. Historically, many political elites have used political platforms to campaign and discriminate against LGBT individuals. For many decades many African political leaders have been publicly damning and criticising non-conforming sexual behaviour and homosexual individuals. Stark reminders of these discriminatory public discourses are documented and recorded in academic articles and media reports (Bertolt, 2019). In 1999, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni was quoted in a state-owned newspaper saying, "I have told the criminal investigation department to look for homosexuals, lock them up, and charge them" (Bertolt, 2019). Epprecht (2013) argues that the proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill in Uganda creates threats of an array of new crimes to be committed against homosexuals while describing the proposed calls for the death penalty for aggravated homosexuality as shocking. Similarly, former Gambian President Jammeh publicly threatened death upon gays and warned Gambians that gays will not be tolerated; even if they were in hiding, they will be found and their throats slit (Tharoor, 2015). The late ousted Zimbabwean President Mugabe's threads of homophobic threats and statements likened homosexual behaviour to those "worse than pigs and dogs", and described non-conforming sexual behaviour as "condemned by nature" (Gunkel 2010; Prempeh, 2021; Moyo, 2020). Despite the collapse of Mugabe's reign during a coup in 2017, Mashininga (2021) argues that his vocalised homophobic hate and instilment of fear still remain deeply rooted and felt amongst Zimbabweans and its LGBT people.

In South Africa, despite progressive laws safe-guarding the protective rights of same-sex relations, Jacob Zuma in his tenure as deputy president described same-sex marriages as a "disgrace to the nation and to God"; he further stated that "growing up, a gay would not have stood in front of me, I would knock him out" (Hodes, 2012; Msibi, 2011). Patekile Holomisa, president of the Congress of Traditional Leaders in South Africa, made a public call to Parliament in 2012 to repeal and reverse Section 9 of the South African Constitution, which prevents discrimination based on sexual orientation. Holomisa claimed that South African masses are not in favour of protecting homosexuality (Hunter-Gault, 2015). In the same year of 2012, the Zulu Monarch, King Goodwill Zwelithini, called people who engage in same-sex relations "rotten", stating "same-sex is unacceptable" (Ratele, 2013). In 2014, Democratic Alliance leader Musi Maimane referred to gays as sinners (Mulaudzi, 2018). These publicly-made statements show non-support and intolerance of same-sex relations in South Africa whilst allowing homophobia to become embedded in South Africa's public political domain. While the public utterances of revered leaders re-enforce heteronormativity, the translations of these utterances and statements fuel and promote homophobia. Public leaders politicise LGBT rights at the detriment of the LGBT person. This clearly makes LGBT individuals suitable targets for homophobic violence and discrimination whilst also creating motivated offenders for those who oppose homosexuality.

African society's strong principles and values attached to ancestral and traditional belief systems contribute to the prohibition of homosexuality because these belief systems places emphasis on procreation through heterosexual marriage, and the continuity of culture through gender roles (Epprecht 2008; Epprecht, 2013). For example, social and political views surrounding homosexuality in Namibia see it as perverted because it goes against the people's culture and religion. Political leaders have publicly denounced homosexuality; this is reinforced through the strong penalty of imprisonment for homosexual behaviour (Saboa, 2023), thereby contributing to the compulsory heterosexual philosophy of the country (Browne, 2018). The prohibition of homosexuality leads to fear of police violence (Human Dignity Trust, 2023; Brown, 2018) which causes LGBT individuals to suppress their gender identity (Ngidi, et al, 2020; Brown, 2018).

In Kenya, there is a law of prohibition of any LGBTQ information in motion. In Ghana, a bill has been approved to increase punishments of LGBT people. Niger and Tanzania are to impose further penalties for consensual same-sex acts (Maunganidze & Cohen, 2023). Ugandan laws

have criminalised the representation of LGBT persons in courts; it also criminalises those who decline to report suspected homosexual activities and those who provide medical care and accommodation to homosexuals (Maunganidze & Cohen, 2023; Epprecht 2013).

Most African societies place moral emphasis on pro-creation and having children, hence importance is placed on heterosexual intercourse as the means of achieving this. This ensures the continuation of genetic and biological lineage (Brown, 2012; Ajei, 2022). Recognition in African society is through the natural production of one's offspring, and homosexuality is considered a threat to African values and norms because it encourages inappropriate families (Rudwick, 2011). In a critical engagement with existing literature, Dlamini (2006) shows that traces of homosexuality can be found in African cultural contexts. Dlamini (2006) provides evidence that African homosexuality is compatible with African culture, spirituality and cosmology. The findings in the study reveal that same-sex relations generate fear, opposition and heated public debate. The argument is that the contextual challenge surrounding human rights and equality remains in mobilising communities to encourage acceptance and respect (Dlamini, 2006).

In a South African context, the above sentiments are echoed in the Zulu Monarch King Goodwill Zwelithini's reference to homosexuality as a "problem" when he said "this new (homosexual) behaviour is quickly becoming a threat in our nation because it encourages people not to have proper families that have children" (Rudwick, 2011). To which Mulaudzi, (2018) referring to the Zulu king's statement, posits that if homosexuality existed in Zulu culture before, then there would not have been as many Zulu's as there are today. Brown (2012) hypothesises that traditional culture saturates South African norms and values based on traditions of marriage and family. South African societies place substantial importance on marriage and having children in order to achieve many functional roles such as matrimonial associations and spiritual contentment.

Within the South Africa context, dysfunctionality is echoed through the poor treatment of minority groups who are perceived to have little or no social power, such as homosexuals. This is reflected through dominant hegemonic attitudes and prevailing mindsets and through cultural and geographic contexts that influence people's everyday lives. The dominant culture creates an otherness which constitutes homophobia and gender discrimination (Sithole, 2015). South African emotive power based on culture operates as a hindrance in challenging heteronormative conceptions of sexuality (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn & Moletsane, 2007).

Traditional claims of gender roles and sexuality seem weak because, as Burns (2007) suggests, current research on gender roles and sexuality indicate that what is usually recognised as traditional may be considered intercultural or new.

In conclusion to the "un-African" debate as mentioned above, it is worth noting that many scholars have claimed that homosexuality existed before African societies were colonised (Jaji, 2017; Epprecht, 2009; Msibi, 2011; Reygan & Lynette, 2014; Epprecht, 2013). However, in Africa, socio-cultural and political norms that regulate sexual orientation continue to subdue gender diversity (Mkhize & Mthembu, 2023). The narrative surrounding the "un-Africaness" of homosexuality is deeply entrenched in most African societies and shared through various socio-cultural mediums. Whilst South Africa's progressive laws show advancement, as mentioned by Pinchon (2019), the implementation and execution still need to be objectively addressed. Mkhize and Vilakazi's (2021) study showed that although South Africa has a virtuous constitution that promotes protection and enables freedom, in practice, this is not the case; there is unrelenting control over gendered bodies. Institutions such as religion, the state, culture and family institute gendered violence (Francis, 2023; Msibi, 2011; Dryer, 2008; Rudwick, 2011). Same-sex orientation leaves the LGBT community vulnerable, especially in South Africa, which is a very gendered society where heteronormative ideologies and norms are re-iterated and valued.

2.9.2 The influence of religion

People in Africa are considered to be very religious, amounting to Africa being the most religious continent in the world, with 63% of its inhabitants being Christian and 30% Muslim (Harsine, 2019). Adamczyk (2017) argues that in countries where inhabitants are vastly devoted to their religion, the country adopts conservative ways with dominant religious views being shared through socialisation mediums such as schools and the media. Ojilere (2022) contends that religion and religious dynamics play a major role in shaping LGBT lives in Africa. The majority of Africans are of the Christian faith, which was introduced to Africa through colonisation and missionaries (Masondo, 2018). Most religious texts articulate homosexuality as challenging and problematic. The probability is that most religious people seriously accept these religious teachings (Adamczyk, 2017).

Pushparagavan (2014) maintains that in most African societies, people of the Christian faith reject homosexuality, based on biblical principles, which state, "Leviticus 18:22 do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable, Leviticus 22: New Testament" (Wenham,

1979). Webster (2019) refers to a religious verse which states, ‘’If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death: their blood will be on their own heads Romans 1 26-27”. These verses are often referred to when demonising homosexuality and considering same-sex relations as immoral and blasphemous (Francis, 2023; Dryer, 2008; Furr, 2014). Other arguments associated with biblical heteronormative norms underpinned by biological sex refer to the strong reference in the bible that God created “Adam and Eve”; attached to this statement is, “not Adam and Steve”, as well as the argument that God created men and women. These heteronormative biblical references are seen as the model, thereby eliminating any other inventiveness of same-sex relations (Ojilere, 2022). It is with these philosophies that homosexuality is considered as a sinful act and an abomination in Africa. Msibi (2011) states that religion is often used as a condemnation of homosexuality; it serves to refute and interrogate the virtue and presence of same-sex relations.

In South Africa, it can be argued that homosexual resistance stems from religion. Webster (2019) contends that 80% of the South African population are Christian. Most of South African society has been moulded through the Christian faith and teachings since colonisation. The African education system was primarily from the source of British missionaries who proliferated Christianity and its notions of sexual chastity. This allowed dictation by missionaries to the African followers of what was considered morally right (Pushparagavan, 2014). These conservative teachings still condition people’s way of thinking, hence promoting heteronormativity whilst shunning LGBT individuals and further exacerbating homophobia, thereby contributing to homophobic violence and discrimination. For example, in a study conducted by Mushome and Mushwana (2021), they relayed how participants in rural South African communities based their perceptions of homosexuality on Christianity and therefore condemned men having sex other men. The notion from participants was that a woman was given to man by God and that homosexuality is against God’s will. Similarly, in a South African study conducted on university students’ attitudes towards LGBT by Mavhandu-Mudzusi and Netshandama (2013) that reinforces the Adam and Steve debate, participants mentioned that LGBTI people went against God’s creation of male and female. The view was justified with a participant’s responses that God did not create Adam and Steve but rather Adam and Eve.

In stark contrast, a study conducted by Van Vollenhoven and Els (2013) showed the misconception that all denominations of religion condemn the LGBT. Van Vollenhoven and

Els (2013) argue that although different Christian faiths utilise the Bible as the foundation of the faith, principles between these faiths are diverse; for example, leading churchmen in Africa condemned the controversy surrounding the ordination of an openly gay bishop. In South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu had been very vocal in protecting the rights of LGBT people (Chitando & Mapuranga, 2016).

The challenge of understanding their sexual orientation often leads LGBT individuals to turn to religious and spiritual entities to help them negotiate their sexual identity through the reflection on religious texts taught to them through religious institutions, or they seek assistance from the religious leaders (Super & Jacobson, 2011). Some faiths believe that the synthesis of sexual identity and religious values is contradictory, leaving the LGBT individual feeling forsaken and abandoned (Lease, Horne & Noffsinger-Frazier, 2005). The most common contentious issue within religions is that same-sex attraction is unacceptable, making beliefs about same-sex relations immoral (Super & Jacobson, 2011). These teachings and messages of immorality, which may include threats and intimidation, are filtered down to congregants or members within these religious groups, who then uphold these beliefs, thereby causing them to infiltrate into other social settings. This negatively impacts the LGBT person's view on their self- acceptance, self-worth and development of their sexual identity (Barton, 2010).

A study conducted amongst diverse groups of community members in Lesotho showed that the complete denial of homosexuality was due to the influence of conservative religious teachings and the cultural context. The study revealed that LGBT individuals experience emotional and physical attacks from community members (Matsúmunyane & Hlalele, 2019). Similarly, Mushome and Mushwana's (2021 showed cultural and religious beliefs played an integral role in shaping people's negative perception on homosexuality. Heterosexual participants, some of whom were teachers, would make up names with their friends or use the labels that were seen on social media for LGBT individuals. Mkhize and Sibanyoni's (2019) study found that within their communities and neighbourhoods, homosexual individuals experience a lot of hate speech, sometimes coupled with physical assaults in their daily lives. This type of victimisation was based on sexual orientation because LGBT behaviour is viewed as being abnormal within their community. The study noted that all participants mentioned that they were not accepted within their communities and were humiliated through the use derogatory labels (Mkhize & Sibayoni, 2019).

2.9.3 Familial homophobic victimisation and rejection

Power institutions such as family are threatened by homosexuality because heterosexuality is considered normal and is valued (Wells & Polders, 2006). The coming-out process is often challenging for LGBT individuals because it means revealing or disclosing of one's sexual orientation to those closest to them, such as family (McKenzie, 2018). Coming out and disclosure to parents are one of the hurdles that LGBT youth face. The fear of parental rejection, being unsupported and judged plays an integral part in the coming-out process of LGBT youth (Mayeza, 2021). The LGBT person can be subjected to potential rejection, which has negative consequences such as prejudice and discrimination against them; this in turns cause familial victimisation.

A qualitative study conducted by Higa, Hoppe, Lindhorst, Mincer, Beadnell, Morrison, Wells, Todd and Mountz (2014) with participants consisting of youths aged between 14 and 24 in Washington, United States, found that there were negative features when discussing their families. Participants' most common apprehension was experiencing or fearing rejection from their families. Youth were worried about being disowned, deprived of financial support or being kicked out from home if their guardians or parents found out about their sexual orientation (Higa, et al., 2014). Youth participants felt they had to conceal their sexual identities or were unable to openly engage in talks about being LGBTQ with family members because their parents were antigay. Participants also reported family members thought that LGBTQ was a passing phase and would encourage them to be straight.

Katz-Wise et al. (2016) contend that families who are traditional in their values place strong emphasis on marriage and having children; in addition, those families who are religious are less likely to accept their children who LGBT. In a South African study, Mayeza (2021) noted that parents with strong conservative and religious values were a key hindrance in the coming-out process of LGBTI individuals. Unsupportive and outright rejection reactions were associated with parents who held solid worldviews. These strong worldviews were informed by orthodox conventional religious doctrines. McKenzie's (2018) study exhibited how lesbian women who were rejected by their parents and the church turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism to deal with their experiences of the trauma. Some lesbian participants described how their parents abandoned them whilst others expressed how their parents are still expecting them to get married to a man.

Research conducted by Gyamerah, Collier, Reddy & Sandfort (2019) of men having sex with other men in four Tshwane townships, showed that 53 of the 81 interviewees disclosed their

sexual orientation to at least one member of their family. This was due to passive disclosure, which included being outed or confronted by family members about their sexual orientation, whilst other participants reported active disclosure because they chose to live freely through being honest with family. Ten participants assumed their families were aware of their sexual identity because they presented themselves as effeminate, implied to family members about their same-sex orientation or they were seen with a same-sex partner by family members. Participants who came out to their families reported that their sexuality was never discussed and it remained a silent matter. The 18 who did disclose their sexual identity were in fear of losing their family, violence from family members, or had internalised homophobia (Gyamerah et al., 2019).

The impact of family rejection, which in turn is a form of victimisation, has negative effects on LGBT individuals. Meta-analysis research conducted by Carastathis (2013) showed that lesbians and gays who were rejected by their families showed high levels of anxiety, depression, stress and internalised homophobia. The results also revealed low levels of self-acceptance and self-esteem. According to Giannobile, Jackson and Fagan (2016), 40% of the homeless youths in America are LGBT individuals. Many youths who come out to their families experience forced eviction from family homes, denial of familial resource, and are left to fend for themselves. When youths are left without family support, they are left vulnerable and as targets for further victimisation. This also leaves them vulnerable to substance abuse in order to cope with the rejection (Mckenzie, 2018).

2.10 Negative effects of homophobic victimisation

The impacts of homophobic victimisation are immense on the victims. Whether the incidents of victimisation are past or present, the consequences have varied long-term and sometimes debilitating effects on victims. These include physical, emotional, economic and mental trauma (Nel, Venter & Stratford, 2022). A study conducted by Mitchell and Nel (2017) on hate crimes showed that participants felt anger, worthlessness, shame, loss of dignity, lack of support and distrust.

LGBT persons live in fear, and the anxiety concerning their safety plays an integral part in their daily lives. It compromises their quality of life in various ways. LGBT individuals constantly fear becoming a victim of crime (Dick, 2009). A study conducted in the US by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) revealed that due to concerns for their safety, LGBT students were more prone to absenteeism than heterosexual students. LGBT people's

perception is that they are at higher risk of being a victim of crime, therefore they take measures to avoid being victimised; this includes changing their behaviour and concealing their identity (Dick, 2009). In order to conceal their gender identity and sexual orientation, some transgender and bisexual women enter into marriages or sexual relations with other men (Nath, 2011).

Whilst the victimisation has severe negative effects on the victim, it also has a larger impact on the group they identify or belong to because of the similar traits and unchangeable characteristics (Lantz & Kim, 2019). These similar traits and characteristics are seen as targets, thereby instilling fear and anger in the group (Nel, Venter & Stratford, 2022; Lantz & Kim, 2019). LGBT individuals therefore feel targeted based on their sexual orientation and live in fear of being targeted. This causes emotional and mental anxiety. Flores et al. (2022) maintain that after a violent hate crime, negative mental and physical health symptoms are experienced by LGBT individuals. Physical and psychological symptoms are more distinct amongst LGBT hate crime victims as opposed to non-LGBT victims.

A study conducted by the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (2016) indicated that homophobic discrimination and stigmatisation affects gay men in various ways, including difficulty in expressing their sexuality. Being open about their sexual orientation limits their social support because gay and bisexual men were more likely to be rejected by their families. The study also revealed that 40% of homeless youth were LGBT individuals who were rejected by family and the community due to their sexual orientation.

In order to fit into society and to avoid victimisation, LGBT individuals have to suppress their true identities and who they are. In a study of gay men, Speice (2021) posits that hegemonic masculinity substantiates the value of gender performances within a society while hegemonic sexuality is used as a social organising principle that further adds to the discrimination and marginalisation of gay men. Most societies favour masculinity, and gay men are considered as a subordinate group. Speice (2021) argues, however, that the way in which gay men perform their masculinity, in different ways, allows them to attain the hegemonic ideal. Gay men who act straight or who have less feminine attributes are able to enjoy the social privileges afforded to straight men whilst allowing them to avoid discrimination.

The impacts of victimisation have devastating effects on LGBT victims. Despite South Africa's inclusive constitution that offers legal protection and comprehensive inclusion, LGBT individuals still remain vulnerable. Few LGBT individuals report victimisation to the police

while few cases make it to court (Müller & Meer, 2018). Negative responses from the criminal justice system, services and officials serve to deter LGBT victims from reporting victimisation.

2.11 Reporting homophobic victimisation to police

The primary duties of the public police in South Africa include maintaining public order, preventing crime, investigating crime incidents and safeguarding all citizens and their property (Minnaar & Ngoveni, 2004) However, due to fears of hostile responses and the lack of sympathy, LGBT individuals were less prone to reporting anti-gay hate crimes to police (Wells & Polders, 2006). A qualitative study conducted in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal by Mahapa (2012) affirms the lack of anti-gay hate crimes reporting to police; the findings revealed that victims who experienced victimisation were uncomfortable in reporting these incidents to the police. This was due to the trauma they experienced during the incident and the fear of revictimisation by the police. The study also revealed the lack of empathy toward LGBT individuals, rude behaviour and inattentiveness of police officers, trivialisation, ridiculing and mocking of the homophobic crimes (Mahapa, 2012).

A more recent study conducted by Mkhize and Sibanyoni (2019) in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal revealed similar findings to those of Mahapa (2012). When reporting their victimisation to the police, participants believed that the LGBT community is not taken seriously because cases are often not investigated. Hence most LGBT victims do not report victimisation due to the lack of trust they have for the South African Police. Participants revealed their lack of support and protection from police. The findings also showed that almost all participants in their study did not report victimisations committed against them due to the lack of effort by police and the criminal justice as a whole (Mkhize & Sibayoni, 2019).

Müller and Meer (2018) argue that existing evidence suggests that sexual violence survivors experience challenges when accessing the South African criminal justice system. LGBT survivors share these same challenges as the general population, however there are added challenges based on their gender identity and sexual orientation. Muller and Meer's (2018) LGBT sexual violence survivor research spanned across three South African provinces, namely, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. The study revealed that LGBT survivors do not report cases because:

- They feared their safety from perpetrators to the extent that the fear renders them silent about their violent experience.

- The fear of the lack of familial support; in conservative households, families often hush or reject LGBT identities because it is considered a shame or embarrassment to the family, and reporting violence against them would be an added stigma.
- Experience of bias from SAPS officials.
- The risk of their sexual orientation being made public.

Nath (2011) maintains that the South African police do not detail gender-based violence nor categorise it; neither do they classify hate crimes committed against LGBT individuals. This makes it difficult to determine the actual statistics of corrective rape, violence or hate crimes. Mkhize and Sibayoni (2019) argue that while LGBT individuals become targets for hate speech, in South Africa these types of crimes are uncategorised therefore non-chargeable, hence they go unpunished. LGBT victims fear re-victimisation or exposure by police, hence most crimes perpetuated against them are unreported. In line with Muller and Meer's (2018) research, Nath's (2011) study showed that LGBT victims were afraid to report crime because of the sexual embarrassment; they feared their sexuality would be disclosed. They were also concerned about being demeaned and punished further by the police.

2.12 Conclusion

The literature review in this chapter demonstrates that despite the progressive laws in various countries, it is evident that societies still uphold heterosexual norms, thereby discriminating against and victimising LGBT persons. The literature review revealed that despite South Africa's constitutional protection of the LGBT person, South Africans still remain homophobic. The deductions and conclusions derived by the authors highlight the assumptions that South Africans are "uniformly and incorrigibly homophobic" (Sigamoney & Epprecht, 2013). This validates that more research is required to establish a better interpretation of the complexities associated with the discrimination against and victimisation of gays and lesbians.

South African scholars concerned with sexual and gender diversity have produced evidence of high concentrations of heteronormativity and homophobia in schools and tertiary settings (Jagessar & Msibi, 2015; Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Ganga-Limando, 2014; Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Netshandama, 2013). Chamane (2017) argues that within the African context, most studies are focussed on same-sex practices and why people transgress from the social hegemonic views of gender instead of the issues of lived experiences, sexual identities and emotional associations that LGBT individuals encounter. The way in which people identify themselves is shaped by

their own realities and their own unique lived experiences. This suggests that understanding the prejudice experienced by LGBT individuals requires more in-depth micro-level examination, which this study aims to investigate; hence this study sought to explore homophobic victimisation endured by LGBT individuals through documenting their experiences.

Mulaudzi (2018) maintains cases of corrective rape are unreported and not easily accessible, therefore one has to depend on news articles, blog posts, writings of activists, civil society articles and victim media interviews. While conducting this literature review, the researcher shared the sentiments as Mulaudzi (2018) who indicated that research on cases of homophobic attacks and victimisation was dependent on news articles, civil society articles and blog posts. Hence, in the researcher's opinion, by conducting qualitative research using in-depth interviews with LGBT participants, the researcher will add to the body of knowledge that will contribute to further reference and serve as documented evidence of the homophobic victimisation experienced in Pietermaritzburg.

Chapter 3

Theoretical frameworks

3.1 Introduction

A theoretical framework is a structure that encapsulates concepts and theories, which can be developed from prior tried, tested and published knowledge. These theories can be integrated into a study, to assist in constructing a theoretical context or basis to provide meaning for the data analysis and interpretation within the research (Kivunja, 2018). This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks that were used to frame this study. It further presents the integral frameworks, theories and concepts that underpin this study, particularly the queer theory; this explains the existence of other sexualities outside of heterosexuality and heterosexual norms, which further disassembles traditional assumptions about sexual identities and gender. It assisted in critically viewing how the social and cultural constructions of gender negatively impact the lives of LGBT people. The other theory discussed in this chapter is the target congruence theory, which describes how LGBT become vulnerable targets to victimisation, victims of gratification and victims of antagonism.

