

**Perceptions and attitudes regarding “corrective rape” among lesbian students at  
the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein**

By

**Nnuku E. Moleko**

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**Supervisor: N. Lake**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the mini-dissertation titled *Perceptions and attitudes regarding “corrective rape” among lesbian students at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein* is my own work and has not previously been submitted at this or any other university, and that all the sources that I used are fully acknowledged.

MOLEKO N.E

Date

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## **ABSTRACT**

Post-apartheid South Africa is a country filled with conflicting ideas. While the Constitution enshrines the rights of sexual minorities, homophobic attitudes tend to reflect discriminatory behaviour within society. Homosexuality has been defined as un-African and news reports suggest that black lesbians are a particularly vulnerable minority in the country.

While much research has focused on violence directed against black lesbians living in South African townships, this study focuses on the lived experiences of black lesbians in a university environment. South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are considered safe spaces where students can express their sexuality more freely. For this reason I have chosen to examine the realities of an under-researched community, black lesbian students at the University of the Free State (UFS).

The study has relied on a qualitative research design and semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants who come from different backgrounds but all study at the UFS. Data was transcribed and a thematic analysis was used to identify themes. Prominent themes that emerged during this process include: 1) silence around lesbian identity, 2) visibility and lesbian identity, 3) physical environment and lesbian identity.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my daughter, Oratilwe Moleko, who is a blessing in my life. Her presence became my strength and motivation to see this project through. To my mother, Joyce Jabane, I can never have the words to thank you enough for your support and motivation. For all those times I came to you crying and ready to quit, you always found a way to make me regain my focus. Because of you, I now truly believe that with dedication the sky is the limit. Thank you.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Violence against women is an issue that exists within every culture and social group. Everyday around the world women experience physical abuse (which may include being beaten, forced into sex, and assault), emotional, verbal and psychological abuse (Arnold, 2012: 4). Arnold claims that more often than not, the perpetrator is someone the woman knows, for instance, a family member, a neighbour, an intimate partner, an employer or employee. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2012: 6), violence against women is also known as gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is defined as “[v]iolence that is directed towards an individual based on their biological sex, gender identity, or observed adherence to socially defined norms of masculinity and femininity. This type of violence includes physical, sexual, and psychological abuse; threats; coercion; arbitrary deprivation of liberty; and economic deprivation, whether occurring in public or private life” (USAID, 2012: 6). This definition is similar to the official definition provided by the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993 Article 1. It states that gender-based violence is “[a]ny act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life” (Sigsworth, 2008: 5). People who are most at risk or who are affected by gender-based violence are women and girls. This is the reason why the terms (violence and gender-based violence) are used interchangeably. However, men, boys and sexual minorities may also be victims of gender-based violence.

Research has shown that sexual violence is one of the major challenges faced by South African societies (Dosekun, 2007: 89 and Bhana, 2012: 352). According to Nicholson and Jones (2013),<sup>1</sup> every day a number of women and girls become victims of rape. For instance, Nicholson and Jones estimate that during the previous year i.e. 2012, about 3

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<sup>1</sup> Nicholson, Z. and Jones, M. 2013. Up to 3 600 rapes in SA every day. Cape Times.

600 women were victims of rape daily. According to the South African Police Services 42,596 rapes were reported for the year 2015/16. Additionally, South Africa has started to experience another form of sexual violence which targets homosexuals. Many homosexuals in South Africa become targets of sexual crime because of their sexual orientation. "Corrective rape" is a tragic fate that predominantly affects black South African lesbians. This crime is perpetrated with the hope to "cure" lesbians from their perceived "unnatural" sexuality (Brown, 2012: 45).

South Africa adopted a liberal and democratic constitution in 1994 that promotes equality for all citizens. This meant that gender discrimination became unconstitutional and violation of this regulation is regarded as a criminal act. Despite this amendment, members of the South African community continue to marginalise sexual minorities. Community members however are not the only ones who disregard the Constitution. Survivors of corrective rape claim that law enforcement authorities, such as the police, contribute to their victimisation. This type of re-victimisation usually takes place when victim-survivors report rapes (Vetten et al 2008: 23). This example makes clear the disjuncture between the Constitution and the reality for sexual minorities.