3.2. Queer theory

Queer theory was first introduced by feminist film critic Teresa de Laurites in 1991. She outlined key features central to the theory – that lesbian and gay sexualities be investigated on their own terms rather than as nonconformities of heterosexuality. The queer theory therefore argues that gay and lesbian sexualities are forms of confrontation to cultural homogenisation in that they subvert prevailing ideologies (Amory, Massey, Miller and Brown, 2022). Piantato (2016) argues that there was a time when calling someone “queer" was slang for being gay. The phrase was frequently used as an insult and carried a strong homophobic connotation. However, now, not only does the term "queer" no longer have the negative connotation that it once did, it now refers to people who are attracted to the same-sex and those whose sexuality and physical appearance contest accepted social norms. Thus, the term queer argues against the hegemonic heterosexuality by examining the differences between gender identity, anatomical sex, and sexual desire. Queer came to represent marginalised sexualities that were not accepted in the mainstream discourse on gender and sexuality, and it evolved into a symbol of the struggle against heterosexual societal norms (Piantato; 2016).

The queer theory argues that gender is socially constructed. (Butler, 2002; Gieseking, 2008). Queer theorists argue that LGBT individuals are victimised because society views gender as flexible and fluid (Browne, 2019; Butler 2002; Gieseking, 2008). Butler's (2002) work on gender performance is key to understanding the fluidity of gender. Butler, (2002) argues that gender is performed and only exists if it is acted through repetitive practices. Identities are the result of repeated enactments and performances of cultural signs and conventions. A person's gender identity is brought into being through conscious and unconscious obedience to the norms and cultural signifiers of gender and sexuality (Valocchi, 2005). Butler (2002) suggests gender is not rooted within a person but only exist through actions that society deems acceptable based biological sex at birth i.e. being a male or female. Valocchi (2005) argues that the culturally placed classifications, normative frameworks, and meaning systems that permeate society, constitute and shape an individual. People absorb the standards created by the gender and sexuality discourses that are disseminated by social institutions (Valocchi, 2005).The employment of the queer theory was used to demonstrate how gender enactment, due to its social construction, is engraved into society and is therefore unknowingly enacted. Perpetrators of homophobic victimisation deliberately victimise LGBT individuals because the victim's enactment of gender does not support the perpetrators socio-cultural beliefs. It was further applied to demonstrate the fears LGBT people experience when their gender performances do not align with society's expectation and therefore the theory shows how they consciously enact their gender based on their biological sex to avoid victimisation.

Heteronormativity, a central concept to the queer theory, encapsulates the perspective of power (Valocchi, 2005). Heteronormativity is the set of norms that structures homosexuality as its binary opposite and makes heterosexuality seem natural or normal (Corber & Valocchi, 2003). This set of norms serves to maintain the dominance of heterosexuality by preventing homosexuality from being accepted or taken for granted (Valocchi, 2005). Therefore, the dominance of heterosexuality frequently functions unconsciously. Bravewomon (2018) argues that the queer theory posits heteronormativity as the daily interactions that structure heterosexuality as the typical and normal way of conducting relationships and establishing families. It highlights the prevalent existence of heteronormativity, which in turn emphasises the binary notions of gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation. The normalisation of heteronormative standards positions LGBT people as invisible, unacceptable and taboo (Bravewomon, 2018). Hence the application of the theory was apt, because through this study, LGBT participants' experience of homophobic victimisation demonstrated how the

heteronormative narrative is prized and maintained in society and is produced and re-produced through cultural and social institutions. LGBT individuals live in families and communities that uphold these standards, which causes perpetrators to voice and express their dissatisfaction of unacceptance or taboo through violence.

The queer theory notes that society has developed its own definition of gender and therefore polices the behaviour and the concepts of heterosexuality, gender, and sexual identities. It explores the nature of standardised norms based on sexuality and gender that are considered normal (Wozolek, 2019). Heterosexuality is considered typical while homosexuality is deemed inappropriate and improper hence it must be punished. Therefore, this theory was used to explore the factors that influence the social constructions of gender through examining participants perceptions and experiences of homophobic perpetrators. Wozolek (2019) maintains that the application of queer theory can assist us to rethink historical, cultural, and socio-political norms and values. In qualitative research, queer theory similarly frequently examines LGBTQ+ individuals' and groups' narratives in ways that aim to question commonplace experiences. To understand everyday experiences across sociocultural contexts, it is important to examine both the theoretical framework and the narratives gathered and examined in qualitative research (Wozolek, 2019). Hence, the researcher employed the queer theory to form a critical lens through which this research examined how certain heteronormative expressions of gender and sexuality are valued and upheld by members of society and how the non-acceptance of LGBT gender expressions is communicated through violence and victimisation through the experiences of participants. The application of this theory is beneficial when forming preventative measures against homophobic victimisation through reconsidering how we make unconscious assumptions of gender and sexuality based on a person's biological body.

Fixed definitions of gender and sexuality restricts our knowledge about what can be known about LGBT identities and their experiences (Renn, 2010). The queer theory in this study was employed to recognise that LGBT individuals experience multiple forms of oppression simultaneously leading to their unique experience of homophobic victimisations. Through the application of this theory, the trauma inflicted by these victimisations was acknowledged and therefore recommendations for community support was suggested. Furthermore, the application this theory was significant to understanding LGBT individuals 'experiences of homophobic victimisation because it encompassed normative values on what society regards

as the norm. This includes social constructs that produce social meaning to those living their sexualities, especially because the queer theory is not a systematic theoretical framework but rather as a compilation of intellectual encounters of homophobic victimisation based on gender and sexual orientation through the engagement of LGBT peoples' lived experiences (Chamane, 2017). Through the adoption of this key theory, the researcher was able engage with participants and extract rich, in-depth data to understand their experiences of homophobic victimisation, the impacts thereof, and also to understand how they navigate their lives to avoid such victimisation or further victimisations.

Gender is performed based on society's gender norms either aligning with it or transgressing them (Browne, 2019). Hence, the queer theory in this study, was used to demonstrate how that gender is socially constructed and that peoples understanding of it, is shaped through the society they born into. It was used to further display how gender is centred around the dominant heterosexual norm thereby causing victimisation to those who are considered as straying from the heterosexual norm. The use of this theory demonstrated how people value heteronormative order and heterosexual gender norms both consciously and unconsciously thereby expressing their non-acceptance of homosexuality through aggression and victimisation. Therefore, the employment of the queer theory was suitable in this study because afforded the researcher the prospect of addressing the research questions and objectives.

3.3 Target congruence theory

It must be noted that by no means is the aim of study to portray the lived experiences of LGBT individuals as tragic tropes of victims, but rather to highlight the unexplored dimensions of symbolic victimisation and the violence they endure in a standardised prescriptive and ascriptive heteronormative society. Therefore, Finkelhor and Asdigian's (1996) target congruence theory was applied in this research. Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) argue for the importance of recognising characteristics or attributes that entice perpetrators to choose the victim as their target. Notably, they claimed that the theory was not victim-blaming because victims cannot alter their traits. Instead, they argue that the focus is on the offender's predispositions, tendencies, and reactivities, which is why the concept of congruence emphasises that the offender is at fault rather than the victim (Zavala, 2018). These attributes consist of three factors: target vulnerability; target gratification; and target antagonism.

3.3.1 Target vulnerability

Target vulnerability refers to the victim's personal features that compromises their ability to deter or resist victimisation (Finkelhor and Asdigian, 1996). Individuals might possess characteristics that allow them to be vulnerable targets of victimisation (Finkelhor & Asdigian, 1996). Certain persons are selected for victimization because they are perceived as easy targets. It's possible that these people have certain personal traits that leave them open to abuse (Zavala, 2018). Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) have identified a number of physical vulnerabilities, such as an individual's height and weight, psychological issues, and emotional deprivation as examples of target vulnerability.

People who are susceptible to these vulnerabilities may become victims because the perpetrator may believe they are helpless (either mentally or physically) to defend themselves or stop physical aggression, which makes them an easy target. The application of target vulnerability in this study relates gay stereotyping as recognised a characteristic that makes LGBT individuals vulnerable targets to anti-gay victimisation. A group's social inferiority is reflected in negative cultural stereotypes, making that group more easily targeted (Waldner & Berg, 2008). Therefore, this study employed target vulnerability to examine how LGBT are deemed as vulnerable through negative gay stereotyping and gender identification / expression.

The majority of harmful preconceptions about homosexual men stem from the misunderstanding of homosexuality as male gender deviation (Waldner & Berg, 2008). Gay men are portrayed by the sissy stereotype as being weak and effeminate, more like women than males (Schippers, 2007). Perpetrators may view potential homosexual male targets as more vulnerable and a source of ridicule if they conform to these stereotypes (Schippers, 2007; Plummer, 2014; Waldner & Berg 2008). Furthermore, it is easier to recognise persons who fit these preconceptions as being more vulnerable therefore target vulnerability was applied to demonstrate how gay men become targets to victimisation.

With South Africa being a heteropatriarchal society (Sathiparsad et al., 2008; Mulaudzi, 2018), butch lesbians who present themselves in a more masculine way, are seen as threats to men (Lock Swarr, 2012) therefore making them vulnerable targets to victimization. Butch lesbians threaten the high social value that men place on being a man and the hierarchal benefits attached to it. Men deem butch lesbians as disrupting the patriarchal order. This fear and threat of the patriarchal order perpetuates violence against them (Nath, 2011; Nel & Judge, 2008) and therefore butch lesbians and lesbians in general with the South African context present more target vulnerability to offenders because their gender identity does not align with socially

ascribed norms. Furthermore, Finkelhor and Asdigian, (1996) argue that being physically weaker or small in size can be considered a target of vulnerability. Finkelhor and Asidigian's (1996) key assumption of physical weakness to target vulnerability; lesbian women are physically weaker and smaller in stature and are therefore at a higher risk of homophobic violence and harassment. Hence, target vulnerability was applied to show how lesbians, transgenders and bisexuals become susceptible to homophobic victimisation.

3.3.2 Target gratification

Target gratification refers to a victim's characteristics or attributes that the perpetrator seeks to have access to, or wants to manipulate such as the female anatomy that a perpetrator wants to have access to, to commit a sexual crime (Finkelhor & Asdigian, 1996) such as rape. Target gratification in this study is a useful concept because it elucidates the perpetrator's motivation to manipulate perceived gender-non-conformance through the varied types of victimisation suffered by LGBT individuals, such as the enforcement of heterosexuality, hate and prejudice toward LGBT individuals, corrective rape (Doan-Minh, 2019; Mieses 2009; Martin et al., 2009; Gaitho, 2021), sexual threats, bullying and harassment (UNESCO, 2016; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019; Chakraborti & Garland, 2012; Pace, D'Urso & Fontanesi, 2020), to affirm heteronormativity and masculinity..

3.3.3 Target antagonism

Target antagonism includes any personal characteristic or behaviours that arouse any negative impulses such as anger or jealousy. For instance, Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) suggest that being a homosexual can intensify the chance of hate crime or bullying. Any trait that elicits unpleasant emotions like envy or rage is considered antagonistic (Waldner and Berg 2008; Zavala, 2018; Finkelhor and Asdigian, 1996). Stereotypes about gay people are associated with gender non-conformance (Judge & Nel, 2008), and people who fit these stereotypes are seen as targets for antagonism because the perceived gender abnormality and homophobia are important triggers for some perpetrators. In this study, target antagonism aided in understanding the triggers of what leads homophobic people to victimise LGBT individuals.

As the literature review, in this study, indicates that factors contributing to the intolerance and victimisation based on sexual orientation in Africa are attributed to homosexuality being considered un-African (Hairsine, 2019; Reygan & Lynette, 2014; Pichon, 2019). South Africa is no exception, the negative connotations surrounding homosexuality, is that it is immoral and wrong (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Netshandama, 2013, Msibi 2011, Mushome & Mushwana,

2021). Therefore, this study employed target antagonism because LGBT individuals, based on their sexual orientation arouse anger in perpetrators who uphold strong orthodox religious and cultural beliefs.

3.4 Summation of theoretical frameworks

This chapter discussed and presented integral theories that underpin this study, including the queer theory, which explains the existence of other sexualities outside of heterosexuality. The chapter explained how the queer theory provides a critical lens through which this research examines how certain heteronormative expressions of gender and sexuality are institutionally legitimatised while other forms are stigmatised and discriminated against. The second theory discussed in this chapter was the target congruence theory. The application of this theory enhances the understanding of homophobic victimisation through recognising LGBT individuals as the vulnerable targets, targets for gratification and targets for antagonism.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed account of how the research study was carried out. It presents the research methodology that the researcher employed when conducting this study. The main aim of this chapter is to provide the work plan and technique of how this scientific research was carried out. Research methodology refers to an organised way to explain a problem. It is the science of reviewing how research is to be carried out. It involves the measures that researchers use to conduct their research (Goundar, 2012; Kothari, 2004.) Therefore, this chapter illustrates the research methodology that the researcher adopted to conduct the research. It is the representation of the framework that provided an analytic lens which directed this research together with the philosophical keystones that defined the nature of this study. These include: a description of the research approach, paradigm and design, which includes the ontology that translates to what constituted to the structure of reality and the beliefs regarding the nature of existence, the epistemology which is the explanation of the study of what knowledge is, and the logic that underpins this knowledge. It proceeds to explain the theoretical approach that structured the research process that defined and evaluated the methods that were utilised during the research (Creswell, 2013; Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013). The subsequent section in this chapter elucidates the research process, inclusive of the sampling techniques used, the process of recruitment, the data collection process and how the data was analysed. The final section of this chapter concludes with a reflection of ethical considerations.

4.2 Research approach

4.2.1 Qualitative approach

Creswell (2014) states that qualitative research is used for exploring and understanding meanings ascribed to human or social problems. This means that the researcher was able to assemble participants' subjective evidence. The adoption of the qualitative approach was apt because this study sought to answer questions systematically through the use of a predefined set of procedures required to answer these questions. This was done through collecting evidence that produced findings that were not determined in advance. This approach allowed the researcher to focus on participant perspectives, which centred on how participants of the study interpreted and gave meaning to their experiences of homophobic victimisation.

Nieuwenhuis (2007) and Merriam (2009) maintain that through the use of a qualitative approach, valuable data is obtained; therefore, tthrough participants' insights and understandings, the researcher was able to gain valuable and organic data.

The interpretive methodology allowed the researcher to understand the social phenomenon through the lens of the participants. Rehman and Alharthi (2016) note that the main aim of employing interpretive methodology is to understand the experiences of the social phenomena. In this study, the adoption of this methodology allowed the researcher to understand participants' experience of homophobic victimisation within their context. Nickerson (2022) contends that interpretive methodology requires in-depth data that is not based on numerical values but rather information recorded through verbal and written communication (Nickerson, 2022); therefore, this methodology was beneficial. Owing to the interactional nature of this methodology, the researcher was able to able to interact with participants whilst gathering data through interviews, hence making the researcher the primary instrument for data collection and analysis; this allowed for prompt responsiveness and adaptability from the researcher. Through this methodology, the researcher was able to clarify and develop her understanding through verbal communication and it allowed for swift processing of data. Meriam (2002) argues this methodology allows researchers to be able to clarify the precision of interpretations with participants. This allowed the researcher flexibility in data generation because she was allowed to clarify interpretations with participants. In order to allow for a familiar neutral setting for participants, the researcher asked participants where they were comfortable in being interviewed, and Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network offices was agreed upon. Permission was granted to the researcher to utilise the boardroom to conduct interviews. This assisted with sensitivity to the participants' social context. Rich and detailed data was collected using this methodological approach (Creswell & Poth, 2013).

The application of the qualitative approach was fitting to this study because the researcher was interested in interpreting how LGBT individuals in Pietermaritzburg experience homophobic victimisation based on discriminatory social constructions of gender. This study aimed to understand the meanings that participants assigned to the phenomenon of homophobic victimisation. Utilising the qualitative interpretive research design was beneficial because it sanctioned the exploration of participants' perspectives based on their experiences, interpretations and understandings of an aspect of the social world. Whilst Creswell and Poth (2013) contend that the limitations interpretative qualitative methods is that it cannot be generalised because it relies of subjective experiences and understandings, this research

focused on transferability rather than generalisability. The research findings in this research can be applied to similar populations within the similar settings.

4.2.2 The interpretive paradigm

A paradigm is the way in which the world is viewed, and in research, it is the arrangement of ideas used to comprehend or explicate matters relating to a certain subject. A research paradigm is a systematic framework that underpins what is known, what can be known and how it can be known (Sheppard, 2020). It forms a framework that outlines existing knowledge, the nature of the problem that requires investigation, the suitable methods used to investigate the problem, and the appropriate ways in which data is analysed and interpreted (Sheppard, 2020; Nickerson, 2022). The framework that the researcher adopted in this study was an interpretive paradigm to structure this study. Chen, Shek and Bu (2011) describe the interpretive researcher as a discoverer wanting to understand peoples' subjective experience, their perceptions, and how they experience the social world through gaining in-depth understanding of the meaning they attach to their experiences and behaviours. And social constructivism is concerned with the broader cultural and social of how society influences our understanding of reality (Chen, Shek & Bu, 2011). Therefore, the researcher selected the interpretive paradigm because it was used to examine how LGBT people construct, reconstruct and assign meanings through their experiences of homophobic victimisation. This paradigm offered the researcher an overall framework to represent marginalised groups through the investigative intention of understanding particular topics or issues without further marginalising them (Creswell, 2013).

The foundation of interpretivism is the idea that reality is socially created, multifaceted, and subjective. Meaning that we can only comprehend a person's reality by their own experience of it, which may differ from another person's due to the influences of their social or historical background (Chen, Shek & Bu, 2011; Bhattacherjee, 2012; Nickerson, 2022). Interpretivism, located in social science research, asserts that reality is subjective; it places emphasis on understanding the phenomena from the individual's perspective. In theory, it suggests that reality is subjective and varied. It is interpreted by each person founded on their own experiences; therefore, the main aim of social science research is not to predict or control the phenomena but rather to understand the phenomena from the views of those directly involved with it (Nickerson, 2022). In order to find or produce a rich and deep understanding of the topic under investigation, interpretive approaches rely on observation and questioning. This is strongly related to qualitative data collection techniques (Creswell, 2013; Nickerson 2022).

Interpretivism has its origins in symbolic interactionism along with phenomenology, which concurs that value- and theory-neutral facts are non-existent, and that the way people view objects signifies the nature of the objects (Weber & Henderson, 2012). Chen (1996) summarises the interpretative paradigm as an encouragement to researchers to seek experience and to consider the varied interpretations of particular social contexts in order to gain further insight into the phenomena. Therefore, employing the interpretative paradigm afforded the researcher the opportunity to give priority to LGBT people's subjective understandings whilst describing and exploring their feelings in detail within the context of the phenomenon of homophobic victimisation. The relevance of the interpretive paradigm had a primary objective, which was to gather rich in-depth information from LGBT individuals residing in Pietermaritzburg. This research aimed to capture their views, and their understandings of how they assigned meanings to socially ascribed gender roles whilst also describing their feelings towards these. It also captured their lived experiences of homophobic victimisation and the impacts thereof.

4.2.3 The Phenomenological Design

A research design is grounded by the purpose of the study; the chosen paradigm encompasses the research techniques that will be used to collect and analyze the data. It operates as structural framework that is used to guide a study (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Bezuidenhout, 2011). The researcher adopted a phenomenological research design in this study. Phenomenology is a research design that highlights the investigation of conscious experiences as a method of understanding the realities that exist. First developed in the early 20th century, German philosopher Edmud Husserl believed that the source of knowledge is through the study of human experience (Smith, 2013).

Located within the qualitative research approach, the phenomenological design in this study endeavored to understand and depict the core of a phenomena of homophobic victimisation through the investigation of the everyday experiences of participants. Meriam (2002) notes that the phenomenological design allows the researcher to adjourn any pre-conceived notions that they might have had about the phenomena. Thus, the researcher employed this design because she was able to suspend ideas of homophobic victimisation. The use of the phenomenological design allowed the researcher to describe the meanings that participants assigned to the phenomenon of homophobic victimisation through their lived experiences thereof (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Through the adoption of this phenomenological design, the researcher

concentrated on describing the experiences of LGBT individuals and finding commonality in these experiences. The four main characteristics of a phenomenological method, namely description, reduction, essence and intentionality, were applied to this study.

A phenomenological design is descriptive. The focus is not to explain the phenomena but rather to accurately describe the phenomena as experienced (Umanailo, 2019). A phenomenological study describes the meaning of the lived experience from participants who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The application to this study resulted in the researcher obtaining rich, detailed descriptions on the discrimination and homophobic victimisation that participants experienced. It assisted to describe how these incidents of victimisation and discrimination were experienced as well as the meanings that each participant attached to them. Thus only participants who have experienced the phenomenon were selected. In terms of the reduction characteristic, it refers to the process of reduction where the researcher's biasness and assumptions regarding the phenomenon are suspended. This is to ensure that biasness is not transferred into the participants descriptions and the data is not polluted (Umanailo, 2019). The researcher set aside any predetermined notions, beliefs or knowledge on the phenomena and focussed on describing participants' experiences as they were relayed. In order not to contaminate the data, the researcher remained objective. Essence refers to the fundamental meaning how each participant makes sense of their experience within the context of the phenomena experienced (Umanailo, 2019). The aim is to condense participants' experiences of an account of the phenomenon to a general essence (Creswell, 2007). The researcher interpreted each participant's perceptions, feelings and experience to determine the essential characteristics and essence of their experience of homophobic victimisation. Intentionality refers to consciousness being directed toward an event or object; reality is then based on the consciousness of it, hence reality of the event is based on the participant's reflection of their reality (Creswell, 2007). This allowed the researcher to understand the experience of homophobic victimisation through the participants' mental or conscious representation of their reality through the way in which they structured and reflected their experiences.

4.3 Research Process

4.3.1 Location of study

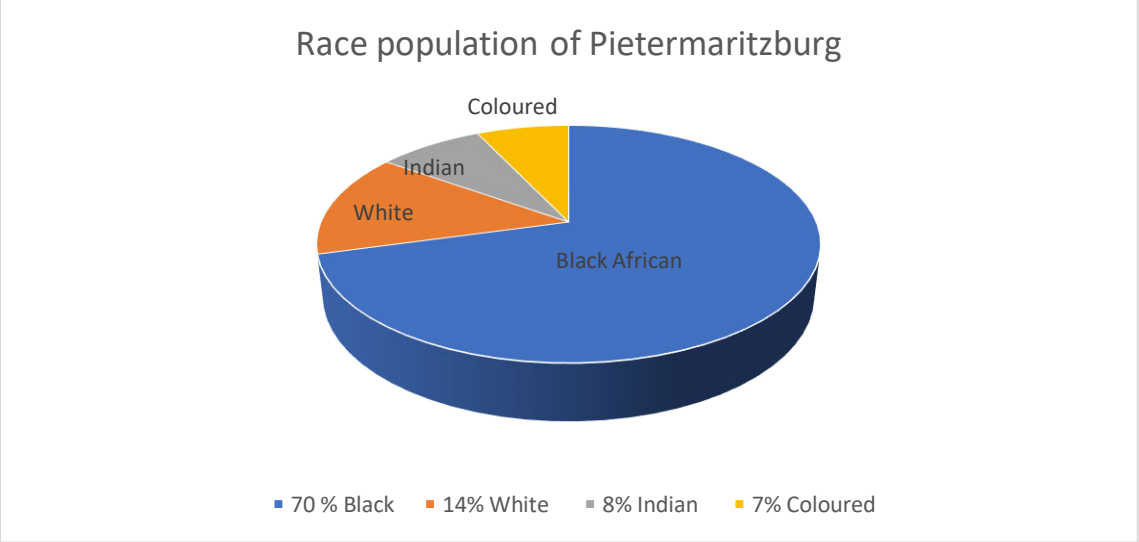
This study was conducted among volunteer gay, lesbian and transgender participants residing in Pietermaritzburg.

Figure 3: Map showing Pietermaritzburg

Source: Google Maps

Pietermaritzburg is also known as uMgungundlovu district municipality. It is the second largest municipality within the province KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa (Khuzwayo & Taylor, 2018). Pietermaritzburg is the capital city of KwaZulu-Natal province. According to Cogta (2020), the Pietermaritzburg population structure consists of 52% female and 48% male. Census (2011) notes that population groups in Pietermaritzburg comprise 70% Black African, 14% White, 8% Indian or Asian and 7% Coloured.

Figure 4 – Race population in Pietermaritzburg



Source: Author

The research site was Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network, a non-governmental organisation situated in Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The reason the researcher selected this site is because it provides support to marginalised LGBTI persons residing in and around Pietermaritzburg. This NGO serves to create a safe space where LGBTI's can socialise and meet as well as offer services and programmes to the LGBTI community (Uthingo). Therefore, it was apt to conduct this study at Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network as it created an opportunity for the researcher to get access to volunteer samples who were highly familiar with topic of the study.

4.3.2 Sampling

A sample is a selection of a subgroup of the target population or the population of interest that the researcher plans to study. Sampling, located within the qualitative approach, is to study a particular phenomenon within a particular context; the researcher's intention is to describe, interpret and explain the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; McCombes, 2019). When conducting research regarding a specific group of individuals, because participation from a whole population is hardly possible to collect data, it is therefore necessary that volunteer samples from that population group are selected. Qualitative sampling does not seek to generalise from the sample to the population but rather focuses on obtaining rich information, which requires appropriate and adequate samples to inform the study (Guetterman, 2015; Creswell, 2013; McCombes, 2019). Thus, the researcher employed this sampling.

Sarantakos (2005) hypothesises that during the design stage of the research there are integral points that the researcher has to consider, for example, the number and nature of people to be included in the study. Table 6 explains how the researcher applied Sarantakos' (2005) points of consideration to sampling in this study.

Table 6 Sarantakos' (2005) points of consideration to sampling in this study.

Points of consideration	Application to the study
Population size	The researcher did not conduct the study among the entire LGBT gay and lesbian population in Pietermaritzburg. The researcher focused on a sample of LGBT people who were affiliated with Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network in Pietermaritzburg.

The most suitable sampling procedure	In order to acquire participants to meet the aim and objectives of this study, the researcher found it apt to utilise a non-probability, purposeful sampling method. Therefore, this study's participants had to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and had to have experienced homophobic victimisation.
The size of the sample	This study did not require a quantity of LGBT individuals but rather LGBT people who would provide qualitative data based on their experiences of homophobic victimisation, thus a small sample was regarded as appropriate. The researcher selected 20 participants who would effectively relay their subjective experiences to adequately address the objectives and aims set out in this study. This sample size was deemed apt because these participants would provide robust evidence of their homophobic experiences without apprehension of being victimised or any limitation. Refer to Table 7 for the breakdown of sample size.
Administrative arrangements required the sample selection	The researcher set up a meeting with the Director of Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network. The study was explained to him. He was familiar with those affiliated with the organisation and thus asked if he would assist in recruiting participants, which he agreed to.
Considerations of ethics and objectivity requirements be met	Prior to the selection of participants, ethical considerations were adhered to. Because this study was of a sensitive nature, permission was sought from all gatekeepers. In case of re-traumatisation, Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network offered the services of their resident counsellor. Participation in the study was voluntary and if at any time, a participant felt uncomfortable, they had every right to withdraw without any repercussion.

Source: Sarantakos (2005)

The table above explains the considerations that the researcher bore in mind before and during the study. It elucidates a summary for the choice of sampling and the sample size. The table also explains how the ethical considerations were observed.

The above table will be outlined in detail in the ensuing discussion.

4.4 Sample criterion

In a phenomenological study, Creswell (2007) contends, it is crucial that participants have experienced the phenomenon central to the study, hence a sampling criterion is critical when selecting samples. In order to inform the aim and objectives of this study and due to this research being based on the lived experiences of LGBT individuals, the selection sampling criterion was as follows:

1. Participants had to identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.
2. Participants had to have experienced homophobic victimisation.
3. Participants had to reside in the Pietermaritzburg area.
4. Participants were willing to participate in the study through signed consent.
5. Participants had to be over the age of 18 in order to autonomously consent to participation in the study.

4.4.1 Sample size

A sample size is the process of selecting a subset of participants or items from a well-defined population for inclusion into the study (Creswell, 2013). In the qualitative research approach, samples are much less than that of a quantitative study; this is due qualitative studies being focused on gaining in-depth understandings and meanings of a phenomenon (Dworkin, 2012). Based on Dworkin's (2012) contention, the researcher opted for a sample size of 20, as follows:

Table 7 Sample size

Sexual Orientation	Individual interview participants
Gays / Male	5
Lesbians / Female	5
Transgender	5

Bisexual	5
Total number of participants	**20**

The above sample demographic will be further broken down in chapter 5.

4.4.2 Sampling technique

For the researcher to extract sound conclusions, it was important to have a clear understanding of the techniques or methods that were used to select a sample that is representative of the entire group, hence the importance of sampling techniques (McCombes, 2019). There are two types of sampling techniques used in research i.e., probability and non-probability sampling. For the purpose of this research, non-probability sampling was used. McCombes (2019) describes non-probability sampling as a data collection method based on a non-random selection criterion established through suitability and convenience.

In order to inform the study, it was hardly possible for the researcher to collect data from all LGBT individuals living in Pietermaritzburg, hence the research employed the technique of non-probability sampling. This allowed the researcher to select volunteer participants who represent the collective group of LGBTs. This research adopted a non-probability sampling technique of purposive sampling. Qualitative research uses purposive sampling, meaning that the researcher selects participants who purposively inform the study based on the objectives and the phenomenon being studied (Creswell 2007). According to Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters and Walker (2020), the use of purposive sampling in qualitative research allows the researcher to select participants who are likely to yield suitable and valuable information to the study. McCombes' (2019) description of purposive sampling is when the researcher wants to obtain detailed knowledge about a particular phenomenon instead of making statistical inferences, or where the population is very specific or small. Due to the LGBT population being a minority group, the researcher engaged with the Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network in Pietermaritzburg. And also owing to the sensitivity and stigmatisation of LGBT individuals sharing their experiences, the researcher employed the purposive sampling technique. This afforded the researcher access to volunteer participants who provided appropriate and beneficial data that informed the aim and objectives of this research. The researcher used purposive sampling for data collection from one-on-one interviews. This data collection technique is further elaborated on in the section on data collection methods.

4.4.3 Recruitment strategy

Browne (2005) argues that participant recruitment is difficult when research involves a particular group of individuals or collective groups who are not supported by society because these individuals often conceal themselves from discrimination, hence participant recruitment is compex. In order to gain access to participants, the researcher approached the Director of the non-governmental organisation, Gay and Lesbian Network, based in Pietermaritzburg, called Uthingo, to assist with participant recruitment. The reason for choosing this NGO is that this organisation functions and operates specifically to provide support for LGBT people. The researcher set up an appointment with the Director of the Uthingo. During this meeting, the purpose of the research, together with objectives and aims were discussed. The Director was able to suggest and identify participants suitable to the study. As per Browne's (2005) assertion regarding the intricacy of participant recruitment of marginalised groups, the researcher requested that the Director explain the study, its objectives and aim to prospective one-on-one participants. This afforded participants to engage with someone they are familiar with because these LGBT people were already acquainted with the Director. It afforded them a choice of participation in the research without divulging their identity to the researcher. Prospective participants were given the details of the researcher by the Director and some consenting prospective participants' details were shared with the researcher via the Director. The prospective participants were contacted or made contact with the researcher. Thereafter, an appointment date was set for the meeting with the consenting participants. The researcher re-iterated the assurance of participant anonymity at all times as well as the reassurance that real names or personal identifiable details will not be shared publicly. This was also communicated to the Director of Uthingo.

4.5 Data collection method

Creswell and Poth (2016) describe data collection as a method of obtaining information from suitable participants that informs the study. Merriam (2009) asserts that there are two characteristics of interpretive qualitative research: the researchers must aim to understand the meaning people have attached to their world, the constructed meaning they have about their experiences, and; how do people make sense of their experience? Based on Merriam's (2002) assertions, in this study the researcher sought to understand how LGBT participants attached meaning to the homophobic victimisation they have experienced and how they made sense of this experience. Merriam (2009) further asserts that the researcher is the key instrument for

data collection and analysis. In this research, the researcher was the primary tool for data collection. In qualitative research, there are different methods of collecting data such as observations, case study, open-ended surveys and questions, one-on-one interviews and focus groups (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In this research, the researcher adopted the method of one-on-one interviews.

4.5.1 One-on-one in-depth individual interviews

Interviews are a renowned data collection instrument used in qualitative research because it is an advantageous way of retrieving people's insights, meanings and understanding of their experiences (Punch, 2014). By carrying out individual interviews, the researcher was able to retrieve suitable data from participants by probing and gaining in-depth insight of their experiences on how socially ascribed gender roles cause them to feel victimised, and their lived experiences thereof. With the application of Punch's (2014) hypothesis to the study, the researcher put aside any preconceived notion about the phenomenon and encouraged the participants to openly give their own account of their experience without fear of ramifications or contradiction.

Before conducting the interviews, the researcher found it apt that these interviews be conducted in a setting that was suitable for the participants, such as the Uthingo offices. Permission to use Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network offices was requested and granted. This was done to create space familiarity which provided for a safe and known setting for the participants. In order to establish a safe and comfortable as well as private environment where participants could openly share their insights, the one-on-one interviews were conducted in a closed-door office. Using the closed-door office also prevented any distractions, and confidentiality was observed. Consent from each participant was requested by the researcher and consent forms were signed before the interview process began. The researcher informed the participants about confidentially and anonymity. The researcher went over the purpose and aim of the study, the time required to complete the interview and informed participants of the intentions of utilising information gathered. The interviews were conducted in English although participants were asked if they were more comfortable speaking in isiZulu. Participants were served refreshments whilst engaging in an informal conservation to help break the ice and this also assisted in building relations with the researcher.

Creswell and Poth (2016) concur that using suitable recording devices are required to capture participant responses, thus the researcher used a tape recorder. Participants' permission to use

a recording device was first obtained before the interviews were conducted. The researcher encouraged participants to speak and share their experiences openly and with ease, and without fear, assuring them that there are no repercussions of relaying their views. During the interview, participants were asked questions as per the interview schedule and further probing was conducted for clarity.

4.5.2 Interview schedules and time-frames

The interview schedules for individual interviews were semi-structured and consisted of open-ended questions, which sanctioned further enquiry and engagement whilst still adhering to consistency and uniformity. In order to fulfill the aim of the study, the interview schedule contained 17 questions overall. This comprised 5 questions to fulfill objective number 1, 3 questions to fulfill objective number 2, 1 question to fulfil objective number 3, 5 to fulfill objective number 4, and 3 questions to fulfill objective number 5. In order to prevent the interview process from being exhausting to both the participants and the researcher, the interview period for each session lasted from about 30 minutes to 45 minutes.

Please see Appendix 1 for the sample semi-structured interview guide.

4.6 Data Analysis

Creswell and Poth (2016) note that data analysis is the procedure of systematically examining, organising, interpreting and representing the information collected from participants to gain more knowledge about the phenomenon being studied. Additionally, Dilshad and Latiff (2013) contend that when analysing qualitative data, it is important to recognise and record themes that derive from the transcripts whilst also noting words and the contexts in which they are used. This research used a phenomenological data analysis technique which was relevant in this qualitative study. In order to describe the participants' experiences of the phenomenon of homophobic victimisation, the researcher utilised the following thematic guidelines suggested by Creswell (2007) to analyse the data collected:

Table 8. Thematic analysis guideline

Guideline	Application to this study	Example of how the guidelines were applied to the study.

Develop a list of important statements made by participants.	The researcher found statements in participant interviews on how they experienced homophobic victimisation, listed the important statements and treated each statement with equal value. A list non-repetitive and non-overlapping statements were developed.	For example, in this study, participants reported how they were victimised: - Physically beaten - My dad beat me with a whip - My dad wanted to remove the demons - My dad disowned me
Important statements are grouped into themes	The researcher grouped the important statements into larger thematic units.	This is how the researcher grouped physical victimisation thematic units: Physical Victimisation
Describe what the participants experienced	The researcher wrote a verbatim textual description of what happened and what the participants experienced.	For example, P15 reported "*my dad started beating and shouting at me. He beat me up because he wanted to take out the demons. And he even disowned me. He beat me up so badly because he used a sjambok (*whip*). It was so bad, it left scars on my body even on my legs, I will never forget that day"*

Describe how the experience happened	The researcher wrote a structural description of the context and setting in which the homophobic victimisation was experienced.	Example: Participant 15's family found out that she was a lesbian from her aunt who was a teacher in her school. Her dad approached her about and she did not deny it. Her mother accepted her but dad became very furious. He started shouting obscenities at her. He proceeded to beat her with whip. He believed he could remove the demons from her. He beat her up so badly that she has visible scars on her legs. She explained how traumatic that experience was. He further disowned her due to her sexual orientation. .
Write composite description of the phenomenon incorporating both what and how it happened	The researcher amalgamated both the textual and structural description of what and how homophobic victimisation was experienced. This allowed for the essence of the experience to be captured and culminated.	Example: Disclosure of their sexual orientation can lead to victimisation. Non-acceptance by close family members can lead to physical homophobic victimisation, isolation

		and exclusion. Non-accepting parents with strong cultural and religious values become more intolerant of their child's sexuality. Disappointment in their child's sexual orientation coupled with strong ties to orthodox religious beliefs plays a key factor in believing homosexuality is deviant and unacceptable. Family members who cannot accept their children sexuality are often angered because they believe that their child is defying traditional gender norms. This can lead to physical bullying. This is evident with participant 15 who revealed that her aunt, who was teacher at her school, found out that she was lesbian from other learners. She did not deny that she was a lesbian because she felt she could not hide her sexual orientation

		anymore. Her aunt mocked her and then shouted at her in front of the class. The aunt then proceeded to tell her parents that afternoon that their daughter was a lesbian. She explained that she further did not deny that she was a lesbian when her parents confronted her. Although, she tried to explain her sexuality to her father, the participant expressed that her father became so enraged, he refused to listen to her. He began to shout vulgarities at her. She relayed that her father then proceeded to fetch a whip and beat her with. The participant further explained that her dad beat her up so badly that the beatings left scars on her body. The participant explained her father then told her that she is no longer his daughter and wants nothing to do with her.

Source: Creswell (2007)

The above table summarises the process of thematic data analysis followed during the study.

The following section dwells on the ethical considerations that were undertaken in the study. It also highlights the trustworthiness of data.

4.7 Ethical considerations

Some of the ethical considerations in this study were already mentioned, however this section aims to provide details on how these were addressed. In order to augment the scientific value ethical sensitivity and enhance the ethical sensitivity of this study, the researcher incorporated Emanuel, Wendler and Grady's (2008) ethical framework as the basis of this study. This methodical and thorough framework provides eight ethical principles that avoid exploitation of participants as well as minimise possible harm. Whilst Emanuel et al.'s (2008) ethical framework was pre-dominantly used in biomedical research, Tsoka-Gwegweni and Wassenaar (2014) recommend that its universal and comprehensive principles be applied to all research contexts and backgrounds. Emanuel et al.'s (2008) ethical framework includes collaborative partnership, social value, scientific validity (i.e. credibility, dependability and transferability), fair participant selection, benefit ratio / favourable risk, independent ethical review, informed consent, and ongoing respect for participants and study communities. This section discusses how this framework was applied to this study.

4.7.1 Collaborative partnership

The principle of collaborative partnership requires that researchers collaborate with the pertinent community representatives and involve them in the context of the study in order to share responsibilities and benefits. It also requires respect of the local context (Emanuel et al., 2008; Tsoka-Gwegweni & Wassenaar, 2014). The research process of this study required planning, developing and compiling by the researcher solely, hence participants of study were not involved in this process. Permission to conduct the study was sought from relevant gate-keepers. In order to respect the local context, the researcher familiarised herself with LGBT culture together with other orthodox cultures and practices. This was done through studying contemporary and relevant literature as well enquiring with relevant people about the various values and practices. This allowed the researcher to be mindful and sensitive of participants' cultures as well incorporate sensitivity around the contextual values that participants might hold.

4.7.2 Social value

Social value warrants that the research carried out adds value and is beneficial not only to the research participants but to the community and society as a whole, and adds value to academia (Emanuel et al., 2008; Tsoka-Gwegweni & Wassenaar, 2014). The benefits of this study for the research participants themselves were possibly through vocalising their experiences of homophobic victimisation; this might have allowed them to gain additional insight and to know that by sharing their experiences, they are able to assist the LGBT community as whole. This study could potentially assist society in understanding the impacts of homophobic victimisation. Because this study focuses on a marginalised under-studied population, it can add to the limited research in academia as well as possibly inform policy.

4.7.3 Scientific validity – Trustworthiness

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), trustworthiness refers to the verification and trailing process to ensure that the study is trustworthy. In order for this study to be trustworthy, the researcher employed Lincoln and Guba's influential overview and organisational structure as proposed by Stahl and King (2020). The synthesis of trustworthiness in this study included credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The researcher thus incorporated this structure into the study.

4.7.3.1 Credibility of trustworthiness

Stahl and King (2020) contend that credibility refers to congruence or compatibility of the findings to reality. This was achieved through employing well-developed qualitative research methods, which warranted that data be collected correctly and accurately through the use of one-on-one interviews. Audio-recordings were used to record interviews. To ensure voluntary participation, participants were informed throughout the interview process that participation was voluntary and they could suspend participation at any time. The researcher remained objective and suspended any preconceived notions of the topic in order for dependable findings to be transcribed. To ensure congruence, extracts from the data are provided in the research to support the findings. Stahl and King (2020) also refer to peer debriefing as a tool to ensure credibility. In this research, the researcher sought guidance of the supervisors and as well other researchers within the University.

4.7.3.2 Transferability of trustworthiness

Stahl and King (2020) refer to transferability as a level of application to which the findings can be utilised in other milieus or to other participants. It refers to the extent to which findings from qualitative research can be applied to different situations or scenarios with different respondents (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Therefore, the researcher employed detailed explanation to assist prospective users in making a transferability assessment. In this research, thick participant description was used. The data collection methods, sampling techniques and recruitment strategy were clearly explained. Other LGBT people who were not a part of this study will resonate with the findings and also echo the same sentiments shared by participants of this study.

4.7.3.3 Dependability of trustworthiness

Dependability, according to Stahl and King (2020:27), denotes trust and stability of findings, "in which researchers, both producers and consumers, actively build their trust in the events as they unfold, there are a few concrete research practices that not only produce trust but also feel trustworthy when they are executed". Additionally, according to Kakar, Rasheed, Rashid and Akhter, (2023) dependability is data consistency over similar contexts so if the findings of one study is replicated in a similar population, condition, or context, the findings are dependable. To enhance the dependability of this study, comprehensive information detailing the research methodology, its aims, rationale, research questions and sampling decisions, and the data collection and analysis procedures was provided. Therefore, if the inquiry were to occur within the same cohort of participants in a similar context but at a different time and to ensure the findings and constancy of conclusions of this qualitative inquiry is repeatable, the researcher established a thorough audit trail. Hence, the researcher kept a record of notes that were taken during the interview sessions as well as recordings of all interview sessions, which provided a clear trail of information that was taken during data collection. These recordings and notes are safely stored away in a locked cupboard.

4.7.3.4 Confirmability of Trustworthiness

Confirmability is the objectiveness of the researcher, which ensures that the biasness of the researcher does not contaminate the study (Stahl & King, 2020). In this research, the researcher submitted a draft copy of the proposal for comment and review. During the interviews, the researcher upheld a neutral stand to avoid influencing the participants' responses in anyway. Her presence was to guide the questions and probe further when it was necessary. Participants took an active role, such that they had the opportunity to have their voices heard. The researcher

also maintained objectivity during the entire study and captured participants' accounts precisely and truthfully without any amendments.

4.7.4 Fair participant selection

Fair participant selection ensures that the study population that is selected, is relevant to the study objectives (Tsoka-Gwegweni & Wassenaar, 2014). Participant selection in this study was informed by the research objectives; therefore, to qualify for participation in this study, participants had to identify as lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual; had to have experienced homophobic victimisation; had to reside in Pietermaritzburg; and be over the age of 18.

4.7.5 Favourable risk/benefit ratio

This principle requires that all potential risks are identified by the researcher and that these risks be minimised. Potential benefits should also be identified (Tsoka-Gwegweni & Wassenaar, 2014). In order to minimise risks, the researcher was aware that this was a sensitive topic and participants might be re-traumatised, therefore she elicited the services of a counsellor who participants were familiar with at Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network. All responses from participants were kept strictly confidential; no names or demographics of participants were divulged in the study. All responses were locked away for safe-keeping. The benefit for participants was being able to raise awareness of the impacts of homophobic victimisation and contribute to the LGBT community's fight for fair treatment.

4.7.6 Independent ethics review

This principle requires the researcher to minimise the risks involving conflict of interest and warrants public accountability of the study (Emanuel et al., 2008). The necessary protocols were observed and the study underwent the ethics review before the study could begin. Ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal was obtained, HSSREC/00005693/2023 (Appendix 2). All gate-keepers permission was attained, including a letter from the Director of Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network where the study was carried out (Appendix 3). With all protocol observed, the researcher conducted the study under the direction of her supervisor.

4.7.7 Informed consent

Informed consent requires respect to be shown for participant autonomy by the researcher (Emanuel et al., 2008). Respect for participant autonomy in this study was done. Prior to participation, participants were informed verbally about the study, its objectives and the

research aim. After agreeing to participation in the study, each participant was given an informed consent form, which contained all the relevant information about the study (Appendix 4), to read and sign. The researcher reiterated that participation was voluntary and they were at liberty to withdraw any time without any repercussions or negative consequences. Consent to record the interviews was obtained from the participants.

4.7.8 Ongoing respect for participants and study communities

Ongoing respect for participants warrants value to study communities and participants. This ensures that respect is maintained during every stage of the research and that all information obtained from participants is strictly confidential (Emanuel et al., 2008). All participants in this study were treated with the utmost respect. This was done through:

- Explanation of their voluntary participation in the study
- Continuous evaluation of participant wellbeing and emotional state during the research process
- Limits to confidentially relayed to the participant
- Refreshments provided to participants
- Participants were made aware that all data and findings were for the use of this study

Participant privacy was maintained at all times during this study process. The identities of participants were kept strictly confidential. Participants were informed that any information that could potentially identify them would be removed or modified. Participants were advised that findings in this the study would be made accessible to them on request. Written and audio data is stored securely in a locked cupboard to which only the researcher has access. This data will be disposed of after five years, with all written data being shredded and all recordings erased.