To other people who are not affected by hate crimes, residing in and outside South Africa, corrective rape incidents have proven that it does not matter if a country is based on a good Bill of Rights framework, because if it is not translated into reality it carries no substance (Wesley, 2012: 75). Existing literature (Wesley, 2012 and Silvio, 2011) illustrates that South Africa is not a safe environment for homosexuals.

Within the existing literature that focuses on corrective rape, there is limited research on the perspectives and voices of the victims that reside in environments that are not rape-prone. As such, this study suggests that conducting formal research based on the narratives of black lesbian students at the University of the Free State (UFS) will shed light on the issue of hate crimes and homophobic violence affecting an under-researched community who may still be affected by the violence. The study aspires to compare the experiences of black lesbians living in townships and urban areas with those of students living at the UFS.

## 1.2 Contextualising “corrective rape”

“Corrective rape” is a social issue that South Africa is faced with. It is a crime that is perpetrated against women who identify publicly as lesbians. It is also a crime that is commonly reported to happen in South African townships.<sup>2</sup> “Corrective rape” has been defined as a type of punishment to ‘correct’ or ‘cure’ lesbian sexuality (Brown, 2012: 45). Black lesbians have been identified as a vulnerable group and they are often publicly shamed after being raped; there have also been reported cases of murder (Brown, 2012: 45 and Dahlstrom & Malmberg, 2012: 9).

In her documentary titled *We live in fear* (2013), visual activist and lesbian, Zanele Muholi, expresses that black lesbian women in South Africa are targeted because of the belief that homosexuality is unAfrican or unnatural. Scholars and activists such as Dahlstrom & Malmberg (2012) and Muholi (2013) suggest that lesbian women challenge patriarchal norms that have a long history in African communities. It may be argued that black lesbian women pose a threat to these norms because they define themselves outside of patriarchal tradition and culture.

South Africa has a complex history of racialized and sexualised politics and sexual rights have become a highly contested issue over the past twenty-one years. The South African Constitution also makes it clear that people may not be discriminated against based on race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2014: 6). However, not all citizens in South Africa feel safe and protected by the law. For instance, corrective rape is one of the many hate crimes that has left black lesbians brutalized and feeling unprotected.

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<sup>2</sup> “Townships are defined as areas that were designated under apartheid legislation for exclusive occupation by people classified as Africans, Coloureds and Indians. Previously called ‘locations’, Townships have a unique and distinct history, which has had a direct impact on the socioeconomic status of these areas and how people perceive and operate within them” (Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs; 2009:5).

This study aims to analyse the lived experiences of black lesbians whose views and experiences may have been influenced by an environment which is not rape-prone. The study is therefore interested in examining the lived experiences and perceptions of black lesbian students at the UFS.

The section that follows contextualises the problem statement, aim and objectives of the study; the theoretical framework; and finally the ethical considerations.

### 1.3 Problem statement

Corrective rape is a major issue in South Africa. Artz (2007), Breen and Nel (2011) and Anguita (2012) argue that there have been numerous studies conducted on the subject. However, many of these studies have only focussed on the general nature of the phenomenon, tackling questions that relate to the perpetrators of hate crimes in general, the suspected victims of corrective rape, and the reasons that these crimes are committed. In addition, these issues have been discussed mainly from the point of view of people who reside in rape-prone townships such as Khayelitsha, Soweto, Daveyton, Kwa-Thema and Bredasdorp. Therefore, specific knowledge about the experiences of black lesbian women who do not reside in these locations but who may also experience homophobic reactions or violence is limited. Consequently, there is a perception that most victims of corrective rape are lesbians who reside in South African townships. This study is however interested in the perspectives and lived experiences of black lesbian students from the UFS. The study is thus unique because it addresses an unexplored perspective on black lesbians in South African society.

#### 1.3.1 Research question

Based on the above-mentioned background and previous research, the main question of this study is: What are the perceptions and lived realities of black lesbians from the UFS regarding corrective rape and homophobia? The aim of this study is to provide an in-depth description of the lived experiences of black lesbians whose views and experiences might be sheltered by a University environment by analysing the perceptions of black lesbian students at the UFS.

This study attempts to answer the research question by exploring the following objectives.

### 1.3.2 Objectives of the study

- Evaluating existing variants of definitions of “corrective rape” amongst the LGBT community within a higher education institution context
- Examining how homophobia may manifest differently in diverse social contexts
- Investigating how social attitudes influence lesbian identification and expression
- Exploring implications of the belief that homosexuality is unAfrican

### 1.3.3 Value of the study

This study will contribute to the already existing body of knowledge by focusing on the lived experiences of young black women in a university context. The study is interested in supporting the perspectives and opinions of LGBT students within a university environment and uncovering untold stories.

### 1.4 Chapter outline

The mini-dissertation is composed of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction and consists of a brief background and previous research, the theoretical framework, a problem statement, research question and objectives.

Chapter two consists of a description and discussion of the theoretical framework that serves as a guideline to exploring the experiences of black lesbian women within a university context. The theoretical framework is informed by queer theory, post-colonialism and intersectionality and the research project is grounded in a feminist paradigm.

Chapter three provides an overview of existing literature on corrective rape and black lesbian sexuality in South Africa. The chapter focuses on the South African Constitution and provides a definition of rape and hate crime in the country. Furthermore, the issue

of masculinity is discussed within a South African context in conjunction with the idea that homosexuality is unAfrican. A final theme that is discussed is corrective rape, gender-based violence and the manifestation of these issues in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter four outlines the methods and methodology used in the study. The chapter focuses on the research design, the research population and provides a comprehensive overview of interviewee data. In addition to this, I examine the types of research tools used in the study and the manner in which data has been collected and analysed. I pay attention to the way in which validity and reliability is maintained in the study and finally I examine the ethical considerations.

Chapter five comprises the presentation of findings/results based on the themes that emerged during data analysis. Also presented is the discussion of these themes on how they compare with existing literature. The main themes of this research project are: silence around lesbian identity; visibility and lesbian identity; and physical environment and lesbian identity.

Chapter six comprises the summary, recommendations, and conclusions. Homophobic attacks remain a problem for the LGBT community within black communities, including the university environment. For these reasons, this study makes a few recommendations. For example, the university is advised to implement a policy that ensures zero tolerance towards homophobic acts on campus. In this regard, one of the strengths of this research project is that it provides a basis for further research concerning new policy implementation.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter employs a feminist framework for analysing different perspectives and experiences in terms of normative and deviant sexual behaviour. Theories such as queer theory, post-colonialism and intersectionality will serve as the background to explore this research project, which will place it within a feminist paradigm. According to Guba (1990: 17), a paradigm is “a basic set of beliefs that guide” the everyday life activities “in connection with a disciplined inquiry”. In other words a paradigm can be understood as a frame of mind that influences what individuals do and how they do it in their everyday lives. Janse van Rensburg (2000: 1) defines a paradigm as a frame of reference, and a point of departure from which one thinks and acts. In basic terms, a paradigm refers to the “ideas, a theoretical framework, a theoretical model of how society or nature works” (Slattery, 2003: 151). A paradigm provides all scientific disciplines with a structure and a point of reference so that underlying forces of the natural world can be better understood. According to Ritzer (1975: 7), a paradigm serves as a guideline to what scientists should study, what type of questions they should ask, how to ask these questions, and what type of rules they should follow when they interpret the obtained answers.

Feminism as a theoretical framework is complex to follow (Beasley, 1999: ix). The reason behind this is that the term “feminism” has proved troublesome to understand, “in its diversity and its differences, and in its specificity as well” (Mitchell and Oakley, 1986: 8). However, Mitchell and Oakley argue that a “base-line definition” of the term feminism and feminist is possible to construct. They define a feminist as “someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change in the social, economic and political order” (Mitchell and Oakley, 1986: 13). In other words, feminists believe that the socially constructed nature of sex has resulted in unequal relations between men and women. Furthermore, if women’s position were to be changed it would require a total transformation of society’s

structure. According to Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007: 185), feminists write about social life and human experience from a perspective that is woman-centred. For example, they focus first on the situations and experiences of women in society. Secondly, feminists write about the world from the vantage point of women (Lengermann and Niebrugge, 2007: 185). Feminism then, according to Mitchell and Oakley (1986: 13) is defined as “an active desire to change women’s position in society”. In that regard, feminism is a social movement that seeks to change the position of women (Wood, 2007: 3).