4.8 Summation

This chapter was distributed over three sections. It included description of the postulations of the philosophical underpinnings and delineated the qualitative methodology that was undertaken in this study. An explanation of the phenomenological research adopted in this study was given. The subsequent section outlined the research process employed, and included a description of the sampling techniques used in the recruitment process. Additionally, the data collection and data analysis processes were highlighted. The last section explained the measures put in place to ensure scientific and ethical value of the study through the use of

Emmanuel et al.'s (2008) eight principle framework, which assisted in safe-guarding against the potential of exploitation or harm of participants in this study. This was inclusive of the use of Lincoln and Guba's influential structure of trustworthiness to ensure credibility of the study.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis and presentation of findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the analysis of the data collected and the discussion of the findings. This chapter integrates existing scholarly arguments and academic articles relating to homophobic victimisation to contextualise the data, analyse and present the findings offered in this chapter. Data was collected from lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual participants residing in Pietermaritzburg. Based on queer criminology, the main aim of this study was to explore how homophobic victimisation that emerge through socially ascribed gender norms, impact the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals living in Pietermaritzburg. The focal arguments in this study show how LGBT individuals experience victimisation based on their sexual orientation because they are considered to be digressers of the dominant heteronormative order. Through the solicitation of queer criminology in this study, the LGBT participants were not considered deviant but rather were understood as victims of homophobic attacks and as people who are navigating risks or trying to avoid victimisation (Ball, 2014; Panfil, 2018; Buist & Lenning, 2016). The application of queer criminology assisted on focusing how LGBT people are devalued by homophobic people which resulted in in them being victimised.

The data, the analysis and discussion thereof are carried out under the guidance of two main theoretical frameworks employed this study; the queer theory and the target congruence theory. The application of the queer theory in this study, is used to show how deeply engrained heteronormativity is in our society and that individuals who are considered as digressing from the dominant socially prescribed heteronormative order are marginalised, discriminated against and victimised. The queer theory is also used to demonstrate how heteronormativity is so highly valued in our socio-cultural institutions that heterosexuality is considered the norm (Robinson, 2016; Wozolek, 2019; Bravewomon, 2018; Van Anders et al., 2022), whilst homosexuality is considered immoral and wrong (Butler and Astbury, 2005; Msibi, 2012) and therefore must be punished. The target congruence theory is used to understand the attributes and characteristics which LGBT possess that perpetrators use to incite and inflict harm, victimisation and discrimination against LGBT individuals (Finkelhor & Asdigian, 1996; Waldner & Berg, 2008). The target congruence theory was also employed to highlight the unexplored dimensions

of symbolic victimisation and violence that participants have endured in a standardised prescriptive and ascriptive heteronormative society.

The findings that will be presented in this chapter are in response to the aim of the study: Understanding how homophobic victimisations and gender prejudices, that emerge through socially ascribed gender norms, impact the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals living Pietermaritzburg. The following five research objectives were derived in order to answer the problem statement:

i. To recognise the types of victimisations experienced by LGBT individuals.
ii. To explore the characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic victimisation.
iii. To explore factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation
iv. To understand the effects of homophobic victimisation on the LGBT individual.
v. To understand how LGBT individuals navigate their identity to avoid victimisation.
vi. To understand how LGBT individuals feel about reporting the victimisation to police.

5.2 Participant demographics

To provide an understanding of the participants in this study, the table below indicates all participant demographics. Whilst age, religion and ethnicity were not an inclusion criterion for this study, the researcher found it apt to include this information because it assisted in giving context to study, through understanding homosexuality and homophobic victimisation within the age groups of between the ages 20 and 34. The addition of religion and ethnicity was useful because it assisted in understanding how homosexuality was perceived within participants' religion and culture. Stating the age, religion and ethnicity may also possibly serve as guideline for future investigations.

In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, when reporting, P is used to indicate participant and a number assigned the participant. For example, P1 indicates participant 1 and P2 indicates another participant and so on.

Table 9. Demographics of participants

Participant	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Pronouns	Religion	Ethnicity
Participant 1	P1	21	Lesbian	She/her	Christian	Zulu
Participant 2	P2	22	Lesbian	She/her	Christian	Zulu
Participant 3	P3	22	Bisexual	They/them	Christian	Zulu
Participant 4	P4	21	Gay	He/him	Christian	Zulu
Participant 5	P5	33	Transgender	They/them	None	Zulu
Participant 6	P6	20	Bisexual	She/her	Christian	Zulu
Participant 7	P7	22	Gay	He/him	Christian	Zulu
Participant 8	P8	21	Lesbian	She/Her	Christian	Zulu
Participant 9	P9	20	Lesbian	She/her	Ex Mormon	Zulu
Participant 10	P10	20	Gay	He/him	Zion	Zulu
Participant 11	P11	21	Bisexual	He/him	Christian	Zulu
Participant 12	P12	22	Bisexual	She/her	Christian	Zulu
Participant 13	P13	23	Gay	He/him	Christian	Zulu
Participant 14	P14	20	Gay	He/him	Christian	Zulu
Participant 15	P15	23	Lesbian	She/her	Christian	Zulu
Participant 16	P16	29	Bisexual	She/her	Christian	Zulu

Participant 17	P17	34	Transgender	They/them	Christian	Zulu
Participant 18	P18	32	Transgender	He/him	Christian	Zulu
Participant 19	P19	24	Gay	He/him	Christian	Zulu
Participant 20	P20	25	Transgender	They/them	Christian	Zulu

Source: Author

Participants were aged between 20 and 34. There were 20 participants in total; 5 lesbian individuals; 5 gay individuals; 5 bisexual individuals; and 5 transgender individuals who participated in this study. All reside in Pietermaritzburg.

5.2.1. Internalised homophobia

Before delving into the major themes and subthemes, it is important to note that participants in this study already experienced internalised homophobia. The social and individual facets of internalised homophobia entail the internalisation of the predominant socio-cultural norm that prohibits and excludes homosexuality (Dryer, 2007). Through societies' promotion and standardisation of the heterosexual image as being the ideal, individuals always firstly presume they are heterosexual. The process of the homosexual identification formation for the LGBT individual is therefore a variation from the norm. This homosexual identification occurs when homosexual feelings are recognised inwardly in a secretive and personal manner. Due to the adverse excessive social sexual stigma and prejudice towards homosexuals, LGBT individuals frequently develop negative perceptions and feelings of themselves which are internalised (Rowen & Malcolm, 2003). Participant responses in this study support Dryer (2007) and Rowen and Malcolm (2003) on internalised homophobia.

P11 explained that whilst growing up, he starting experiencing feelings for both males and females.

> "*When I was growing up, I tried to remove this feeling from my head, I tried so hard to fight it. I even took incense and burnt it, I asked my ancestors to please remove this because I couldn't understand how I am guy and I am interested in*

other guys. I prayed and prayed. I tried everything on my own to remove this thing from so that I can live by the rules." (A closeted bisexual)

P9 relayed her confusion

"*When I was in Grade 6 that's when I started experiencing feelings for girls, I thought I was going crazy in Grade 6. I used to ask myself, how am I only in Grade 6 and how can I be having feelings for other girls."* (A lesbian woman)

P4 recalls his prayer

"*I will always be praying "God please change me."* (A gay man)

P8 recounted her early stages of internalised homophobia

"*When I was growing, I starting being a lesbian from a young age and I hated myself. And I to behave like a girl made me angry but I had to do it.*" (A lesbian woman)

P18 expressed

"*When I was younger, I knew I was different, I prayed and I even fasted and I prayed more but I always ended up feeling the same."* (A transgender)

P20 reflected their suicidal thoughts

"*When I was old enough to know that I am in the wrong body, I tried to kill myself because I hated being in this body"*

The above responses echo Blondeel et al.'s (2018) argument that when a person's sexual orientation deviates from society's accepted definition of heterosexuality, they may face discrimination and victmisation because homosexuality is viewed as wrong, inappropriate, and is criticised. The sexual stigma from being exposed to heteronormative and homophobic environments such as the school, the media, family, faith-based organisations and other socio-cultural settings have contributed to the participants' experiences of internalised homophobia. This has a cascading impact on them because they are seen as challenging and rebelling against society's heterosexual order and therefore fear being treated with hostility and violence. These individuals then internalise these harmful socio-cultural ideals of heterosexuality, leading to internalised homophobia. Participants responses reveal their own discrimination and

victimisation of themselves for example P8's experience of self-hate and P20's experience of self-victimisation was based on their internalised feelings of what society expects of them. LGBT individuals suffer negative consequences from their own internalised homophobia, including increased susceptibility and vulnerability to aggression and antagonism because of inner emotional conflicts with themselves. This has a double impact on them because not only do they have to be mindful of not being victimised by society for being different, they have to deal with their internalised fears, their own negative feelings towards themselves, and phobias associated with being different to mainstream society itself.

5.3 Themes and subthemes

The researcher employed thematic analysis to analyse the recorded data. Through the use of thematic analysis, the following themes and subthemes emerging from the data collected are explained in Table 10 below.

5.3.1 Themes and subthemes from data collected

Table 10. Themes and subthemes from data collected

Theme	Subtheme
Types of homophobic victimisation and the impacts thereof	➢ Bullying - Physical bullying - Derogatory name calling and insulting remarks - Relational and social bullying ➢ Sexual violence - Sexual intimidations - Sexual violation and harassment
Characteristics of gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic victimisation	➢ Same sex orientation ➢ Gender role expectations ➢ Gender identity
Factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation,	➢ Factors that contribute to homophobic victimization - Cultural beliefs - Religious beliefs

The effects of homophobic victimisation on LGBT individuals	➢ Impacts of homophobic victimisation - Humiliation, shame and insecurity - Fear of homophobic victimization - Stress and anxiety - Depression and suicide ideation - Loss of self-confidence and self-questioning
How LGBT avoid of victimisation	➢ Risk assessment and gender adaption ➢ Adaptation of gender expression ➢ Avoidance of heterosexual spaces ➢ Coping mechanisms adopted by participants - Passive coping - Confrontational coping - Protective coping - Empowerment and resiliency
Perceptions of reporting victimisation to police	➢ Poor police experiences ➢ Fears of being misunderstood by police ➢ The right to be protected

5.4 Theme 1 – Types of victimisation

Homophobia is considered a patriarchal practice because homosexuality threatens social orders and traditional values (Richard, 2015). In this study, recognizing homophobia as a patriarchal contravention will assist in understanding the intersections of oppression and victimisation of LGBT victims. Patriarchy dominates the South African social fabric (Sathiparsad, Taylor & Dlamini, 2008; Mulaudzi, 2018). In hetero-patriarchal societies, such as South Africa, LGBT and gender non-conforming persons are seen to be breaching social gender norms (Ewing, et al, 2020). Patriarchal ideology centres on the reinforcement of traditional gender roles where men and women have to enact their gender according to assigned birth based on societal norm. Gay, lesbian and transgender persons who allegedly undermine or disrupt the patriarchal order

through non-conforming gender roles, behaviours and undesired stereotypes are stigmatised through discrimination and victimisation (Judge & Nel, 2008). As the queer theory demonstrates society defines and polices the concepts of heterosexuality, gender, sexual identities (Wozolek, 2019). It is from this perspective that homosexuality is so heavily monitored because homophobia ensures that the nature of standardised norms based on sexuality and gender are adhered to.

Heterosexual relationships are valued more highly by the majority in society (Robinson, 2016). Heteronormative constraints place LGBT identities in formidable positions because when generalised social identities or behaviours are seen as the norm being non-conforming runs the risk of LGBT people being seen as deviant or aberrant (Chakraborti & Hardy 2015; Dick, 2009; Haynes, Schweppe & Garland, 2023). The dominant discourse in South African society is predominantly heteronormative, heterosexual relations are the ideal while same-sex is considered deviant (Mayeza, 2021). Heterosexuality is a socially constructed convention formed to serve as a structural directive of sexuality and gender hierarchies which favour men and heterosexuals thus leading to patriarchy (Francis, 2021). In order for patriarchal power to be maintained, heterosexuality has to be policed, protected and normalised (Bhana & Chen, 2020). The response to homophobic victimisations in study aligns with Mulaudzi (2018) who argues that homosexuality is viewed as unsuitable mainly because it defies and challenges a patriarchal society. Homosexuality is considered as disrupting and dislocating the dominant hetero-patriarchal order. It is therefore noted that most preparators of homophobic victimisation in this study were males.

The homophobic victimisations noted in this study demonstrates that LGBT and gender non-conforming persons, just by being in existence, are considered to be contravening gender norms (Ewing et al, 2020). Gay, lesbian and transgender persons who allegedly destabilise or disrupt the patriarchal order through their non-conformance to traditional gender roles, behaviours and stereotypes are chastised through discrimination and victimisation as a mode of social control (Judge & Nel, 2008). It is noted that through the victimisations experienced by participants that heterosexuality is policed and those who don't adhere to the of standardised norms based on sexuality and gender are punished.

The dominant heterosexist standards cause LGBT people to experience a kind of two-fold victimisation: firstly, it is the actual victimisation, and secondly, it is the impacts of such victimisation. UNESCO (2016), in a global study, shows that homophobic victimisation is a

type of gender-based violence that manifests in various ways. The findings on victimisation in this study align with UNESCO's (2016) study, which exhibits bullying, physical, psychological and sexual violence as sources of victimisation. Studies have also demonstrated how the trauma of these victimisation events impacts the lives of LGBT persons physically and psychologically (Katz-Wise & Hyde 2012; Herek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002). The findings in this study align with various authors in regards to victimisation of LGBT people.

5.4.1 Bullying

Bullying was a common theme amongst participants. UNESCO (2016) describes bullying as a common form of violence committed against LGBT people, including physical victimisation, psychological victimisation, relational and social bullying. The findings on the forms of victimisation participants aligns with UNESCO's (2016) study.

5.4.1.1 Physical bullying

People who do not behave in a heterosexual manner or whose gender identification does not fit in with society's expectations are more likely to face violent physical punishments (Bates, 2022; Abaver & Cishe 2018; Mampane, 2020). Participants' accounts of physical bullying and victimisation align with the above authors, showing that the physical victimisation they have experienced relates to attacks such as kicking, beating and threats of or actual damage to one's property. Participants' responses demonstrate the types of physical victimisation they have experienced which also collaborates with UNESCO's (2016) findings.

P5 reported her physical ordeal as traumatising.

> "*When these guys thought I was a girl, then they wanted to rape me. I was beaten and hit. Three guys physically assaulted me. And when they discovered I was not woman, they became even more angry and started beating me even more badly physically saying that I think I am woman."* (A transgender person)

P8 pointed to a visible scar on her face when she described the homophobic attack that she experienced.

> "*I play soccer a lot and I only play with the boys, sometimes the boys think I because I am girl I shouldn't play soccer with the boys. My team mate, who is very homophobic, always has a problem with me playing with them, kicked me*

in my face. You know soccer boots have studs so as you can see the studs damaged my face." (A butch lesbian)

P7 recalled his frightening ordeal,

"*There was this boy who tried beat me badly because he knew I was gay, he punched me in private parts and then grabbed me by my neck but lucky I managed to free myself and runaway because he was fuming and violent, I was so scared, I thought I was going to die because of how angry he was.* "(A gay man)

P9 recounted how her friend was killed

"*I am scared because my friend was stabbed by some guys. She was murdered for being a lesbian. She was raped and her body was hidden behind the bushes in our neighbourhood"*

P15 relayed her experience physical victimisation when her family found out from her aunt that she was lesbian,

"*my dad started beating me and shouting at me. He beat me up because he wanted to take out the demons. And he even disowned me. He beat me up so badly because he used a sjambok (*whip*). It was so bad, it left scars on my body even on my legs, I will never forget that day".*

P8 explained

"*One day I was walking with my girlfriend on the street and this guy came over and asked my girlfriend for her number. I told him she is my girlfriend. He asked me why I have a girlfriend because I am also a girl, he then grabbed my hand and tried to hit me. I told my girlfriend to give him her number because I was so scared and I didn't have the power to fight him."* (A lesbian woman)

The accounts of physical victimisation depict acts of brutality and ruthlessness that the offenders inflicted. Lees (2017) describes homophobia as a perverse hate and prejudice against people who do not conform to normative gender and sexual identities. Participants responses indicate the perverse hatred for LGBT individuals expressed through extreme violence perpetrated against them based on their sexual orientation. P5's experience of physical violence and attempted rape shows the lack of safety that participants experience. It exhibits

gang rape as a serious crime in South Africa that needs to be addressed. Responses of physical violence exhibit patriarchy because the preparators were male (Ewing et al., 2020). The physical victimisation participants endured align with Finkelhor and Asdigian's (1996) target congruence theory's which include target vulnerability, target for gratification and target for antagonism. Participants responses suggest that perpetrators have the notion of that LGBT are non-conforming to the heterosexual norm thus making them vulnerable targets to physical homophobic victimisation. Target gratification was evident because, as described by participants, perpetrators who victimised them did so based on their sexual orientation, they attempted to use the victim's attributes of homosexuality to satisfy or gratify their need to preserve the socially created heteronormative order. Target antagonism is also exhibited in the responses because it shows that homosexuality incites anger and violence, which leads homophobic people to commit physical victimisation, because heterosexuality is profoundly endorsed and accepted.

In the case of LGBT victimisation, perpetrators seek to manipulate the attributes of homosexuality. P9, P7, and P8 response further exhibits gay bashing. Waldner and Berg's (2008) study revealed gay bashing as a means of target gratification, achieved through male perpetrators inflicting violence and victimisation against homosexual gratifying their need to assert their masculinity. The findings suggest that participants were physically assaulted because homosexuality is considered defying the hegemonic masculine order hence perpetrators sought to enforce their masculinity through disapproving acts of physical violence. For instance, P5 and P9's experience displays how the perpetrators committed acts of violence in a group consisting of males; these acts suggest they wanted to proclaim their masculinity and declare their maleness through violence. P8's response to physical victimisation "*he then grabbed my hand and tried to hit me"* demonstrates that the perpetrator's attempted physical assault on her, left her feeling terrified for both hers and her girlfriend safety. P8's sentiments '*I was so scared and I didn't have the power to fight him"* further exhibits target vulnerability which Finkelhor & Asdigian (1996) argue that susceptibility to victimisation is increased due a person's physically weaker and smaller stature.

Participants' accounts of the physical victimisation they have experienced reveals the aggression in how these physical attacks were perpetrated. These instances of physical victimisation indicate that perpetrators sought to dehumanise, demean and punish them based on their sexual orientation. Participants' sexual orientation made them vulnerable targets to victimisation, their non-conformity to the heterosexual norm was seen as target for gratification

for their perpetrators, and their homosexuality was seen a target for the perpetrator's aggression.

5.4.1.2 Derogatory name calling and insulting remarks

Another theme that featured prominently in terms of bullying was the derogatory name calling and insulting remarks which leads to psychological victimisation. This type of victimisation refers to the mental, emotional and psychological harm perpetrated on an individual. This type of victimisation occurs through verbal bullying such as mocking, unwanted teasing and name calling (UNESCO, 2016). While these types of victimisation do not inflict physical pain, they do inflict emotional and psychological pain.

P1 said

> "*Most of the boys bully me, they tell me that "I am fake boy" and they pick on me asking why I want to act like a boy when I am not a boy."* (A lesbian woman)

P3 relayed her experience

> *"There are people who call me twin plug because I like both genders and I like boys and girls. People also call me broken arm, you know, the arm that shows you talk too much with your one hand and Stabanie."* (A bisexual female)

P6 expressed the psychological trauma she when she expressed

> "*It is those horrible words, man, like those words "stabanie". Sometimes they call me loose I like both men and women. I am also called a "sifebe", oh that means bitch in isiZulu because I am drawn to both men and women. They take it that I am loose because I am attracted to both genders."* (A bisexual female)

P17's account of the embarrassing name-calling

> "*Before my transition, I was perceived as a butch female. I remember how I was always mocked at the taxi rank in full view of others, it was embarrassing because, people would say "Oh look, here is this stabanie"* (A transgender)

P4 articulated

> *"I also experience a lot name calling, like complete strangers will be like "hey you stabanie" or they will say "this guy is a real stabanie". They will shout*

> *loudly and be like "you're gay, whats happening in your head". They use words like nkonkoni. Sometimes they would use names I dont even know, I will have to go home and google the names."* (A gay male)

P10 voiced his experience,

> "*I have experienced a lot of victimisations from my neighbours because most of the time I am always with my mother or I am always with my friends who are girls and when they see this they start calling me names like "stabanie", even some of the guys in my neighbourhood will tell me that I am I am unholy and dirty."* (A gay man)

The sexual stigma entrenched in socio-cultural and political processes casts those who do not conform to societal gender norms as the other (Judge & Nel, 2008). The normalisation of heterosexuality on institutional and personal levels compromises the safety of homosexuals because it allows for them to become targets of victimisation through intimidation, physical and verbal abuse, violence and discrimination (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). In this study, participants' gender non-conformance is seen as a target for antagonism (Finkelhor & Asdigian 1996; Waldner & Berg 2008) because it served as a trigger for homophobia or undue anger toward homosexuality which intensified the chances of the LGBT participants' experience of homophobic victimisation. The disruptions of patriarchal norms were eminent; for instance, lesbian participants relayed: "*Guys say we are taking their woman*" (P8; P1).

Participants' accounts of derogatory name calling and insulting remarks shows psychological victimisation and are examples of gender-based harassment and hate speech. These disparaging terms and offensive expressions from perpetrators seek to insult LGBT victims (Mkhize, 2018). The derogatory name calling also serves to reinforce the heteronormative order. The distasteful articulation of the demeaning terms "*stabanie, twin plug, nkonkoni, broken arm*" are used to humiliate and verbally abuse LGBT individuals. P6's explains the term *"sifebe" oh that means bitch in isiZulu"* displays that because she is bisexual, she is considered as being promiscuous. Although P6 has an attraction to both men and women, it does not necessarily mean promiscuity, her sexual attractions or romantic relations should not be dictated to her. P9's account for being called bitch relays that men are angered by her gender nonconforming hence the humiliating name calling. These acts of labelling and hate speech are a type of

psychological victimisation which extends to other members of the LGBT community. These offensive phrases, as mentioned by participants, are strict enforcers of gender adherence and serve as reminder to others not to stray from socially accepted gender behaviour (Espelage et al., 2019) Moreover, the offensive labels serve as a threat and a source of stress for LGBT individuals (Sithole, 2015).

The responses again exhibit the enforcement of patriarchy and masculinity. The responses demonstrate that gay bashing. This further aligns with Waldner and Berg (2008) and shows that their unique traits such as mannerisms, gender identity, and being openly LGBT are viewed as targets for bullying. P9's experience proves that visible traits such a dress code that does not fit into mainstream expectations arouses anger, which leads to discrimination and victimisation. P4, P9 and P1's experience displays that being openly gay serves as target for verbal embarrassment and intolerance. Their experience relays that the dominant ideologies surrounding homosexuality is considered defying traditional norms and therefore should be questioned through verbal discrimination. P4's comment, "*They will shout loudly",* suggests that perpertrators seek to mock them whilst also drawing attention to the LGBT individual, for others to know that somebody is breaking the rule of perceived gender norms.

5.4.1.3 Relational and social bullying

In the context of homophobic victimisation, relational and social bullying are actions intended to harm an LGBT individual's position and social connections due to their actual or perceived sexual orientation. These actions can be especially dangerous because they attack the person's social support networks and emotional health. Participants reported relational and social bullying; this included their sexual orientation being divulged which resulted in them being beaten, threatened and excluded in social and relational contexts (UNESCO, 2016). Earnshaw, Bogart, Poteat, Reisner and Schuster (2016) argue that traditional gender norms are valued within certain social group such traditional masculinity and femininity, if these norms are not observed, peers within the social groups influence and/ or commit LGBT bullying through social devaluation, discreditation or abuse of the non-conforming person. Social bullying is concerned with damaging one's social status while relational bullying relates to damaging relationships and social connections which participants in this study relayed.

P13 said

> *"After I told my former friend about me being gay, he organised a group of guys to attack me. These guys caught me and started kicking me and hitting me, some*

of them started taking off my clothes, I think maybe they were going to molest me." (A gay man)

P15 related her experience of social and relational bullying

"*my aunt who was a teacher at my school, found out I was lesbian, before she told my parents, she started shouting and mocking me in front of the whole class, and that's when the bullying and the threats started, they would push me around, bully me badly.*

When probed further about the bullying entailed, P15 responded

*I used to get notes that says that they will kill me and beat me because I was lesbian. To my face, the boys would say that they were going rape to make me straight, I used to be scared to go to school" (*A lesbian)

P12 expressed

"*When I was in high school, I confided in my friend and she told everybody, people at school and out of school started threatening me. Like guys be saying that were going cure me from this thing I might have for girls. Because they were saying like I only need a man only and they will make sure that I only stay with a man. It was like they meant they were going rape me because I like girls too. The girls used to call me names and gossip about me, it was horrible."* (A bisexual)

P1 stated

" *I have been spat on and sworn at by my so-called friends and people who don't accept me."* (A lesbian)

P4 recounted his experience

"*One day when I school, these guys found out I was gay from a friend, they caught me and pushed me into this dark, dirty room which was not used, I couldn't see anything and they started rubbing up against me I could actually feel the dick imprints against me. They were saying that I am dirty and they were going show me, I started screaming and lucky the teachers banged at door or else I would have been raped by these guys. imagine being raped by guys"*

Participant responses correlates with the queer theory, because it is noted that perpetrators of social and relational bullying regulate and monitor individual's adherence to the societal standard of heterosexuality, , gender, and sexual identities. It reinforces the values placed on the standardised norms of based on sexuality and gender (Wozolek, 2019) whilst homosexuality is considered aberrant and therefore the defiance against heterosexuality must be punished and ostracized. Bullying on a social and relational levels can have significant effects when combined with homophobic victimisation. Perpetrators use it as a tactic to isolate, discredit and humiliate LGBT participants from their peers for example P13's account shows how his friend influenced LGBT bullying through "*organising a group of guys to attack"* him. P13, P16, P4 and P12's experience shows how one person's non-acceptance of nonconformity to traditional gender norms can influence an entire group to commit homophobic victimization. Participants experiences also demonstrates how their social relations can be compromised because social and relational bullying served as a means to publicly embarrass participants, thereby creating a hostile environment for the LGBT person.

P15's experience demonstrates that those such as teachers, who are supposed to help socialise and safeguard the well-being of their students, add to the discrimination and victimisation. It also relays strong messages of intolerance which affects others who belong to the LGBT community; for example, there could have been someone else in P15 and P12's school or community who was homosexual, and they would be afraid to be themselves in fear of experiencing the same fate such as being publicly ostracized or threatened. P15 also relayed that her aunt further relayed her sexual orientation to parents which resulted in a physical beating which suggests the reduced support she suffered from her family. The responses indicate strong messages of relational and social bullying ultimately lead to homophobic victimisations thereby killing the LGBT person's self-esteem and leaves them feeling socially isolated and secluded. Earnshaw et al (2016) and Poteat, DiGiovanni, and Scheer (2013) argue heterosexual male youth who place great importance on their heterosexual identity are less empathetic towards homosexuality and therefore are more prone to perpetrate LGBT bullying for instance P13 and P4's response again demonstrates the immense anger of the male perpetrators exhibited through the physical and sexual assault. .

5.4.2 Sexual violence

LGBT individuals are more prone to sexual violence compared to heterosexual individuals (Messinger & Koon-Magnin, 2019). Sexual violence of LGBT individuals are serious problems

that take many different forms in different cultures. These actions frequently stem from ingrained homophobia and social sexual stigmas, which have severe negative effects on the victim's physical, mental, and social well-being. The findings in this study allude to various kinds of sexual violence which include sexual intimidation, sexual violation and harassment and forced relations (UNESCO, 2016).

5.4.2.1 Sexual intimidation and harassment

LGBT individuals experience sexual intimidation in this study, manifested in the form sexual of verbal sexual abuse, groping and unwelcome sexual advances. These types of sexual intimidation can occur in various settings such as public areas, work and even at home (Herek, 2009). Participants in this study reported receiving different types of sexual intimidation in different settings. For instance;

P4 expressed

> "*Sometimes in the hood, a random guy will come to you and say "I want to have sex with you" like in an inappropriate way. Like, how would you feel that someone just wants have sex with you? Obviously, you going to feel unsafe around them or just unsafe. And they say it in a way where they will execute it or in a way that they want to rape you."* (A gay man)

P5 relayed

> *"some of these men, just want to have sex with me. If I respond and say no, they threaten me, like they say they will rape me or they will catch me and force me to have sex with them."* (A transgender woman)

P12 explained

> "*One day I was with my girlfriend, and this guy, a stranger, came to us and threatened us he said, "I will have sex with both of you, so that you know what a man feels like. I will make both of you straight." We were so afraid. Because he meant what he was saying, we couldn't say anything because we were scared for our safety. We quickly stopped holding hands and kept walking."* (A lesbian)

P20 described

> "*There is this guy who sexually threatens me because every time he see me, he says "Wait till I get you, you will taste what I got" and he points to his dick and makes these movements, it's revolting."* (A transgender)

P1 elucidated

> "*I was threatened by some guys in my neighbourhood, they said that they will show me how good a penis can feel and I will forget about being a lesbian."* (A lesbian)

Sexual harassment and sexual intimidation are a form sexual trauma (Gentlewarrior & Fountain, 2009). The responses aligns Fineran's (2002) study, which identifies hetero-sexism as a major social violence when it comes to peer sexual harassments for instance P1 and P12's experience suggest that the perpetrators express these sexual intimidations based on the heteronormative order where women can only be sexually attracted to men. Participants' accounts of sexual harassment and intimidation specify that these unwanted incidents in the form of threats and coercion were imposed upon them by male perpetrators. P1 and P12's experience of unwanted sexual threats reinforce patriarchy. Although the victims of sexual intimidations and harassments in this study were not only female, participants' experiences of sexual intimidation display the power dynamics that exist in our society, which is the marginalisation of homosexual individuals (Jackson 2006; Bravewomon, 2018) and the dominance of masculine males. The sexual intimidation suggests threats of corrective rape which will be discussed in the next subtheme.

P12's experience exhibits that public displays of affection between two people who are of the same biological sex is considered incorrect and irregular behaviour and therefore needs to be corrected. Especially if it is between two women, because it is defying the male order. P4 and P5's articulations also display how men create a negative stereotype that gays and transgenders are promiscuous and they can have sexual access to them. Participants' responses further allude to male privilege and their perception that they are sexual beings and can have easy access to sex whenever. If they are denied, they will threaten, or they demand it through violence because they are entitled to it. These sentiments contribute to the rape culture plaguing South Africa, which needs to be recognised and tackled.

5.4.2.2 Sexual violation

Sexual violation and corrective rape are forceful discriminatory acts which violate the victim's rights whilst being used a means to oppress, dominate and control. This further reinforces the intimidation, powerlessness and vulnerability of the victim based on their sexual orientation and sexual identity. Doan-Minh's (2019) study on corrective rape and homophobic violence found that offenders admittedly violated victims, not because of their obstinate hatred toward homosexuality but rather to target the lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender individual's encroachment and resistance of hegemonic gender norms. Participants' insights of their experience of sexual violation and harassment shares the same findings as Doan-Minh's (2019) study.

P8 relayed

> "*There was this one guy who told this other guy I am girl and he wanted to prove it and he just comes and starts violently touching me on my boobs and my vagina. He wanted to open my pants to check if I had a vagina. It was so wrong and uncomfortable."* (A lesbian)

P9 explained that she experienced sexual harassment on two occasions.

> "*I went to a party once and this guy was there, he kept following me around and then he came and sat next to me and starts rubbing my thighs and my private areas. This guy didn't stop after I told him to, he grabbed me hard, like he made marks on my thigh and he started saying that he wants to "finish this", he wanted to finish the gayness. The second time it was at a place in Scottsville, this guy who was supposed to be my friend said, "I can tell you are not a lesbian, you just need a man to show you" and then him and his friends started touching me on body sexually aggressively."* (A lesbian)

P15 described her account of sexual violation

> "*My dad forced me to have a relationship with a man,. Also, when my uncle heard I was lesbian, he wanted to prove that I really don't like men and he wanted to show me what it is like to sleep with a man. He tried to rape me because he wanted to cure my "gayness"."* (A lesbian)

P17 highlighted

> "*My very own cousin at home, it was after a ceremony at home. I was in bed and my cousin who had been drinking comes to me and says, "I have a problem with you, I feel you don't show respect", and I was like what are you talking about, and he started shouting "you should be respecting me!"; by this time I got out of the bed and then he became violent, I asked him to leave my room and he became more violent he started holding me down and choking me and starting saying, "you think you are a man that is why you cannot respect me. You need to feel what a man feels like", while he started undoing his pants and for me immediately I knew he was going to rape me. He wanted rape me, to teach me a lesson, I tried with all my might to fight him off, it was difficult but luckily I was able to fight him off because he was very drunk and I was sober."*
> (A transgender)

Gaitho (2021) describes corrective rape as a hate crime against a person whose gender identity and sexual orientation is not acceptable to dominant societal norms based on the responses, the male perpetrators, as mentioned by participants in this study, disapproved of participant's lesbianism. P17 a transgender who is currently transitioning from female to male explained that prior to the transition, while still having the female anatomy, was almost raped by a male cousin. P17's experience shows that men disapprove of women wanting to be masculine. It further demonstrates that men feel they need to be revered and respected even if it means demanding it through violence, an implication of gender-based violence, another criminal activity that is a menace to South African society. It is also noted that in cases reported by P17, P15 and P8, the perpetrators were well known to them, an argument that Geldenhuys (2021) points out. Geldenhuys (2021) argues that when perpetrators are well known to the victims, it makes it difficult for them to report these victimisations to the police or to even talk about these cases because it is difficult to speak of their very own as rapists.

The sentiments shared by participants elucidate that corrective rape is used a "weapon" or a tool to correct and punish women's sexual orientation because they are considered to be defying the heteronormative order (Geldenhuys, 2021). Participants responses further demonstrates how the concept of heterosexuality is being monitored and policed (Wozolek, 2019). Therefore, as participants' experiences of sexual violation and harassment allude to, LGBT and gender non-conforming people are viewed as gender norm violators in hetero-patriarchal communities simply by virtue of their presence. As a means of social control, discrimination

and violence perpetrators use rape as a way of cultivating LGBT individuals about appropriate and acceptable behaviour or sexual orientation. Corrective rape is used as means to attack their gender identities because they are considered to be causing instability and disruption of the patriarchal order through their non-conforming gender roles, behaviors, and stereotypes (Judge & Nel, 2008; Ewing et al., 2020).

5.5 Theme 2 – Characteristics of gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic victimisation

In order to contextualise homophobic victimisation in this study, it is relevant to understand the close link between gender norms and homophobia. Therefore, participants revealed the characteristics of gender norms is what perpetrators identify or target, when they commit homophobic victimisations against them. Traditional gender norms and gender expectations often perpetuate discrimination against LGBT individuals, which can significantly influence the victimisation of LGBT individuals; therefore, recognising the characteristics of gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic is important.

Norms are defined as social constructs which exist as a collective shared belief of what is typical and appropriate behaviour within a group. In other words, it is a collective standardisation and expectation of how members within the group should behave and is therefore maintained through strong approval or disapproval (Heise & Manji, 2016). Gender norms, according UNICEF (2020), are informal rules that consist of collective shared beliefs which characterise and categorise expected behaviour based on gender identities within social contexts. Gender norms are internalised and plays an integral part in gender stereotyping. Traditional gender norms reinforce the idea that there are only two genders, male and female, and that non-conformance to the expectations associated with their assigned gender leaves LGBT vulnerable to homophobia, which can further lead to discrimination and possibly homophobic victimisation. It is from this perspective that this theme explored the characteristics of gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic victimisation.

5.5.1 Same-sex orientation

In most societies, both nationally and internationally, LGBT victimisation is focussed on sexual orientation and occurs from a heteronormative and heterosexist perspective, where heterosexuality is deemed the norm (Robinson, 2016). Homophobia signifies prejudice against

homosexuals. The main target of homophobia is being attracted to same-sex persons or homosexuality. The reason for homophobia is that hetero-sexism is the ideological belief system that privileges heterosexuality while marginalising, stigmatising, or discriminating against non-heterosexual orientations, behaviours, identities, relationships, or communities (Plummer, 2014)

Participants were asked why they felt vulnerable to perpetrators of homophobic victimisations. Responses were pre-dominantly that it was standardisation of gender norms which was "*discriminative*" against them. They felt that ultimately, heteronormativity and being heterosexual was seen as normal and was unquestionably accepted thereby rendering them victims to homophobic violence. The heteronormative narrative, which is constantly produced and re-produced through various institutions and interpersonal practices, creates privilege to heterosexuals based on the premise that being attracted to the opposite sex is the norm and is considered natural, resulting in discrimination against those are attracted to the same sex (Kowalski & Scheitle, 2020; Kitzinger, 2005; Jackson, 2006). Normative heterosexuality normalises heterosexual behaviour through regulating acceptable traditional gender arrangements and monogamy, thereby creating marginalisation against those who do not conform to the heterosexual norm (Jackson, 2006). The responses below support Kowalski and Scheitle (2020), Kitzinger (2005) and Jackson's (2006) studies.

P15 relayed

> "*because women are supposed to be attracted to men only and I don't have feelings for men at all, they see me as doing wrong*." (A lesbian woman)

P14 expressed

> "*because I dress like a man people know that I am attracted to females that's why I get treated like an outsider"* (A lesbian)

P12 said

> "*People judge us for who love we love. I feel restricted because I am only supposed to date men only but I want to be able to date whoever I want both males and females because it is my body."* (A bisexual female)

P5 elucidated

> "*It's the lack of knowledge and information from people not understanding exactly being trapped in the wrong body is like."* (Transgender)

Participants' responses emphasise discrimination that LGBT individuals experience. It reinforces that LGBT are discriminated against based on their sexual orientation as mentioned in theme one in 5.4. It further highlights they are considered as deviant for wanting to be desired by the same sex and for their desire for the same sex (Schippers, 2007). The exclusion and judgement, expressed by P14 and P12, convey that sexual stigma attached to being homosexual and the non-conformance to gender norms leaves LGBT feeling rejected by the society they live in, thereby creating what Nel and Judge (2008) refer to as the "other". In the expressions of restrictedness, participants revealed, the social constraints they feel for not being able to date whom they find sexually attractive. Participants' responses are indicative of the pressure and normalisation that society places heterosexuality, which alludes to traditional gender norms being considered as the standard (Blackstone, 2003). It also shows the experience of discrimination for LGBT participants is based on the non-alignment of their gender and the biology of their body. They become vulnerable victims because their gender and sexuality does not align with the socially constructed norm of gender and sexuality. Perpetrators of violence against them seek to victimise LGBT individuals for target gratification because these perpetrators seek to access and manipulate the LGBT individuals' attributes of who they are sexually attracted to. They further become targets of antagonism because perpetrators of victimisation consider LGBT individuals as being deviant and straying away from social expectations of gender and sexuality, thereby arousing anger for perpetrators.

The above responses show how the convergence of gender and sexuality are interconnected, overlapped and intertwined through the common perception that characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms are heavily reliant on the gender binaries (male and female) of heteronormative and heterosexual relationships, in order for one to be favoured and not discriminated against (Vilakazi & Mkhize 2020; Duncan et al, 2019). This also suggests that conservative societies *"lack of knowledge and information"* which P5 mentions. It demonstrates that people are misinformed about homosexuality (Van Vollenhoven & Els, 2013) and transgenders as well the lack of knowledge thereof. Responses further indicate that participants feel restricted in their bodies due to the pressures of heterosexuality, thus resort to being their authentic selves however perpetrators victimize them for being different. There is lack of understanding of the experiences of LGBT by heterosexual homophobic perpetrators.

Participants' feelings of being misunderstood and discriminated against culminates into emotional dispossession as well as psychological weakness, which Finkelhor and Asdigian (1996) identifies as examples of target vulnerability. LGBT individuals displaying characteristics of psychological and emotional distress increases their possibility of victimisation because perpetrators may consider them emotionally weak, thereby making them easy targets for victimisation (Zavala, 2018).

5.5.2 Gender role expectations

Gender roles are considered to be crucial components in organising social interactions. Together with gender norms, they prescribe behavioural patterns and predetermined roles for what society considers typically female or male. Universally, societies have different prescribed and ascribed social roles which are deemed acceptable to men and what is deemed acceptable for women. The traditional view on gender roles is that men and women have distinct roles (Konrad & Harris, 2002). Men are to take on a more assertive, self-confident, goal-driven and decisive role whilst women are to be empathetic, nurturing, tender, caring and kind (Lueptow, Garovich-Szabo, & Lueptow, 2001). If these predetermined gender roles are not imitated or are avoided, individuals' risk being victimised and socially excluded (Horn, 2007). Apart from social exclusion, individuals can be victimised through being humiliated, demoralised, and abused (Gordon & Meyer, 2007; Horn & Nucci, 2006).

Participants communicated how they are expected to behave and assume roles based on their biological features together with their fears of not imitating or digressing from gender role expectations, especially within social settings.

P13 described

> *"Society expects me to behave in a certain way and I feel different inside from how I am supposed to behave. As, male I am expected to be tough and very masculine however. I am the total opposite. I have feminine features. Like for instance, I am very sensitive and emotional. I also do the girly stuff, I like to cook and clean. That's why I think it's the gender roles cause people to victimise us. Because it tells you what behaviour is acceptable and what is not. People know this that's why we are seen are behaving incorrectly."* (A gay man)

P9 pointed to her appearance as she said

> *"As you can see, I am tomboy, I don't like to act like and do girl stuff but I have to suppress myself and act like a real girl when I am home. So, when I am with them* (her family)*, I have to act properly, because if they notice something wrong, they will be very abusive."* (A lesbian woman)

P11 expressed

> *"As a man, I am expected to do certain things or behave in a certain way. I am supposed to be strong and like women only. I am expected to do things that I am not comfortable doing because if I don't, I will be injured or hurt."*

Participants' accounts of gender role expectations align with Butler's (2002) work, which notes gender only exists if it is performed. Gender is brought into being through repetitive practices and interactions with society. This shows that digressing from the dominant heteronormative narrative not only has a negative impact on LGBT person's wellbeing but also instils fear that the digression from gender role expectations exposes their sexuality and sexual orientation, which can ultimately lead to them being hurt or injured.

Participants' accounts on gender roles demonstrates that the typical behavioural expectation shows that society sanctions and upholds heteronormative behaviour; this includes the conformance to socially accepted gender roles (Duncan et al., 2019). The assumption that gender binaries based on biological sex dictates how females are supposed to behave and how males are supposed to behave are informed by traditional gender roles. It demonstrates that characteristics they possess, such as P9's "*tomboy"* traits and P11's effeminate characteristics, are viewed are targets of vulnerability, traits that perpetrators see as a target for their gratification for their perceived notion that LGBT's are not conforming their gender behaviour roles to the accepted heterosexual role. Therefore, they seek to manipulate and monitor how participants behave to align with heterosexual binaries of being a male or female; therefore, they are considered as targets of antagonism because if their gender behaviour and roles does not align with gender role expectation, it evokes anger in some heterosexuals and therefore makes the LGBT person the ideal targets for victimisations. P11's response shows that he is aware of dangers associated with straying away and despite him being uncomfortable with conforming to gender role expectations, he is forced to do so, otherwise he risks being victimised. Participants revealed they have to be cautious in their environments, and therefore assume or "*correct"* their gender behaviour to align with their birth sex to prevent being

victimised which further aligns with Butler's (2002) argument that gender is socially constructed, is fluid and not fixed to the biological body.

5.5.3 Gender identity

A prominent theme that arose during the data analysis was gender identity and the experiences of victimisation because participants' gender identity did not align with the socially accepted norm. Butler (2002) argues that gender is a social construction, meaning that gender identities are standardisations that are enforced and supported through social sanctions. The way in which bodies are understood and given meaning is through prevailing and dominant philosophies and language. Bodies are social objects that are given meanings through social signifiers that emerge from societal contexts. The body's anatomy of being either male or female is permeated with meaning through communication and discourse which is then acted out accordingly (Zimman, 2014). Any transgressions from these socially constructed gender identities are considered unnatural and wrong. This also places a great deal of pressure on nonconforming individuals, thereby causing anxiety, fear and judgement.

P2 felt that because her gender identity did not align with her biological body, she felt unaccepted and afraid.

> "*Because of the way I look and dress as you can see it's not like a girl because I do not like looking like a girl because I don't feel that way. But the way people treat me because I am dressed like this makes me feel like I am abnormal or something like that. I should be treated as to how I feel, because I may look like a woman but inside I feel like something else."*

She also felt threatened due to her gender identity not aligning to her biological sex, because she relayed,

> "*Boys say we shouldn't wear like them, sometimes they try to touch us sexually."*

P9 explained

> "*One day I was wearing guy clothes, and these guys on the street just started swearing me saying "Hey, it's wrong what you doing, sibefe". Imagine, I was just walking and they just started insulting and swearing me about how wrong it was that I was dressing like a boy and they said I must remember that I have a vagina."* (A lesbian female)

P20 reported

> "*As a transgender I want to wear clothes that I feels suits who I am on the inside but when people who know me see me dress like that, they start calling me names. It is just unsafe out there, to be who you truly are. People threaten you not just in the way the way they look at you but also verbally. I am afraid to be who I am."* (A transgender)

P3 relayed

> "*There are days when I feel like dressing like a boy but those are the days I am scared the most, because those are the days the boys get angry with me for dressing like them. They start saying that they will show me for taking their women but I don't care I dress how I feel that day."* (A bisexual woman)

P1 relayed

> "*Because of how I dress I have been called all those horrible names by people who don't accept me"* (A lesbian)

P12 highlighted

> "*People in my community do judge me because I wear male clothes and people call me names for dressing like this."* (A bisexual woman)

Participants' responses showed that gender identity is another characteristic which makes them vulnerable to homophobic victimisation. Social signifiers such as dress code categorise men and women (Altman, 2020). This further alludes to gender being socially constructed and gender identity, such as dress code, being a source of marginalisation which, as participants relayed, influence homophobic victimisation. Dress code often reinforces traditional gender expectations that requires men to dress in more masculine attire and women to dress in feminine attire (Altman, 2020). For those who identify with genders different from their biological sex, and as indicated un the findings, it can be alienating and terrifying simply for not adhering to traditional dress codes. LGBT individuals who dress in non-traditional ways become vulnerable targets to homophobic victimisation.

The probability of being a victim is increased by both being visible and having the ability to make physical contact with the perpetrator. Unique clothing or appearance, mannerisms, other actions, or the victim's location can all be used to identify them as targets, such as being openly

gay or frequenting gay spaces. The notion that homosexuality is seen as a deviance from socially and culturally accepted gender norms creates more vulnerability for LGBT individuals, especially for those who are openly gay and those who express their gender identities openly. As participants indicated, their safety is comprised due to their non-traditional gender identity. This not only implies target vulnerability due their non-alignment of socially accepted gender identity but also target antagonism because this non-alignment invoked anger in the perpetrator and target gratification was based in the victim's non-conforming gender identity. Hence the findings supports Finkelhor and Asdigian's (1996) target congruence theory. Participants response regarding gender identity aligns with Waldner and Berg's (2008) argument that LGBT individuals become targets because they might dress in ways that perpetrators deem inappropriate; their digression from the dominant heteronormative gender dress code therefore arouses anger in perpetrators thus leading to them to commit homophobic victimisation. These perpetrators seek to attack the LGBT person's characteristic of non-traditional gender identity to fulfil their need to reinforce heteronormative order. Participants indicate that they are abused and victimised for dressing in a way that digresses from the heteronormative way.