Feminism differs from ‘mainstream’ or ‘traditional’ Western thought because of its innovative, inventive and rebellious capabilities that challenge masculine bias. According to Beasley, feminists argue that within mainstream or traditional social and political theory today there is a process that serves to exclude, marginalise and trivialise women and “their accounts of social and political life” (Beasley, 1999: 4). In this regard, trivialising occurs when men’s experiences are used to interpret women’s experiences, when feminist writers are limited to writing about less serious issues in comparison to mainstream writers or when “feminist writers are shown ‘respect’ in a patronising way” (Beasley, 1999: 4).

Furthermore, feminism challenges misogyny, i.e. “the assumption of male superiority and centrality” (Beasley, 1999: 4). In other words, feminist writers seek to challenge the subordination of women by men and society at large. The South African feminist Bernadette Mosala (1986), as cited by Beasley (1999: 6), argues that within mainstream thought, the oppression of men is perceived as tragic, while women’s oppression is perceived as traditional. This means, for example, that men cannot be told how to dress, where to work, and who to date; whereas the same cannot be said in women’s case. Furthermore, this belief mentioned by Mosala indicates two things: first, it shows how much society devalues women and discriminates against them, and secondly that society seeks to keep women within roles that have been assigned to women. Black lesbian women in township communities are victims of this type of oppression, which is disguised as tradition. Their bodies are targeted because they are perceived as



deviating from their 'traditional roles'. As a reaction/response to the misogynistic system feminists ask: *And what about women?* (Lengermann and Niebrugge, 2007: 187).

Fundamental to feminist studies is the idea of gender. According to Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007: 188), gender is “understood as the socially constructed patterning of masculinity and femininity and of the relationships between men and women”. However, Lengermann and Niebrugge argue that referring to gender as a socially constructed phenomenon means that it is a product of socialization. The following sub-sections will discuss the position and experiences of lesbian women in their communities by exploring sexuality and gender.

## 2.2 Queer theory

This study employs queer theory as one of the frameworks to explore black lesbian women's experiences within black communities. Queer theory has provided an array of understandings to non-normative studies. These non-normative studies predominantly revolve around issues such as sex, gender and sexuality (Harris, 2005: 1). However, Rudy (2000: 196) argues that before queer theory brought us to these nuanced definitions and understandings of non-normative studies revolving around sexuality, it first took us through the concept of non-normative as anything and everything that can be perceived as odd and unusual in human life. To other writers, such as Spargo (1999: 9) and Watson (2005: 68), queer theory emerged as a basic tool to challenge and analyse desires that individuals have and the relationship between desire and identity. In this way its emergence is based on using theory that will lead to a revelation of the historical constructions and deconstructions of the subject of sexual identities.

Queer theory stands firmly in its rejection of the idea that “sexuality is an essentialist category, something determined by biology or judged by eternal standards of morality and truth” (Harris, 2005: 1). Queer theory views sexuality as a social construct that consists of various codes and forces, forms of individual activity and institutional power, which all work together to come up with the ideas of what is “normative” and what is

“non-normative” and what is “natural” and what is “not natural” at a given moment (Harris, 2005: 1; Lengermann and Niebrugge, 2007: 188).

Cheryl Stobie (2007: 17) points out that queer theory can be viewed as a platform for the voices that are considered “non-normative” in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, body, sexuality and sexual practices, a fact that has made queer theory both inclusive and a tool that can be used to disrupt an array of normalising practices. For instance, queer theory can serve as an inclusive platform that challenges the common notion that homosexuality is unAfrican or unnatural.