5.6 Theme 3 – Factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation

This theme investigated the experiences and perspectives of participants of homophobia. This theme provides evidence of the dominance of the heteronormative narrative; it shows the elements that disseminate the privileges of heteronormativity whilst also revealing the factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation. This theme further explored the factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation of participants within the context of social institutions.

The two main beliefs and misconceptions about homosexuality are as follows: A cisgender person may be of the view that homosexuality is learnt, therefore making it a personal choice therefore homosexuality is viewed as self-deviation from heterosexual norms and the other is that homosexuality maybe considered as physiological or genetic disorder (Ngcobo; 2007). On the contrary, all participants in this study mentioned that they were "*born this way*" and "*did not choose*" to be homosexual therefore it is not a self-deviation nor a genetic disorder. They believed that negative reactions to their sexual orientations stemmed from the highly valued and deeply ingrained heterosexual standardisations enforced through culture and religion. These important elements shape and contribute to their experiences of gender prejudice, thereby allowing them to be vulnerable victims and rendering them targets for gratification and antagonism.

In order to understand homophobic victimisation, it is significant to understand the factors that contribute to or influence homophobia. Therefore, it is important to recognise that mainstream society is normalised through ideological heterosexist systems and anyone whose sexual orientation does not align with hetero-sexism is considered to be aberrant and abnormal. These ideological heterosexist standardisations are circulated and re-enforced through socio-cultural institutions.

5.6.1. Cultural beliefs

A number of factors impact the lives of LGBT individuals in South Africa. Albertyn (2009) argues that culture is a significant aspect in attaching meaning to gender. Culture facilitates how we make sense of the world thereby making it an unavoidable part of being human. Cultural beliefs are a particular way of life of a collective group; it is underpinned by values and norms which are upheld by its members (Ngubane, 2010). A community is defined by the cultural values it endorses. These values encompass norms, principles, spiritual practices and beliefs, and is inclusive of intellectual and emotional characteristics (Minkov, Blagoev & Hofstede, 2013). This means that culture shapes how people behave, think and feel (Swallow and Wang, 2020). The findings in this study concur with Mushome and Mushwana's (2021) study, which revealed that strong cultural and religious beliefs regarding homosexuality contribute to a community's denial and discriminatory tendencies towards people who are attracted to the same sex.

Participants in this study were all from the Zulu culture. Epprecht and Mngoma's (2023) study showed that Zulu culture is highly conservative, based on respect and moral obligations to community, ancestors and family. Hierarchal interpersonal relations place elder men at the top, while young women and girls place near the bottom (Epprecht & Mngoma, 2023). Culture featured as theme for factors that contribute to the perpetration of homophobic victimisation such as physical attacks, bullying, sexual violations as noted in 5.4. All participants expressed that in their culture, homosexuality was taboo.

P2 explains,

> "*In my culture we do ceremonies and, in the ceremonies, they stereotype, like, girls should do this, boys shouldn't do this. And for the ceremonies you are supposed dress and act like female if you are a woman. Some people take culture very seriously and that's why they are so strict, these homophobic*

people believe we are going against our own culture that's why they want to rape us." (A lesbian woman)

P16 conveyed,

"*It is against my culture. If you are a woman you must marry a man and a man must marry a woman. So, being bisexual is against the Zulu culture, If, you behave otherwise, they will make it known that you are going against your culture. People believe a lot in culture that's why they especially the Zulu men will violently attack you and show you for disrespecting our culture"* (A bisexual woman).

P15 stated

"*People don't accept us especially those people who believe in things like ancestors. Because there were no such things like gays and lesbians even during the time of the ancestors and that's why they treat us so badly".* (A lesbian woman)

P13 communicated,

"*In the Zulu culture, it is believed that if you are male, you must behave like man, you must be strong and you must grow the clan name by having children. When you are gay people know that you will not have a kid and this prevents culture from being passed down. There are people that are intense about culture and they will beat us up if we don't follow the rules"* (A gay man).

P10 relayed,

"*They say Zulu guys have to do the Zulu dance in front of the girls, it's a very masculine dance and I can't even do that. There is also another ritual where the males must go to the isibaya, it is like a kraal where the cows are kept, the male is expected to slaughter the cow. I am very scared of this. The male elders shout at me because I don't know how to do these rituals. So, they like don't understand that I can't do these things and they become very angry"* (A gay man)

As noted from participants' responses, culture endorses heteronormativity through the specificity of gender roles. LGBT participants are challenged with the struggle of non-

acceptance from their culture. This is coupled with feelings of guilt for not abiding to cultural endorsements of heterosexuality. Renn (2010) argues that fixed definitions of gender and sexuality limit what is known about gendered identities. As the findings suggest culture has rigid elements of heterosexual norms. Participants experiences reflect, the rigidity of heterosexual practices is based on designated roles for each person based on assigned birth sex. This makes identifying as any other sex, other than the binary sex, or identifying as homosexual, taboo. Swallow and Wang's (2020) argument that culture structures people's beliefs and behaviour reverberates in this theme because culture plays an integral part in disseminating heterosexuality as the norm. Additionally, the queer theory notes LGBT sexualities are forms of resistance to cultural homogenisation in that they destabilize prevailing ideologies (Amory, Massey, Miller and Brown, 2022). Therefore, due to the cultural non-existence of homosexuality and cultural belief of heteronormativity as well as the cultural homogenisation of heterosexuality, people are then of the belief that homosexuality is culturally wrong and therefore feel the need to target LGBT people as punishment for going against cultural norms. The findings revealed that perpetrators of homophobic victimisation feel that the punishments they impose on the LGBT victim is justified. The LGBT person's attribute of homosexuality is considered culturally unaccepted and wrong, therefore leading to provocation of the perpetrator.

Participants' responses to culture further validate Epprecht (2008) and Epprecht (2013) that African societies place strong emphasis based on dominant philosophies and ideals attached to ancestral and traditional belief systems that contribute to the prohibition of homosexuality. For example, the responses indicate that people are so enculturated and set in the beliefs systems passed down to them from generation to generation that heterosexuality becomes a norm. Fears of digressing creates anxiety and guilt of what might happen if their sexuality will be divulged. P2 and P10 indicate that culture creates heterosexual stereotypes which enforce the heteronormative narrative and does not allow for alternative sexual orientation or genders. Participants response demonstrates that through set cultural practices, non-homosexual people are therefore of the belief that other sexualities are deviant and should be disciplined.

P2's response further points out that culture dictates gender identity: "*you have to dress like woman".* Dress code is dictated by culture which conditions peoples' minds that this the norm, and when this dictated dress code is not adhered, men see it as a violation, which triggers unwarranted aggression. The same applies for participants' responses to gender behaviour. For example, P13 says, "*they will beat us up if we don't follow the rules."* This asserts the cultural

ideal in African society where men are supposed to be assertive heterosexuals and assume their roles accordingly (Brouard & Visser 2010; John et al., 2017; Rudman & Glick, 2021) Not adhering the cultural standardisations of gender expectation can lead to violence against the LGBT person. This cultural assertion affords men power over women, thereby considering them subordinate to them. The power has to be maintained and therefore any other sexualities are considered a deviance or a threat. This power also affords perpetrators the privilege to police gender adherence and punish women and men who are seen to be deviant of gender expectations (Bhana & Chen, 2020; Wozolek, 2019).

5.6.2 Religious beliefs

Strong religious tenets in South Africa consider homosexuality as sinful and morally wrong (Butler & Astbury, 2005; Msibi, 2012). In the context of this study, religiosity upholds dominant heterosexual norms whilst deeming homosexuality immoral and against God. Therefore, LGBT people require deliverance from what is considered sinful acts (Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Sandy, 2015) or they must be punished for going against Gods will. Participants' responses highlight that there is requirement for deliverance from homosexuality. Homosexuality is considered as immoral (Msibi, 2011) and therefore casts LGBT individuals as target of congruence because it displays target vulnerability, target gratification and target antagonism

P11 conveyed,

> "*The church is not accepting of homosexuality, they use scriptures from the bible to preach that homosexuality is sinful and wrong. People at our church believe that being homosexual is having evil spirits. And they say that no one must bring those evil spirits here.*

P11, who lives in a rural village, further explained:

> "*Therefore, in my community being gay or bisexual is associated with evil spirits. So, for them to accept me, it will take a lot of explaining and understanding. People in my community don't have any information for them to understand or accept me."* (A bisexual man)

P2 said,

> "*People are violent towards us because at church they say we are demons and what we are doing is demonic acts."* (A lesbian woman)

P9 explained,

> *"I remember this one time a person who sat next to me in church said "Homosexuals must be shifted to another planet, they do not deserve to live" and another time someone said how "filthy" homosexuality is. I decided to leave because straight after my baptism they assigned me to do a sermon on how bad homosexuality was, imagine being freshly baptised and forced to do this?"* (A lesbian woman)

P10 responded,

> "*I am a Zion, people in Zion church are very homophobic. When they preach about sexuality, they will say homosexuals are demonic. And they say if anyone in this Church is a homosexual, they must come to the front and get prayed for so that the demons can get out. People in the church believe that homosexuality is wrong and sinful and that's why they attack us. I am afraid."* (A gay man)

Participants felt that their church members were intolerant of homosexuality and most participants conveyed that they were "*demonised"* for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Religious texts and verses are often used as a reference to prohibit and demonise, thereby considering same-sex relations as immoral and blasphemous (Francis, 2023; Dreyer, 2008; Furr, 2014). Responses further allude to the queer theory whereby people absorb the standards created by the gender and sexuality discourses that are disseminated by social institutions (Valocchi, 2005). The findings suggest knowledge is obtained by people, from these preachings they receive and they use this when they come into contact with homosexual individuals. These conservative teachings condition people's beliefs and ways of thinking thereby promoting heteronormativity whilst ostracising and rebuking LGBT behaviours. This further exacerbates homophobia, thereby contributing to homophobic violence.

The negative sermons and narratives surrounding homosexuals is where perpetrators get the information that informs their decision to victimize LGBT individuals. Once they are outside of church, they used the information that they learnt from church to correct, punish and educate LGBT individuals through use of violence. Participants responses resonate with Msibi's (2011) argument that religion is often used as a condemnation of homosexuality; it serves to refute

and interrogate the virtue and presence of same-sex relations. This places the LGBT person at risk of victimisation from those who believe that homophobia is immoral and sinful. Religious people seek to manipulate the LGBT's person's attribute of homosexuality and seek to antagonise them. The findings also indicate participants feelings of exclusion and therefore chose to isolate themselves from the church, this correlates with the argument of Lease et al. (2005) that some faiths believe that the synthesis of sexual identity and religious values are contradictory, leaving the LGBT individual feeling forsaken, vulnerable and abandoned. These feelings of being deserted and rebuked based on faith further lead to target vulnerability because LGBT feel discarded.

Participants reflections on homophobic victimizations indicates that perpetrators of these victimizations are influenced by the heterosexual ideologies circulated through religion. The use of similar terms such as "*unholy"* and being associated with "*evil spirits"* signifies that perpetrators of homophobic victimizations are influenced through the conservative religious teachings that condemn homosexuality., Therefore, perpetrators of homophobic victimizations believe that heteronormativity is considered the rule and that model that should be adhered to. Any aberration from this is believed to abnormal and therefore the mutiny against heterosexuality.

Communities give people a sense of belonging and also guide how members within that community are supposed to behave. Homosexuality may be perceived as going against values and principles of the community. In line with Mushome and Mushwana's (2021) study, religious beliefs influence community members' perceptions of sexual minorities. For instance, in this study, participants living in conservative communities articulated that within their community, homosexuality was taboo. P10's experience of derogatory name calling and insulting remarks "*some of the guys in my neighbourhood will tell me that I am I am unholy"* provides evidence that perpetrators strong religious beliefs influence perpetrators to commit homophobic victimisation. Katz-Wise et al (2016) contends that families who are traditional in their values place strong emphasis on marriage and having children as well as those families who are religious are less likely to accept their children who are LGBT, P16's account for physical victimisation "*my dad started beating and shouting at me. He beat me up because he wanted to take out the demons"* she further explained, "*my dad forced me to have a relationship with a man"* echoes Kate-Wize et al's (2016) sentiments that homosexuality is not accepted in families have strong religious affiliations.

5.7 Theme 4 – The effects of homophobic victimisation on LGBT individuals

The harm and impacts caused by hate based on sexual orientation, differs from any other crimes. Lantz and Kim (2019) argue that the effects of the harm are three dimensional. Firstly, it has increased emotional and psychological impacts on the victims as opposed to other crimes. Secondly, the harm goes beyond the victim, thereby negatively affecting the larger community and those associated to the victim. Finally, it aims to create a threat of further violence against the community, group or persons to which the victim is affiliated (Lantz & Kim, 2019). Homophobia coupled with internalised homophobia can have undesirable psychological consequences on LGBT individuals (Richards, 2015). Victims of homophobic violations suffer adverse effects during and after the victimisation (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012; Herek, Cogan & Gillis, 2002). The findings show that participants experienced humiliation and shame, feelings of being unsafe, stress and anxiety, depression and suicide ideation as well as loss of confidence and self -questioning.

5.7.1 Humiliation and shame

Any form of victimisation may cause humiliation and shame thereby leading to psychological and emotional damage to one's well-being. Perpetrators of homophobic victimisation endeavour to demean, chasten, dehumanise and punish people whom they perceive as different (Haslam & Murphy, 2020). Participants in this study relayed how they felt humiliated, shame and insecure.

P17 recalled,

> "*they would loudly shout obscenities at me and there would be other people around and people will just start laughing. It was always so humiliating and embarrassing because, you know, you become like a joke to everyone around. For me, it was the laughing at me that got to me."* (A transgender)

P10 conveyed,

> "*When these guys used to see me on the street, they would just scream verbal abuse like* "*stabanie and nkonkoni*" *these words are painful man, even now I just want to cry when someone calls me that because it is degrading and embarrassing."* (A gay man)

P8 relayed

> "*It's uncomfortable when the boys say you're say you're just girl come here we will show you how a must treated. It is even more embarrassing when they ask me about how I do sex"* (A butch female)

P7 recalls how he was humiliated at school

> "*I would be walking past and these boys would throw papers at me. They used to take snails and smear it on my bag and my books, it was humiliating"*

The findings show the feeling of humiliation and shame participants experienced is due to the negative societal attitudes towards them which has left them feeling embarrassed and annihilated. P17 and P10's experience of being publicly mocked shows that the humiliation an embarrassment can be debilitating. The findings show perpetrators sought to overtly ridicule participants for instance P17 indicates that perpetrators would purposely direct attention at them through loudly shouting obscenities. P17 explanation "*you become like a joke to everyone"* further displays the shame they endure through being publicly ridiculed. P8's experience indicates that humiliation and shame is experienced through personal questions such as "*how I do sex"*. P10's expression of wanting "*to cry"* after he is called derogatory names exhibits devastating effects of verbal bullying. P7's experience of damage to his property indicates that perpetrators of homophobic victimisation ruthlessly endeavour to embarrass and shame their victim. Participants' accounts of humiliation and shame indicate that the homophobic victimisation they have experienced has had a psychological impact and has emotionally scarred them

5.7.2 Fear of homophobic victimisation

Communities provide their members with a perception of belonging; community members' behaviour is also guided through the collective. As noted, religion and culture play an integral part in how people's way of thinking is conditioned. Therefore, individuals whose behaviour contrasts from the communal norms are considered deviant, rendering them vulnerable targets for victimisation. Participants relayed their fears within their environments of being victimised.

P4 conveyed,

> "*I always feel that we are a target. I wake up every day feeling stressed about being a target. Stressed for my life because I feel that it is something I don't feel I have control of. Homophobic people are everywhere and this makes me feel paranoid to be honest."* (A gay male)

P2 stated

> *" When they say they going to catch me, that frightens me because they will catch me, rape me and kill me."* (A lesbian female)

P10 highlighted,

> "*I am scared to walk in my neighbourhood because of all the judgement. "(*A gay male)

P20 expressed being fearful

> "*I am scared of what might happen to me, I might get raped or hurt by this guy or even by other guys."* (A transgender)

P11 elucidated

> "*I am too scared to come out openly because even at res, the guy I share a room with, will always say horrible things about gays with his friends, I am not sure if they suspect something about me. But they always say they say if they come across a gay person they will beat that person up. Now you can understand why I am so scared to go outside of my room. If my roommate is speaking like this with his friends imagine what they will do to me."* (A gay male)

P1 responded,

> "*Every time I am walking on the street, I am afraid because boys bully us a lot, they say we take their girls. So sometimes walking on the street is very frightening. But we try to ignore all of that and we try to survive."* (A butch lesbian)

The fears that participants relayed within their community and neighbourhoods displays the immense anxiety and distress they experience on a daily basis. These deep-rooted fears which include paranoia, being terrified of violent attacks and being anxious about one's safety illustrates how the heteronormative narrative is so valued in our society. Heterosexuality is privileged and homosexuality is punished. The institutionalisation of heteronormative behaviour therefore marginalises individuals who do not adhere to these norms. As a result, and as indicated by participants, LGBT people who do not fit into the heteronormative mould are pathologized, undervalued, and viewed as abnormal This instils unnecessary fears of being

killed (P9; P2), beaten (P11), raped (P20; P2) bullied (P1) which amounts to added stress and causes pain for those who are homosexual.

Because people are conditioned through religion and culture in conservative communities, they uphold those values and therefore consider homosexuality as wrong. Participants' fears illuminate the grave terrors demonstrated in the problem statement of this study and further aligns with the same distress, such as being murdered, beaten or raped, shared by other LGBT in KwaZulu-Natal in a newspaper article written by Makhaye (2021). These fears are based on homophobic victimisation being directed at the LGBT community as a whole (Lance and Kim, 2019). As various authors and some of the participants in this study indicated, LGBT individuals know of other LGBT persons who have been brutally and torturously victimised for non-conformance to the heteronormative order (Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019; Mahapa, 2012; Sithole, 2015; Makhaye, 2021; Lavers, 2016). Therefore, LGBT individuals' fear and anxiety of homophobic victimisation are compounded.

5.7.3 Stress and anxiety

Participants reported that after they have experienced homophobic victimisation, some of them frequently suffer from elevated levels of stress and anxiety. The findings reveal that it is due to a variety of internal and environmental circumstances. These emotions, as expressed by participants, are widespread and have an effect on many aspects of their life. Stress and anxiety of not being understood also contributed to the negative consequences of homophobia.

P10 recounted that after being bullied in school he became emotional, anxious, and stressed:

> "*I would just go home and cry, sometimes I wouldn't want to go school even though I was in matric."* (A gay man)

P4 explains,

> "*It affects me mentally. Because I can be a strong powerhouse some days but then someone will call me names, that's when those emotions come, I just cannot control them, I just break down. I will go a week without sleeping, I won't see anyone, I don't feel like eating. I just isolate myself."* (A gay man)

P8's account of stress

> *"I get stressed and anxious when my girlfriend wants to show me affection in public. I just feel like we going to attacked again by these guys."* (A butch lesbian)

P9 relayed

> *"I feel anxious and I can't trust people especially guys, because I trusted these people and they wanted to prove that I was not a lesbian"* (A lesbian)

P3 described

> *"I feel stressed because, I wonder sometimes if I am normal or if mentally I am normal because I love both men and women. Because people don't understand how I feel, for them, it is not normal to wake up one day feeling like girl today and then tomorrow I feel like a boy. But I feel these things."* (A bisexual woman)

As noted in participants' accounts of stress and anxiety, it affects them in various ways and in different aspects of their lives (Mayeza, 2021; Mavhandu-Mudzusi, 2017). Participants relayed that the victimisation they experienced causes stress and anxiety of being further victimised. Past traumas are reignited and triggered for example P4's response demonstrates that he cannot forget about the victimisation and his anxiety and stress is triggered by someone else calling him derogatory names. P8's fear of public displays of affection shows the stress she endured when she terrorised by a male perpetrator for having a girlfriend. P9 feels she cannot trust people and P4's isolation from people are due their fears of being revictimized. The findings s demonstrates that the source of LGBT stress and anxiety is manifested from the homophobic victimisation they experienced, it also shows that these victimisations did have adverse effects on them. The fear of being revictimised or victimised causes mental and psychological and emotional distress.

5.7.4 Depression and suicidal ideation

Feelings of sadness of not being able to be oneself also featured in this study. The fear of being victimised for digressing from socially ascribed gender norms positioned participants in a depressive state because they felt socially unaccepted, unable to be their true authentic selves. Putting on a façade of heterosexuality based on fear of rejection and victimisation added to participants' unhappiness.

P13 expressed his feeling of depression and suicidal ideation.

> "*After the incident, I thought I should just commit suicide because I was so lonely and I hated life."* (A gay man)

P15 relayed,

> "*I don't want to lie, I tried to commit suicide after my father beat me and force into a heterosexual relationship with a man. I took pills because I didn't want to live. I ended up in hospital*." (A lesbian)

P5 articulated,

> "*At that time mentally after the attempted rape and the beatings, I was depressed, I had to go to therapy to heal myself. I had to go for healing those memories. So much has happened to me, that I don't feel anything anymore. I have just gone through it all. I just put it past me."* (A transgender)

P9 relayed,

> *"After the incident, I was so depressed and suicidal because I felt like I was living the wrong life.*" (A lesbian)

Participants' experiences of depression depict that the depression caused by the homophobic victimisation ultimately led to self-victimisation through either attempting or contemplating suicide. The findings revealed that the source of participants depression and suicide ideation also ranged from familial rejection and victimisation (VanBergen & Love, 2022), expressed through beatings, forced relationships and threats of corrective rape, to other experiences of external victimisation such bullying, physical attacks and sexual violations. Participants' reflections on depression and suicide ideation portray a triple tragedy for them because not only do they have to deal with the unjust and unfair circumstances and reminders of the homophobic victimisation they experienced, they also have to deal with the unwarranted and unfair infliction of depression that perpetrators have caused. They have to further deal with the mental trauma which led to their self- victimisation or suicide ideation.

5.7.5 Loss of self-confidence and self-questioning

The subtheme of loss of self-confidence and self-questioning arose when participants were asked how they felt about their experience of homophobic victimisation. Participants' responses ranged from hating themselves to questioning why they were this way.

P13 elucidated,

> "*It affected me mentally, and very negatively. I felt like I hated myself, I just didn't love myself anymore. I started to think maybe I am demonic as my family said and maybe these guys who attacked me are right, maybe I deserved it. I felt like I wasn't enough. I lost my self-confidence, I was completely damaged It makes me question myself and who I am. It made me question myself and God."* (A gay man)

P14 who experienced verbal abuse and name calling relayed

> "*I feel really bad. It makes me question myself and who I am. God has made me like this, but I still question God, why me?"* (A gay man)

P10 recounted after he experienced physical assault and derogatory name calling explains,

> "*I lost my self-esteem, sometimes I can't even go to the shop because my self-esteem is lost."* (A gay man)

P9 who was sexually violated expressed

> "*I blamed myself for what happened because I shouldn't be like this (*a homosexual) *and if I was not like this then that guy wouldn't have touched sexually"* (A lesbian woman)

The findings reveal that participants' experiences of homophobic victimisation have led to them lose their confidence through the humiliation, shame, annihilation and embarrassment they endured from perpetrators. They are left questioning themselves. Dillon (2001) argues that victims of homophobic assaults often blamed themselves for the incident for instance P9 and P13 both blamed themselves for the homophobic victimisation the endured. These are signs of unjust and unfair self-blame. Blais, Gervais and Hébert (2014) argue that homophobic bullying impacts LGBT victims' self-esteem thereby causing a loss self-confidence. Verbal, sexual and psychological bullying impacts the LGBT victim's self-confidence negatively (Blais et al, 2014). The findings in this study demonstrate that participants experienced decreased levels or loss of self-esteem and self-confidence after their incidents of homophobic victimization. Participants' accounts in this subtheme demonstrate the damaging effects that the enforcement of the heteronormative order has on the LGBT individual, through homophobic victimisation.

This subtheme reveals that the enforcement of socially ascribed heterosexual norms unnecessarily and unfairly causes those who do not conform, immense emotional, mental and psychological trauma. The self-blame reflected in this theme demonstrates how homophobic victimisation is so unwarranted, incapacitating and debilitating.

5.8 Theme 5 – How LGBT avoid victimisation

Prevention measures to social issues or crime related issues are often external however with homophobic victimisation, victimisation is based on the LGBT individual's sexual orientation, gender identity and behaviour thereby suggesting that the prevention measure is internal, hence they develop their own ways to avoid victimisation. Additionally, LGBT victims experience severe, damaging consequences of homophobic victimisation; this not only has negative impacts on the LGBT individual but also on other minority sexual groups and individuals. This is due to their shared characteristics and unalterable traits (Lantz & Kim, 2019). These shared characteristics are seen as a threat to the heterosexual order, thereby making LGBT individuals targets for victimisation. The victimisation and the effects thereof instil fear and panic within the LGBT community as a whole (Nel, Venter & Stratford, 2022; Lantz & Kim, 2019). People who are homosexual have an increased risk of becoming a victim of hate and therefore take precautionary measures to avoid victimisation; this includes altering their behaviour, staying in the closet, and concealing their true sexual orientation and identities (Dick, 2009).

The findings revealed that fear being further victimised and relayed how participants avoid victimisation. This included adapting and adopting to heteronormative appropriate behaviour when they are in social settings. The subthemes that arose from how participants navigate their everyday life to avoid victimisation included risk assessments, the adaptation of their gender performance, avoidance of heterosexual spaces and coping mechanisms. The subthemes discussed in section are in line with the study carried out by Ngidi et al. (2020) on queer men and trans women in South Africa and Namibia which notes that in order to not make their non-conforming gender identities visible, queer participants had to adjust their gender performance such as acting straight and adapting their dress code to heteronormative appropriate ways.

5.8.1 Risk assessments and adaptation of gender performance

Participants reflected that depending on the setting they were in, they were likely to alter their gender performance in order not to divulge their sexual orientation. Most said that they take cognisance of the surroundings and base their gender performance on this accordingly. The general view of participants in this study was that it depended on the social settings and who

was in these settings that made them conscious of how they were to act. They felt that they had act in an appropriate heterosexual manner in order to fit in and to avoid being victimised.

P9 said

> "*I have been doing it for so long that I am so used of it, I will first observe the surroundings around me, I will check if it is safe for me to be myself or whether I have to act more feminine." (*A lesbian woman)

P4 described

> "*I always have to put my sexuality on the side. I have to act straight especially around my extended family because they don't know. Because, like, being black and gay, that's like double homicide. Because you have those Zulu uncles who are too strict and they will beat you up for being gay."* (A gay man)

P10 explained

> "*I act straight especially at res, because I live in a three-sleeper unit and all of my roommates are straight, so when I am with them, I act straighter, like talking about girls and stuff because I can see that are very homophobic."* (A gay man)

P18 expressed

> "*In certain instances where there was a figure or figures of authority, such as when I was in school it was with the teachers or with the principal, I had no option but to conform to a feminine gender role in that space."* (A transgender)

P12 stated

> "*I have to act straight, but it depends on who I am around and depending where I am."* (A bisexual woman)

P11 articulated

> "*I have to act straight. I hate acting straight it makes me feel like I am just acting and I don't feel myself. But I have to do what I have to do to avoid being attacked."* (A gay man)

Butler (2002) argues that gender is fluid and not fixed, participants suggest the fluidity of gender because they reported that they had to adapt their gender performance and "*act straight"* to avoid being recognised as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans for instance P4 has effeminate traits

however as he explained "*I always have to put my sexuality on the side. I have to act straight"* meaning that he has to act masculine to avoid being beaten up his extended family who revere cultural gender roles. The findings revealed, depending on the setting, that they had to hide their true identities for instance P10 explains "*I have to act more straight"* in fear of his homophobic roommates. Participants' responses, on carrying out a risk assessment to see if there are no homophobic people around and acting straight based on who was around, demonstrate that heteronormativity is privileged. Heterosexuals are free to be their authentic selves without the risk of being victimised based on their sexual orientation. However, non-conforming individuals have the exhausting task of scouting their surroundings for any potential threat of homophobic victimisation. The findings further demonstrate Butler's (2002) argument that gender is enacted and only exists if it is performed therefore participants "*act"* their gender to heteronormative appropriate ways to avoid being attacked and to enjoy the safety benefits attached to heterosexual behaviour.

5.8.2 Adaptation of gender expression

Dress codes are one the many gender expressions that link gender to appropriate forms of dress. It is one of the indicators that is being used as the source for the inference of gender, thereby qualifying appropriate interaction with others. The existence of these stereotypical forms of dress code can be both a blessing and a curse (Adomaitis, Saiki, Johnson, Sahanoor & Attique, 2024). This is because, on the one hand, it is used as a gender signifier, and on the other, if traditional and conventional dress codes are broken, it is seen as violation of heteronormativity (Adomaitis et al., 2024).

The findings revealed in 5.5.3 on gender identity, participants indicated that their dress codes make them vulnerable to victimisation. Hence, in order to make them less vulnerable, they now have to adapt their dress code to suit the heteronormative order. While some participants expressed that they dress and behave in a way they deem fit, some participants reported altering their gender expression in fear of judgement (P12) or because they are afraid of their safety (P15) therefore in order "*to fit in*" and not be victimised, participants shared:

P15 mentioned,

> "*Sometimes I feel like dressing like a boy but because I am scared I will just dress like a girl and act straight especially when I go church."* (A lesbian)

P12 echoed the same sentiments,

> "*I also have to change my dressing, even though some days I feel like dressing like a boy, I have to think about who is around and how they going to judge me."* (A bisexual woman)

P8 stated,

> "*As you can see I look like and behave like a boy, so I want to build up more muscle so that I can look more like a boy and be more masculine and then no-one will know I am girl."* (A lesbian)

Participants' reflections on changing their gender expression in order to "*fit in*" and to avid victimisation show that stereotypical dress codes convey and enforce the heteronormative narrative based on how we express ourselves through our clothes and our body image. Participants' accounts of gender expression align with Adomaitis et al.'s (2024) study, indicating that if suitable attire, based on one's biological sex, is not adhered to, it is considered the contravention of heteronormativity. As participants confirmed, this contravention leads to homophobic victimisation.

5.8.3 Avoidance of heterosexual spaces

Some participants felt that if they avoided heterosexual spaces they would feel safer and not endure homophobic victimisation or any undue judgment. There were a variety of reasons that participants reported avoiding heterosexual spaces. While some were based on fear of victimisation, participants also reported safety concerns, some alluded to the lack of understanding from heterosexuals and others reported self-protection. For example:

P13 said

> "*I have mostly homosexuals as my friends. I feel safer at home with them"* (A gay man)

P20 explained

> "*I hate being in places where there are heterosexuals, especially heterosexual males, I try to avoid these places as much as possible. I even changed the place where I cut my hair because there are too many manly men there and they say nasty things to me."* (A transgender)

P8 stated

> "*I rather stay at home most of the time because I know how straight people can talk and I know the horrible things they say."* (A lesbian woman)

P7 expressed

> "*I sometimes feel it's better to not to go out especially where there are straight people or to just be alone because I don't have to listen to people calling me names or judging me."* (A gay man)

Participants relayed different reasons for avoiding heterosexual spaces. The above responses reveal avoidance of the heterosexual is related to past experiences of victimisation within these spaces; some found that they received negative reactions from heterosexuals within these spaces and others were concerned for their personal and emotional safety. Participants' responses also showed that their avoidance of heterosexual spaces was due to ignorance about and the misunderstanding of homosexuality while some chose self-preservation of their emotional and mental well-being. Although the reasons for avoidance of heterosexual spaces might differ, ultimately participants chose to safeguard themselves from further victimisation.

5.8.4 Coping mechanisms adopted by participants

In this study, after participants were asked how they navigate their lives to avoid victimisation, the researcher found it interesting that participants also volunteered information that indicated how they incorporated coping strategies and mechanisms to navigate their everyday lives to avoid victimisation. Participants imparted the coping mechanisms they utilise in order to deal with the trauma of the victimisation they have experienced. Hence the researcher found it apt to incorporate these into this study. Nadal, Wong, Issa, Meterko, Leon and Wideman (2011) (2011), centred on gays, lesbian and bisexuals, enlisted the various behavioural coping strategies which include passive, confrontational and protective coping that were reported by participants; likewise, participants in this study revealed a variety of coping mechanisms.

5.8.4.1 Passive coping

The passive coping mechanisms, according to Nadal et al. (2011), included avoidance – denial and minimisation – as a coping strategy; this refers to downplaying the connotations of the microaggression. Similarly, in this study, some participants actively chose to ignore discriminatory and derogatory remarks and comments.

P20 stated,

"*Even though it hurts me so much, I just have to ignore those comments otherwise it will disturb my peace."* (A transgender)

P17 mentioned

"*People are going to talk no matter what, so you just have thick skin and walkaway."* (A transgender)

P15 revealed,

"*I could not cope with pressure of being beaten by my father and almost raped by my uncle, but after talking to my friends I accepted that my dad will never accept me. I just have to accept what happened to me and move on. And now I feel better."* (A lesbian)

Participants' indicate that, despite being hurt, choosing to ignore incidents of discrimination as a coping mechanism, helps them ignore and overlook the emotional distress that these derogatory remarks and actions inflict upon them. This coping mechanism is used to safeguard their mental state of mind.

5.8.4.2 Confrontational coping

In stark contrast, some participants reported that they confront people who make homophobic or derogatory statements towards them.

P1 said

"*I don't care what people think, when I walk on the road and when someone calls me names or says something homophobic about me, I confront them, I am just straight forward, I just tell people to mind their own business."* (A lesbian)

P4 mentioned

"*When people call me names or say something about my sexual orientation, if it is safe, I will try educate that person about the LGBT community."* (A gay man)

P17 expressed

"*No shame, if anyone talks about me or victimises me, shame, I walk up to them and ask them, and then I will tell them where to get off, I don't stand for nonsense."* (A transgender)

The employment of direct confrontation, as a coping mechanism, indicates a direct contrast of passive coping; participants were able to actively challenge their perpetrators of discrimination. This allowed them to confront and address incidents of prejudice and discrimination and assert who they are. However, this can prove dangerous and further lead to victimisation or even violence being committed against them. P4 acknowledges the dangers of homophobic people therefore mentions "*if it is safe"*. P1 and P17 have only experienced verbal bullying and therefore might not recognize the potential danger that confrontational coping can have.

5.8.4.3 Protective coping

Protective coping, in this study, referred to limiting risks such as limiting the intake of alcohol, avoiding public displays of affections, seeking support, avoiding dangerous areas and engaging in self-care.

P8 elucidated

> "*I don't go out at night because I am afraid that if I go out I might drink too much, someone might attack me. I always limit myself in everything I do, that way I don't have to deal with what can happen"* and further explains "*If we want to have fun, I take my girlfriend home and we have fun at home because people don't like this. We don't even hold hands in public."* (A lesbian)

P10 expressed

> "*I try to cope and if I do have to speak about how these things affect me, I only talk to my gay friends about it. But I feel to protect myself, I rather keep to myself and not talk to anyone, like sometimes I will not talk to anyone, no one for like maybe five days. I just stay in my room and avoid everybody."* (A gay man)

P9 relayed that she

> "*avoids areas that are dangerous*" and emphasised that "*I also pray a lot and I do affirmations, watching you tube videos on how to protect my mind also helps me cope.*"

Participants' expressions of protective coping demonstrate that they limit their risk through staying indoors, not showing public displays of affection and limiting alcohol intake, because it helps them manage the stress of being victimised. They felt the less they put themselves out

there, the less anguish and suffering they have to deal with. Seeking and maintaining support networks, such as friends, helps them validate their LGBT identities. Self-care through prayer and affirmations indicates a beneficial coping technique which helps with relaxation, managing stress and maintaining a healthy mind.

5.8.4.4 Empowerment and resiliency

Many participants reported that despite experiencing homophobic incidents, they felt stronger, and some described how they learnt to be resilient. Some participants expressed that the homophobic victimisation they experienced empowered them to be more resilient. Participants who were openly gay expressed a feeling of liberation and freedom. For instance:

P9 shared that after victimisation she experienced,

> "*After I was kicked in the face by my team mate and touched sexually by those other guys, I started going to the gym so I can build muscle and look more masculine. As you can see its working".* (A butch female)

P15 mentioned

> "*My experiences taught me so much, the beating from my father and my uncle wanting to rape me taught me that I have rights, now no-one can advantage of me now. Being forced have a straight relationship made me become a mother, I was able to have my child who is my world now."* (A lesbian woman)

P13 excitedly relayed,

> "*Because like I experienced much, like the beatings from those guys and all the bullying, I am currently writing a book telling my story of being gay African man, and I also empower other gay men, I am the founder of a very new gay men's support group. I started this now because I have been there and I know what it is like."*

The above responses from participants show that for LGBT people, empowerment and resilience are essential ideas, especially after becoming victims. These attributes enable people to flourish in the face of hardship in addition to helping them recover from unpleasant experiences. P9's experience of resiliency of wanting to "*build more muscle"* shows her determination to change her appearance to look more masculine thereby frightening off her potential perpetrators whilst also externally exuding how she feels internally. P15's experience

has educated her about her rights as a lesbian person and therefore will not allow any further victimisations perpetrated against go unreported. P15's further beamed with joy as she expressed that through her negative ordeal she became a proud mother. P13's experience empowered him to provide support to other male victims as well as educate others about the struggles of being a gay African man.

Participants reflected their appreciation of Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network in Pietermaritzburg and expressed that through joining the network they felt less isolated because they were exposed to people who shared the same experiences and struggles themselves. This allowed them to be more empowered to embrace their authentic selves. For instance:

P12 chuckled as she mentioned,

> "*Before I came to Uthingo, I used to always think that I was abnormal, I didn't know that they were others were going through the same homophobic issues like me. And when I came here, I was like wait! What? I am not crazy, this is a real problem and that others are also experiencing, I am feeling just like them!"*

P8 shared

> "*We didn't know that we had rights, lucky through the workshops at Uthingo, we understand things better about ourselves and our rights"*

Through attending the workshops and services offered at this organisation, they felt less vulnerable because they were informed of their rights. Participants expressed that felt empowered because Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network offered them the support of therapy and counselling as well as created a safe space for them to enjoy social events and social groups.

5.9 Theme 6 – Perceptions of reporting victimisation to the police

In South Africa, hate-crimes against sexual minority groups are not classified by police, which makes it difficult to establish frequency of occurrences (Nath, 2011). However, research has suggested that reservations about antagonistic behaviour from police and the paucity of compassion were the major reasons for LGBT individuals not reporting the victimisation to the police. The fear of being re-victimised and ridiculed by police was a discerning factor which deterred LGBT individuals from seeking police assistance or protection (Wells & Polders, 2006; Mahapa, 2012; Müller & Meer; 2018; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019). While the lack of trust in police and non-investigation of cases dissuaded LGBT participants from reporting

victimisations to the police (Mkhize & Sibanyoni; 2019; Mahapa, 2012), fear of their sexual orientation being exposed, embarrassment of the incident, and their safety from perpetrators being comprimised also added to the distress of non-reporting of victimisation to the police (Nath, 2011; Müller & Meer; 2018).

Perceptions of reporting victimisation to the police were conflicted in this study; while some participants found that the occurrences of victimisation they endured did not warrant police intervention, the participants who felt that they could have reported chose not to report it. For instance:

> P15, who experienced injustices such as being physically beaten by her father, forced into a heterosexual relationship as well as attempted corrective rape, did not report her case to the police in fear of her perpetrators and family pressure. When the researcher posed the question, "*Did you report any of these victimisations to police?*"
>
> P15 exclaimed
>
> > "*No! No one in my family allowed me to go to the police, so I just thought to make my parents I will just leave it like that and besides I was so scared that my father will beat me up again and not support me"* P15 further added "*Now I know my rights, and if somebody harms me, I will report it because I want that person to get caught and not do that to another person."* (A lesbian women)

Muller and Meer (2018) note that sexual violence survivors do not report victimisations to the police victims in fear of safety being compromised by perpetrators as well as the fear of the lack of familial support. As indicated by P15, we can note that she was afraid of family retaliation and reprieve from her family. If her case was reported to the police, whether it was reporting her dad for physically attacking her and then forcing her into a heterosexual relationship, or whether she was reporting her uncle for attempted corrective rape, she was afraid that there may have been a rise in abuse or revenge when she got back home. If her dad was reported and/or arrested, that would have meant she would have lost her emotional and financial support. Therefore, her non-reporting to the police suggests that her support networks would have been compromised if she reported the abuse. However, her lack of knowledge of her rights at the time must also be acknowledged.

5.9.1 Poor police experiences

Some participants expressed that they choose not to report to their victimisation or any further victimisations to the police based on the poor service they received from the police. Participant deterrence from reporting to police ranged from the disappointing previous experiences with police service, to the lack of trust and faith in the South African police.

P5 abhorrently expressed her disappointment in the South African police:

> "*I will never trust them! For me they did not do anything for me*" as she recounted her experience of attempted and rape and physical assault. "*After the beating, at the time we went to police station, they made fun of us. Me and friend, she is a lesbian. They were asking, what gender are we? We need to show them what genitals we have. If I am reporting that I was beaten up and almost raped, the police are busy asking me what gender I am. What does my gender and my genitals have to do with the case I am reporting? They were asking my gender, yet they were not even writing statement. They even asked loudly at the front desk about my gender, where everyone can hear. It was embarrassing."* (A transgender)

P4 explained his distrust in police as he explained an incident which he stated was not a homophobic attack but rather an unfortunate incident which had occurred:

> "*There is nothing that I will report to the police because I almost feel like the police don't get me in a way. That's how I feel. Because like there was this one time, I had a gun pointed to my face and I went to police station, it was like 2 am, I was traumatised and they just said to me come tomorrow in the morning. I am like everything just happened, right now, and they were like, if you are not injured, go home come back tomorrow. From then I stopped relying on the police. Lucky, my brothers came and took me home. I literally wasted my time going to the police station. As a gay man imagine if I went to police station and say I was raped, they will just say, I got what I what I deserve or they will mock me. So as much as I hope the criminal justice would change, but right now it's not something I would rely on at the moment*." (A gay man)

P9 conveyed her experience of the police:

> "*I don't feel protected by the police in South Africa. I know a lot of people who have experienced homophobic attacks and they were not helped by the police.*

Like especially when my friend who lesbian was raped and killed by these guys. They hid her body behind the bush, everyone knew they did it but there was no follow-up, the police did nothing except take statements."

Mkhize and Sibanyoni (2018) contend that homophobic victimisation is often not reported to police due to LGBT individual's perception that police do not take their cases seriously hence their lack trust in the South African Police Services. The findings in this study further provides evidence that participants have a lack of trust in the police. P5 and P4's poor experience of police service shows that the South African Police lack sensitivity and understanding when dealing with sensitive cases. P5's case blatantly exposes the secondary victimisation she experienced from the police. Her case is indicative that she experienced further trauma whilst reporting her case of attempted rape and assault to the police. Noting from the poor insensitive service P5 received at the police station, the officers who dealt with her case showed no empathy but instead left her feeling embarrassed and humiliated. P4's experience displayed that although he experienced trauma during his unfortunate incident, the lack compassion and responsiveness from the police was evident.

5.9.2 Fears of being misunderstood by police

In this study, participants reported their scepticism about reporting any victimisation to the police because some feared being misunderstood, and being embarrassed, thereby leading to them being re-victimised by the police, as reported in other studies (Wells & Polders, 2006; Mahapa, 2012, Müller & Meer; 2018; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019). For example:

P12 expressed,

"*For me I wouldn't report a case because at some police stations, because some of them have their own religious and cultural beliefs about homosexuality. So, imagine, if you say you are gay or bisexual, they will not take it seriously because of what they believe in, I am not going to report because they will laugh at me."* (A bisexual woman)

P8 was asked by the researcher, why she did not report her physical attack to the police,

"*I was afraid they were going to ask too many questions, I was too scared of them judging me."* (A lesbian)

P20 reported,

> "*Imagine going and telling the police I am a transgender, or I am trapped in the wrong body and I was victimised because of that, they will just laugh."* (A transgender)

Mahapa (2012) found that LGBT did not report victimisation to police because they were uncomfortable due to the lack of empathy from police and re-victimisation by police. The findings in this study shows that participants' fears of not reporting included the police not understanding their sexual orientation and the challenges they face as mentioned in P20's account of non-reporting to the police. Fears of being mocked and judged also served as a deterrent for not reporting victimisation to the police. P8's account alluded to her fears of re-victimisation of reporting her homophobic attack to the police. P12's account of non-reporting illuminates that negative religious and cultural beliefs regarding homosexuality might culminate in her case not being taken seriously.

5.9.3 The right to be protected by police

In contrast to the responses of mistrust and studies carried out regarding the non-reporting of hate crime against LGBT individuals (Wells and Polders, 2006; Mahapa, 2012; Müller & Meer, 2018; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019; Nath, 2011), some participants in this study believed it was their right to be protected by police. Participants felt that if an injustice was committed against them, they will report it to the police.

On the contrary, some participants felt that reporting their victimisation will bring justice to them and believed it was their right to be protected. For example:

P7 applauded the South African government saying,

> "*The government made a good call to protect us, because we are also citizens of this country, I will report if I anything serious happened to me because it is my right. Nowadays they take our cases seriously, for example at my college if homophobic cases are reported to management or the councillors, they take seriously and if it is serious enough they call the police*."

P1 relayed her right to be protected,

> "*My view is that the law should play its role. They should understand that no one choses to be this way, but it's something they were born like this. Yes, I will*

report it to the police but if the law doesn't play its role, I will take it by own hands." (A lesbian)

P2 reported that she will report a case of victimisation if it warrants the seriousness

"*If something major happened to me, I will go the police, even though I don't have confidence in them. I feel they will take it very lightly, because some of them, the police, some of them, they don't accept us. They are human too, some of them do and some don't. But is it their duty to protect us and I have the right to be protected."* (A lesbian)

P3 explained that despite her doubts of her case being taken seriously, she will still go to the police because it her right to be protected by the law.

"*Yes, even though they won't take me seriously, I will report it. If they don't take me seriously I will open the same case at every police station in Pietermaritzburg until they take me seriously, it is my right."* (A bisexual women)

Participants reported their need to be protected by the police. They described it as their right. The above participants felt that although it was their right to be protected, they relayed their doubt and their lack of trust that their cases will be taken seriously. P1 explained that if her case is not taken seriously she will "*take the law into her own hands".* This means opting to seek justice independently through confronting her perpetrator directly, which she reportedly admits to doing under the subtheme of confrontational coping mechanisms. This can prove dangerous because it can lead to violent encounters.