Society’s values, beliefs and preferred ways of organising collective life play a central role in determining what is considered normal or acceptable behaviour. According to Wood (2007: 23), from the time we are born, society encourages us to conform to the gender that has been prescribed to us. For example, young girls are taught to be sensitive and are praised for looking pretty and looking after others. Young boys on the other hand are taught to be strong, independent and always to pursue what they want. This illustrates that gender is learned, not innate, nor is it stable (Slattery, 2003: 113). Furthermore, gender constitutes “a complex set of interrelated cultural ideas that stipulate the social meaning and expectation of each sex” (Wood, 2007: 23). For instance in America, to be masculine is to be “strong, ambitious, successful, rational, and emotionally controlled. To be a feminine woman is to be physically attractive, deferential, emotionally expressive, nurturing, and concerned with people and relationships” (Wood, 2007: 23). In South Africa specifically, the idea of a feminine woman and a masculine man resonate with the hegemonic construction of femininity and masculinity. Boonzaier and De La Rey argue that culturally feminine traits include “submissiveness, passivity, and nurturance, and the role of the woman is supposed to be supportive and subordinate to her husband. On the other hand, masculinity is associated with characteristics such as dominance, aggression, assertiveness, and self-assurance, and men are supposed to be the heads of the household and the breadwinners in the family” (Boonzaier and De La Rey, 2003: 1013). Therefore, Wood defines gender as a “social, symbolic construction that varies across cultures, over time within a given culture, over the course of individuals’ life spans, and in relation to the

other gender” (Wood, 2007: 23). Gender in this regard is understood as a continuous action that is performed partly unconsciously and without one’s consent. In addition it is “a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint” (Butler, 2004: 1).

This discussion indicates that the beliefs and values of our society influence our public and private life, and we accept them as normal, natural and right. Wood argues that, even when men and women are constantly defined in this way, it is difficult for individuals to see femininity and masculinity differently. However, sometimes individuals make “choices to either accept cultural prescriptions or to modify or reject them. Individuals who internalise and embody cultural prescription for gender reinforce existing social views” (Wood, 2007: 24). Lesbian women reject these traditional prescriptions and do not follow the normative meanings of gender; as a result they seem to be provoking changes in cultural views. Lesbian women and other gay community members may reject the social injunction to desire only individuals of the opposite sex. However, they may conform to traditional views of masculinity and femininity.

### 2.3 Post-colonialism

Tyagi (2014: 45) defines postcolonial as a term that indicates “resistance to ‘colonial’ power and its discourses that continue to shape various cultures, including those whose revolutions have overthrown formal ties to their colonial rulers”. Furthermore, Tyagi (2014) argues that postcolonial theory “focuses on subverting the colonizer’s discourse that attempts to distort the experience and realities, and inscribe inferiority on the colonized people in order to exercise total control. It is also concerned with the production of literature by colonized peoples that articulates their identity and reclaims their past in the face of that past’s inevitable otherness” (Tyagi, 2014: 45).

Postcolonial feminists focus on how women are presented in colonial and postcolonial literature and challenge the assumptions that are made about women in both literature and society (McEwan, 2001: 94; Gunjate Shital and Shivaji Udgir, 2012: 284). According to Mishra (2013: 129), postcolonial feminism or ‘third world feminism’ emerged in

response to Western mainstream feminism. Postcolonial feminism rejects Western feminism for failing to be attentive to the differences of women who were once colonized. These are the differences that pertain to women's class, race, feelings, and settings. This indicates the tendency of Western feminism to homogenise women's experiences and problems (McEwan, 2001: 99). The primary concern of post-colonial theory is to represent women from around the world as different groupings with visible differences (Tyagi, 2014: 45). In so doing, women will exist in the world that celebrates their differences from each other (Mishra, 2013: 129).

All feminist theories focus on marginalised social groups of which women form the largest portion – thus these theories aim to address the experienced inequalities. However, unlike other feminist theories, postcolonial feminism focuses on women and the liberation of women by acknowledging their differences from other women. According to Mishra (2013) and Slattery (2003: 160), postcolonial feminist theory recognises that the lives, experiences and circumstances of women from postcolonial countries differ from those of the Western world, and they should be judged and evaluated according to those differences. Feminism in a postcolonial framework assesses situations of ordinary women who are in particular spaces alongside broader issues of the rest of other women and provides them with a more powerful basis of collective identity and activism. In this study, for instance, a postcolonial lens can be used to contextualise the everyday challenges of black lesbian women alongside the social challenges of everyday patriarchy. In other words, postcolonial feminism, as a theoretical framework, can be used to advocate for individual women who are different because of, amongst other things, their sexual identity and socio-economic backgrounds. Meanwhile, postcolonial feminism also articulates the long history of discrimination and “inhumane remarks against females” within societies (Mishra, 2013: 130). What postcolonial feminists articulate in this case is that the experiences of women across the world differ because they are different, living different lives and they should be acknowledged beyond the notion of “sisterhood” that is assumed under the basis of gender. As an example, in South Africa, women experience multiple forms of oppression that Western women do not potentially experience. As Slattery (2003: 160)

points out, the oppression and inequality that black women experience is intersected by race and class as well as gender.