5.10 Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter presented the main findings relating to the six objectives of this study. The findings in this study suggests that LGBT individuals face grave homophobic prejudice and victimisation due to the dominant heteronormative narrative that emerges through socially ascribed gender norms. Whilst the sample size was small, participants echoed the same sentiments of many in the LGBT community in Pietermaritzburg. The findings prove a viscous circle produced by standardised socially ascribed gender norms which are endorsed and promoted through various socio-cultural institutions. This normalisation and promotion of heteronormative and heterosexual norms is not inclusive, thereby encouraging an "otherness" towards LGBT individuals. The otherness incites homophobia which leads to victimisation,

and victimisation generates vulnerability of the LGBT individual and community. The conclusion of the study was supported through the integration of the two theoretical frameworks and those of other related studies.

The two theoretical frameworks which guided the analysis of data and the presentation of findings in this study were the queer theory and the target congruence theory. The solicitation of the queer theory the researcher to argue that gender should not be assumed as being binary. It also sought to disturb standardised comprehensions about gender, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation through discussion on the existence of other genders. The queer theory further allowed the researcher show how the dominant standardised heteronormative order inflicts homophobic victimisation on LGBT individuals. The application of the target congruence theory showed how LGBT individuals, through the perceived notion of non-conformity to the heterosexual norm, became vulnerable targets to homophobic victimisation. The target congruence theory showed that perpetrators of homophobic victimisation sought to manipulate the attribute of homosexuality that LGBT people possess, to gratify their need to uphold and maintain the socially constructed heteronormative order. It further provided evidence that due to the deeply ingrained endorsement of heterosexuality, through social and cultural institutions, homosexuality rouses anger and aggression, thereby causing homophobic victimisation.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The study was carried out based on the problem statement, which revealed that many LGBT individuals have suffered injuries physically, psychologically and emotionally at the hands of homophobic people due to gender prejudice. Recent media reports have shown that many LGBT individuals have been killed or brutally injured as a result of homophobic attacks (Makhanya, 2021; De Barros; 2022; Mkentane, 2022; Mbhele 2022; Brodie, 2019). The primary reason for the homophobic attacks was the victim's sexual orientation. Therefore, this study was conducted with the intention of understanding the homophobic experiences of sexual prejudice and victimisation which emerge from socially ascribed gender norms. The study focussed on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals living in Pietermaritzburg. This chapter provides the overarching conclusions of the study as well as some recommendations.

The objectives and research questions of this study were achieved through the qualitative research method. This method was employed, based on the fact little attention has been given to the homophobic experiences of gays, lesbian, bisexuals and transgenders in Pietermaritzburg. Traceable studies focussed largely on metropolitan areas such as Gauteng, Durban and Cape Town, the few studies conducted in Pietermaritzburg focus on tertiary and school settings, while some studies focussed on lesbian experiences only and others on gay men's experiences only (Mampane, 2020; Gyamerah et al., 2019; Nath, 2011; Mulaudzi, 2018; Sithole, 2015; Mahapa, 2012; Müller & Meer; 2018; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019; Nel & Judge, 2008). Other national and international studies focus on quantifying homophobic experiences within the LGBT community rather than listening to the sentiments of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders through documenting their different experiences of homophobic victimisation Lyonga, 2021; Smith, 2011; Kite & Bryant-Lees, 2016; Mahomed & Trangoš, 2016; Mavhandu-Mudzusi & Netshandama, 2013. Therefore, this study utilised in-depth interviews to collect the data. The use of this data collection method provided participants a platform to share their experience of homophobic victimisation. Participants of the study were selected through the Uthingo Gay and Lesbian Network in Pietermaritzburg. A relatively small sample was selected which comprised twenty (20) participants that included: five (5) gay men, five (5) lesbian women, five (5) bisexuals and five (5) transgenders. Interviews were conducted in

English and were later transcribed by the researcher. The findings explicitly demonstrated the homophobic victimisation endure by participants.

The present study was directed by two theoretical frameworks, namely the queer theory and the target congruence theory, in the analysis and presentation of data. Through the application of queer criminology, the researcher was able to challenge the notion that gender is binary by drawing on queer theory. By discussing the existence of different genders, it also aimed to challenge conventional understandings of gender, sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The researcher was also able to demonstrate how LGBT people are victimised by homophobic people as a result of the mainstream, standardised heteronormative order by utilising queer theory and the heteronormative idea. The target congruence theory's application showed how LGBT people, through the notion of non-conformity to the heterosexual norm, became vulnerable targets to homophobic victimisation. According to the target congruence theory, those who victimise LGBT individuals based on their sexual orientation attempt to use their identity as homosexuals to satisfy the perpetrators need to preserve the socially created heteronormative order. It also showed that homosexuality incites hostility and violence, which leads to homophobic victimisation, because heterosexuality is profoundly endorsed by social and cultural institutions.

The researcher attempted to obtain the perspectives of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals based on their experiences and perspectives on homophobic victimisation. In order to achieve the aim of this study, five objectives were formulated. These five objectives were supported by five research questions which underpinned the data collection efforts. Below is a list of the five research questions and an account of the findings which attempted to answer these research questions.

(a) What are the types of victimisation that LGBT individuals experience?

This research question was answered through major theme one. It provided evidence that those who are perceived as not adhering to normative gender standards are viewed as the "other" due to the deeply ingrained socio-cultural and political processes that perpetuate the sexual stigma (Judge & Nel, 2008). The findings in this theme revealed that LGBT individuals' safety is compromised by the institutional and personal normalisation of heterosexuality, which makes them more vulnerable to victimisation (Katz-Wise & Hyde, 2012). These types of homophobic victimisation entailed bullying, which included physical attacks such as physical assaults and beatings, psychological victimisation such as derogatory name calling such as "stabanie",

"sifibe", "twin plug" and "nkonkoni", social and relational victimisation such as the spread of malicious rumours and defaming the LGBT individual (UNESCO, 2016). Another type of victimisation that the findings presented was sexual violence which included sexual harassments, sexual intimidations and attempted corrective rape.

(b) What are the characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic victimisation?

The standardised comprehensions about gender, gender roles and sexual orientation are socially constructed and it was important to note that there are genders and sexual practices that exist outside heterosexuality (Wozolek, 2019; Butler 2002). In this study, participants alluded to the dominant narrative surrounding heteronormativity and heterosexuality and the non- acceptance of their same-sex attraction. They relayed how the dominance of heteronormativity imposes gender identity conformation and gender role expectations based on biological sex (Halpern & Perry-Jenkins, 2016). They expressed that if these societal gender roles were not imitated or were digressed from, their behaviour was considered to be deviant. The non-conformity to heteronormativity placed added pressure on LGBT individuals because it led them to become vulnerable victims to homophobic victimisation (Gordon & Meyer, 2007; Horn & Nucci, 2006; Horn, 2007).

(c) What are the factors that contribute to homophobic victimization?

The findings suggest that homophobia is an institutional and personal discriminatory prejudice against gays and lesbians (Herek, 1988). The findings suggest that attitudes surrounding sexuality and sexual orientation attitudes are learned and culturally constructed. This research question was supported by theme three which provided evidence of the dominance of the heteronormative narrative. It reflected that heteronormativity is so deeply engrained in social structures (Robinson, 2016). The normalising of heterosexuality as the norm is circulated, supported and reinforced through social institutions such as culture and religion. .

The regularisation and normalisation of heterosexuality influence perpetrators negative reactions to homosexuality (Albertyn, 2009; Minkov, Blagoev, & Hofstede, 2013; Msibi, 2012 Bhana 2014, Francis 2017; Mayeza 2021). The reflection by participants in this study indicated that perpetrators seek to vicitimise them based on the entrenched perception that homosexuality is considered immoral, sinful and taboo (Butler & Astbury, 2005; Msibi, 2012), which ultimately created a sexual stigma towards them. The participants' reflections of the factors that contribute to homophobic victimisation validates how sexual stigma can be

disseminated through social institutions and creates the view that digressions from heteronormativity is seen as a nonconformity and a deviance (Blondeel et al., 2018) and therefore should be punished. This theme showed that perpetrators of homophobic actions are influenced by religion, religious scriptures and passages are frequently invoked to forbid and demonize same-sex relationships, viewing them as sinful and sacrilegious (Francis, 2023; Dreyer, 2008; Furr, 2014). The findings suggest that people gain knowledge from the sermons they attend, and they apply this knowledge to their interactions with homosexuals. These conservative teachings condemn LGBT behaviours while conditioning people's views and ways of thinking in favour of heteronormativity and the immorality of homosexuality. Swallow and Wang's (2020) argue that culture structures people's beliefs and behaviour, the findings demonstrate that participants experience of culture show that culture endorses rigid binary gender roles, based birth sex. Therefore, other sexualities are considered taboo and should be corrected through violence and victimisations.

(d) What are the effects of homophobic victimisation on the LGBT individual?

It was noted that perpetrators of homophobic victimisation sought to annihilate, demean, dehumanise and degrade LGBT participants. Therefore, such homophobic victimisation had adverse and severe impacts on LGBT participants. These impacts indicated LGBT individuals suffered humiliation, shame and fear for their safety. It invoked feelings of anxiety and stress which led to depression which further incited self-victimisation through participants either attempting or contemplating suicide. The impacts of homophobic victimisation also revealed LGBT participants' loss of confidence and their self-questioning, thereby causing self-blame for the victimisation.

(e) How do LGBT individual's, navigate their identity to avoid victimisations?

Participants alluded to being cognisant of homophobic victimisations experienced by others who are gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. Their homophobic experiences together with their cognisance and knowledge of the some of the brutal homophobic victimisations that others within the LGBT community have experienced, concurs with Lantz and Kim's (2019) study that homophobic victimisation is three-dimensional, meaning

- that emotional and psychological impacts are far greater than that of other crimes;
- the homophobic victimisation has negative effects on the larger LGBT community
- and the victimisation serves as a threat.

This creates anxiety and stress, leaving LGBT individuals as vulnerable targets for victimisation thereby initiating preventive measures to avoid being victimised (Nel, Venter & Stratford, 2022; Lantz & Kim, 2019; Dick 2009).

Participants in this study revealed that they fear being further victimised and relayed how they avoid victimisations, which included conducting a risk assessment of the environment they are in and adapting and adopting heteronormative appropriate behaviour within these social settings. The subthemes that arose from how participants navigate their everyday life to avoid victimisation included the adaptation of gender of their gender performance and gender expression: altering their behaviour, staying in the closet, concealing their true sexual orientation and identities (Dick, 2009). The need to adopt various coping mechanisms spoke volumes of the added stress that these perpetrators or future perpetrators incur on the participants. While these coping mechanisms can be understood as therapeutic for the LGBT individuals in the short term, these coping mechanisms have damaging long term effects. For example, the passive coping mechanism, which participants reported as ignoring derogatory comments and remarks, this possibly leads to further psychological distress. Confrontational coping meant that participants confronted the offender about the abuse; this can place the LGBT individual in a dangerous and risky position. Protective coping included limiting risks through avoiding unsafe areas, self-care and the formation and maintenance of support networks to help cope with the stress; this coping mechanism begs the question, why should so much stress and anxiety be placed LGBT individuals?

(f) How LGBT individuals feels about reporting the victimisation to police?

Mkhize and Sibanyoni (2019) argue that while LGBT individuals become targets for hate speech, in South Africa these types of crimes are uncategorised therefore non-chargeable, hence it goes unpunished. As noted in this study, the LGBT victims fear re-victimisation or being ridiculed, hence most crimes perpetrated against them are unreported (Nath, 2011; Wells & Polders, 2006; Mahapa, 2012, Müller & Meer; 2018; Mkhize & Sibanyoni, 2019).

In terms of police perceptions in this study, participants had conflicting views in terms of reporting victimisation to the police. Some felt that their poor police service experience served as a deterrent from them reporting victimisation to the police. The findings show that LGBT individuals who did receive poor police service were re-victimised, humiliated and trivialised. Other participants accounted for their non-reporting to police as being based on feelings of being revictimised, judged and misunderstood, hence their fear to report. The concern and fear

alluded to police being enculturated and indoctrinated into believing that homosexuality is immoral and sinful and therefore not taking their case seriously. The findings indicated that among some participants, despite their doubts and distrust in the South African Police Services, they felt it was their right to be protected by the police. Although some participants reported that they would report a homophobic victimisation, if it warrants police intervention, some were sceptical that their cases would receive attention whilst one participant was optimistic about reporting victimisation and further applauded the SAPS revealing recently police do take matters of the LGBT seriously.

Although this study examined the experiences of homophobia of LGBT of participants residing in Pietermaritzburg. The experiences presented in this study showed participants' experiences are similar to those living in South Africa's metropolitan areas such as Gauteng, Durban and Cape Town and the rest of the world (Davis et al., 2021; Abaver & Cishe, 2018; Chakraborti & Hardy, 2015; Haynes, Schweppe & Garland, 2023; Espelage et al., 2019). Homophobia is still rife not only in South Africa but many parts of the world.

6.2 Recommendations for future research

The main goal of this study was to explore how homophobic prejudices and victimisations that emerge through socially ascribed gender norms, impact the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals living Pietermaritzburg. The general finding was that all participants in this study experienced homophobic prejudice and victimisation perpetrated through various institutions and through personal relations. As noted in the study, the various occurrences and types of homophobic victimisation had adverse impacts on participants' well-being. The experience of victimisation based on their sexual orientation ranged from verbal, physical, sexual and psychological abuse. The negative attitudes towards them were rooted in their communities, religious and educational institutions, culture and their families where heterosexual norms are valued and upheld. Renn (2010) argues fixed definitions of gender and sexuality limit what is known about gendered identities, therefore, the recommendations in this study suggests instead of casting non-conformers to socially ascribed and prescribed gender norms as deviants, we need to change society's narrative about gender to be inclusive of gender identities.

6.2.1 Changing the narrative

As noted by Blumenfeld (1982), homophobia affects everyone, not only those who are non-heterosexual but heterosexuals as well. Therefore, a certain amount of reconditioning of

people's mindset could alleviate undue aggressions and stress caused by homophobia. The best way to accomplish this is through educating people that there are sexualities that exist outside realm of heteronormativity. People would be able to recognise that are sexual diversities and that non-conformance to orthodox traditional gender norms is not morally wrong or taboo. This can be achieved through addressing and changing the narrative of the rigid confines of traditional gender norms and roles. Tackling issues based sexual discrimination can prevent unwarranted discrimination and prejudice. It will generate acceptance and tolerance of sexual diversities. As noted in this study, socio-cultural institutions largely influenced how participants experienced homophobia and also played an integral part of their sense of belonging, isolation, rejection or exclusion. Therefore, it is important that these institutions, through various mediums, be included in and participate in the inclusion of sexual diversity.

6.2.2.1 Governments

Internationally, laws that criminalise homosexuality or same-sex acts should be completely removed. International bodies should intervene and call for the immediate decriminalisation of homosexuality and the scrapping of all laws which leads to the punishment of same-sex acts and homosexuality. The United Nations framework should reinforce and bolster laws that include any violence committed against a person based on their sexual orientation. Any such violence should be regarded as the violation of global and international human rights. Countries should be monitored and assisted in implementing relevant plans of actions in eliminating and protecting against hate crimes.

In South Africa, the government needs to be more pro-active in terms of homophobia and how it manifests into violence against LGBT persons. Regardless of one's sexual orientation or gender identity, a person's safety should be a priority. The government should act in addressing the discrimination and violence committed against LGBT individuals. Hate crime cases should be recorded appropriately to allow for a more realistic review on the number of hate crimes. Government officials should be properly trained to be able to deal with such cases. The police and law officials need to be more empathetic regarding cases of the LGBT individuals and trained on the challenges these individuals face.

The Government should invest and provide funding for programs which educate communities about sexual diversity. This can be done through encouraging and supporting organisations to promote sexual diversity workshops in all communities and provide funding for this. For the

communities who already have these programs in place, systems must be put in place to check the effectiveness of these programs.

6.2.2.2 Non-governmental organisations

Collaborations between non-governmental organisations and the government for religious and cultural sectors should be instituted. These should be implemented through various programmes, workshops, road-shows and activities. This will educate communities about the inclusivity of non-heterosexual individuals and non-violence towards them. Workshops and various community outreach programmes can be held to create awareness against homophobia. Cultural and church leaders can be trained through various educational mechanisms implemented by these NGO's about the inclusivity and the tribulations faced by non-heterosexuals. This wealth of knowledge and awareness will equip these influential leaders with the necessary understanding. This will allow them, as revered members of the community, to impart this information to members of the community and congregants, which might also consist of parents or family members of non-heterosexual children, thereby educating parents about acceptance of their non-heterosexual children. This will eliminate discrimination based on the immorality of homosexuality.

Early intervention programmes should be implemented to help victims before the victimisation worsens. Non-government organisations who seek to create and promote safe spaces for LGBT individuals should be equipped and well conversed in assisting individuals who need to report hate crimes. This will allow for a more simplified reporting process and also encourage victims to report cases to the police. They should work closely with government officials to promote the human rights of LGBT victims, thereby creating awareness of the challenges faced by victims and the criminal justice system. Counselling and support services should be readily available with qualified staff to deal with victimisations. Trained mediators, counselling staff and information should be available to help deal with the coming out process to parents, as participants in this study relayed how daunting it was to come out to their parents. Some participants in this study chose not to reveal their sexuality to parents or family due to fear of their reactions.

6.2.2.3 The media

The media can play a pivotal role in educating people on sexual diversity, and help fight against homophobia and violence against the LGBT. People are exposed to the media on a daily basis, whether it is television, radio, newspapers or social media. Mainstream media tends to shy

away from what people might find offensive because of losing viewership, listenership or readership, however, if sexual diversity and acceptance is introduced through these mediums despite the push-back from some public audiences, the media could play an integral part in changing the narrative of homosexuality being taboo and wrong.

Media houses should avoid sensationalising and dramatizing cases of homophobic attacks. This can have different connotations for various people; for instance, Reddy, Potgieter and Mkhize (2007) point out that news media are insensitive when it comes to protecting lesbian rape survivors' identities, leaving them exposed to further attacks. Judge and Nel (2008) argue that victims of hate crimes are deterred from reporting their crimes due to the selective bias and the dramatic way the media reports these cases. In addition to Reddy et al. (2007) and Judge and Nel's (2008) observations, in most instances, when murders or attacks are reported via the media, follow-up stories should be reported to create an awareness of the repercussions of carrying out hate crime.

6.2.2.4. Education institutions

Educational institutions are important agents in our socialisation process, from foundational phase to tertiary levels. To challenge the marginalisation of LGBT individuals, school programs should be inclusive of sexual orientation. Policies and monitoring programmes should be implemented to address the harassment and discrimination based sexual orientation. Strict measures should be put in place to penalise perpetrators.

Educational institutions should provide a conducive, safe environment for LGBT students. This can be done through the training of all staff members to promote equal and fair treatment of all students. They also need to be educated about the challenges non-heterosexual students face. Through leading by example, non-heterosexual students and heterosexual students will gain an understanding of gender inclusivity and take those life lessons forward and possibly impart and educate others as well.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:
PARTICIPANT: _____
INTERVIEWER: _____

Objective 1: To recognize the types of victimizations experienced by LGBT individuals and the impacts it has on them

Research Question What types of victimization are experienced by LGBT individuals?

1. *Have you been a victim of homophobic victimisation?*

1.2. Please explain your experience/s?

Objective 2: To explore the characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms, that make LGBT individuals to vulnerable to homophobic victimizations

Research Question: What are the characteristics of socially ascribed gender norms that make LGBT individuals vulnerable to homophobic victimizations?

2.. Explain how you feel about gender norms?

3. What part of gender norms do you think makes you vulnerable to homophobic victimisation?

4. How does social ascribed gender norms affect your everyday life?

Objective 3: To explore factors that contribute to homophobic victimization

Research Question: What factors contribute to homophobic victimization?

5. What are the factors that influence homophobia towards you?

6. Where and how have you experienced homophobia towards you?

Objective 4: To understand the effects that the victimizations had on the LGBT individual

Research Question: What are the effects of homophobic victimization on the LGBT individual?

9. How did these experiences affect your life?

Objective 5: To understand how LGBT individuals, navigate their identity to avoid victimizations

Research Question: How do LGBT individuals feel about reporting the victimizations to the police?

10. Explain how you navigate social situations to avoid or further avoid discrimination?

Objective 6: To understand how LGBT individual's perception about report victimisation to police

Research Question: How do LGBT individuals feel about reporting the victimizations to the police?

11. Have you reported your victimisation to the police

12. Please explain

13. What are your views on the reporting LGBT victimisation to the police?

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL

For research with human participants

INFORMED CONSENT RESOURCE

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date:

Greeting: Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Ronica Bagwandin, Student no. 216065089. I am a Criminology and Forensic Studies Masters candidate studying at the University of Kwa-Zulu, Howard College Campus in the College of Humanities. My contact details are [redacted] and my email address is bagwandinr@ukzn.ac.za or 216065089.stu@ukzn.ac.za.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on understanding homophobic victimizations and the challenges of gender prejudice faced by Lesbian, Gay Bisexual and Transgender people living Pietermaritzburg. The title of the study is **"Homophobic Victimisation: Understanding the gender prejudice faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender individuals in Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal"**
The aim and purpose of this research is to understand how socially ascribed gender norms impact the lives of LGBT individuals residing in Pietermaritzburg as well to uncover their experiences of these impacts. The study is expected to enrol 20 participants in total, 5 lesbian individuals, 5 gay individuals, 5 bisexual individuals and 5 transgender individuals in Pietermaritzburg. The study will involve the procedure of an individual one-one in-depth interview regarding your experiences. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be 30 to 45 mins.

Due to sensitivity of the study, it may involve the following risk or discomfort of post-traumatic stress. Although the study provides no direct benefits to participants, we hope that through relaying your experiences, the study is able to educate others about the challenges faced by LGBT individuals and the LGBT community. We hope that it gives a deeper understanding of these victimizations from the perspective of those who have

experienced it. The scientific benefits hoped for, from the study is to create an awareness surrounding the impacts of these victimizations. Add to the body of knowledge surrounding homophobic victimization and also create an avenue for further studies to be carried out. It will also serve a point of reference for those aiming to pursue further studies. Should you choose to participate in the study and prefer not to have a one-one interview, the researcher will allow for telephonic interviews as a possible alternate option to study participation.

There will be no compensation to the risk of post-traumatic stress however psychosocial interventions are available as treatment. Uthingo Network has offered full support to all participants offering psychosocial counselling during the process of the study and follow-up sessions after the study is completed. Uthingo Network's main counsellor assigned to the study is Mfundo Ntombela who can be reached on 033 3426165.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (approval number HSSREC/00005693/2023).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at [redacted] or 033 2606707 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

Before participating in this study, please note the following:

- 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 estimated time for the interview is 45 minutes, it can be more or less, this will depend on your preference
- A decision not to participate in this study will not result in any form of disadvantage

- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Your participation is purely for academic purposes only and there are no financial benefits involved.
- Should you wish to withdraw from the study at any point, kindly inform the researcher on 0[redacted] or bagwandinr@ukzn.ac.za

Confidentiality

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person but reported only as a population member opinion
- When the researcher writes the report, your real name will not be used a pseudonym will be used instead
- Data will be securely stored in the department in a locked cupboard at the Supervisors office
- The data will be stored for a period of five years and will be destroyed after
- All recordings will be deleted and any documents will be shredded

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CONSENT (Edit as required)

I (Name) have been informed about the study entitled **"Homophobic Victimisation: Understanding the gender prejudice faced by Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender individuals in Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal"** by Ronica Bagwandin.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study.

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 compensation or medical treatment 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 [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

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview YES / NO

Video-record my interview YES / NO

_____ _____

Signature of Participant **Date**

_____ _____

Signature of Witness **Date**

(Where applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Translator **Date**