## 2.4 Intersectionality

Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007: 204) argue that intersectionality theory begins with an understanding that the experience of oppression by black women is in different manners and stages of intensity. While a woman can experience oppression on the basis of her gender, she can also experience it as a result of her race, class, education level and in other systematic forms. This means that her social status, amongst others, can cause her to be oppressed by another woman (i.e. if she is a domestic worker). As a result, the definition of intersectionality theory includes, but is not limited to, social powers that affect mundane events, giving account to the life history of an individual, in their multifarious ways, involving all social aspects such as differences in gender, age, class, and geo-social location (Lengermann and Niebrugge, 2007: 1668). Furthermore, Pelak (2007: 2395) states that intersectionality is interested in the position of women such as marginalised black women, as well as the differences between women instead of the differences between men and women. With this said, black African women experience a myriad of interwoven oppressions in comparison to white women.

According to Collins (2000: 1), because of their race, class, and gender, black African women are the hardest hit by poverty and unemployment. Lengermann and Niebrugge (2007: 205) emphasise this point by arguing that their experience of discrimination in the work place may result in the “court routinely refuse[ing] to recognise” them because they are women. Furthermore, for a working woman, inequalities not only relate to her work and her movement up the corporate ladder, but to the fact that she is working at all in a society that may frown on such activity.

Contemporary South African traditions have made it possible for men to believe that they are the breadwinners, but many men in South Africa find themselves unemployed. This means that the family relies on the income of the woman, thus weakening the control that men have traditionally had over the family unit (Mosoetsa, 2011: 60-61).

For some of these men, this may result in them subjugating women to inhumane injustices, because they believe that women should be their subordinates.

This subordination is further emphasised in African societies. For example, the woman is expected to 'out-grow' her original family and move to her marital family. By implication, the girl will grow up knowing that she is expected to be in a heterosexual relationship, and ultimately marry a heterosexual man. Failure to do so may meet stern resentment and feelings of rejection from the man (Lessing, 1994: 14).

## CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Introduction

According to Nicholson and Jones (Cape Times, 2013), South Africa is unique in terms of its exceptionally high levels of sexual and gender-based violence. Nicholson and Jones state that it was estimated in 2012 that approximately 3 600 women could have been victims of rape each day in the country. While it was also revealed in that year (2013) that there was a decrease in the number of reported sexual crimes in the country, some places in the country actually experienced an increase in sexual crimes. For example, in Bredasdorp, where a 17-year-old girl called Anene Booysen was gang-raped and brutally murdered, the reported rape statistics increased from the previous year from 47 to 60 cases per year. Such increases were also found in larger provinces such as Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. Moreover, similar to countries such as, Uganda, Jamaica, and Zimbabwe, South Africa has started to experience another form of sexual violence, which is targeting homosexuals. This form of violation is committed with the purpose of curing homosexuality, especially lesbianism, and is known as “corrective” or “curative rape” (Brown, 2012: 45).

After the end of apartheid a number of positive constitutional developments started to take place. These developments included the preservation of the Bill of Rights, which was adopted by the ANC in 1992, which stipulated that “sexual orientation violations” as a form of gender discrimination would not be tolerated in the new South Africa. This was added to the Constitution in 1996. According to Hoad, Martin and Reid (2005: 7), this inclusion was a positive change in relation to the past, when homosexuality was criminalised. Democratic South Africa was now seen as part of modern civilization because of its acceptance of same-sex relationships and marriages. Despite this Constitutional change, homophobic attitudes in society continue to prevail.

Hoad et al. (2005: 15) argue that even with these developments in place within an African context, the nuclear family (with its emphasis on heterosexuality) is still viewed as the only legitimate and sanctioned form of partnership in South Africa today. This

goes hand in hand with how girl children are expected to grow up and become mothers and wives as part of society's conventional socialisation (Shayne 2007: 1687). In light of this denial of female homosexuality, the existence of black lesbian sexualities is regarded as taboo and visible manifestations of their sexuality are punished in a patriarchal environment. This punishment more often than not comes from those who consider themselves as heterosexual and therefore 'normal' within society. This is a result of the belief that men are central and superior (Beasley, 1999: 4).

This literature review will cover various aspects related to "corrective rape" in South Africa. One aspect that will be discussed in the literature concerns South African masculinities, and the violence and homophobia associated with these masculinities. The practice of corrective rape ties in with the belief that women are men's property and any diversion from this norm is met with severe punishment (Bernadette Mosala as cited by Beasley, 1999: 6). In South Africa, black lesbian women become the victims of many forms of oppression and they have been defined as the most vulnerable victims of corrective rape in the country.

### 3.2 The South African constitution

According to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act NO.108 (1996: 1245), Chapter 2 of the Bill of Rights states that the South African Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It basically enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom.

Before 1996 South Africa was not a safe place for people who identified as anything other than heterosexual. People who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex or transsexual were treated as outcasts because their sexuality was seen as taboo. LGBT citizens were not only rejected within society, but this was also a reflection of previous South African laws related to homosexuality. Homosexuality has historically been defined as unnatural or deviant, with members of the community being victimised and marginalised because of their sexuality.



Since 1996, South Africa is one of the few countries that has shown progress in terms of human rights legislation with the specific inclusion of rights for sexual minorities. However, despite the fact that South Africa has made progressive developments in terms of equality and the protection of sexual minorities, the country continues to face a horrible ordeal with regard to homophobic attacks. These homophobic tendencies and behaviours conflict with the fact that South Africa is a signatory to the 2008 United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. According to Epprecht (2013: 32), it is disturbing that, although the South African Constitution enshrines the rights of sexual minorities, the State has not been able to follow through in meaningful ways. It is unnerving to realise that South Africa went as far as to enshrine the concept of sexual rights in their Constitution and even, to some extent, educate public servants and make them aware that they are obligated to defend these rights, whereas the State, more often than not, has difficulties following through in meaningful ways (Epprecht, 2013: 32).

Epprecht (2013: 4) points out that in 2010 there was a controversy around anatomically ambiguous runner Caster Semenya, whose case exposed the huge difference between the high level of rights that are theoretically enjoyed by sexual minorities and the persistent aggression or negative stereotypes about “hermaphrodites” in popular culture. While this argument continued, South African politicians and the media participated in the national pride over the gay-friendly Constitution, despite the fact that they had remained silent about the high rates of hate crimes against black lesbians. On the one hand, Caster Semenya was embraced as a South African athlete, while, on the other, she was put on trial to confirm her femaleness and femininity. This incident indicates that in South Africa, the Constitution may prescribe protection for all citizens, but this does not mean that all South Africans believe that everyone (including minorities) should enjoy equal access to dignity and protection.

### 3.2.1 Defining Rape

According to the South African Law Commission (1999: v), after 1994 rape, in terms of the common law, was defined as committed by a man who intentionally had sexual

intercourse with a woman without her consent. In common law, non-consensual anal or oral penetration did not constitute rape, but only indecent assault. In this sense, sexual intercourse was restricted to penetration of the vagina by the penis. Soon after the implementation of that definition, the South African Law Commission sought to reformulate the definition of the common law offence of rape to focus on the idea of “unlawful sexual penetration” (South African Law Commission, 1999: v). According to the South Africa Law Commission (1999: v), sexual penetration was now strictly unlawful when it occurred under coercive circumstances. These coercive circumstances included “the application of force, threats, the abuse of power or authority, the use of drugs, etc.” Compared to the definition of common law, the South African Law Commission’s (1999: v) definition of sexual penetration was very broad. It included “any extent of penetration whatsoever by a penis, any object or part of the body of one person, or any part of the body of an animal into the vagina, anus, or mouth of another person” (South African Law Commission, 1999: v). This definition also includes simulated sexual intercourse.

This perspective demonstrates that the South African Law Commission’s (1999: v) recommendations regarding oral, anal or vaginal penetration and even simulated sexual intercourse under coercive circumstances could constitute rape and this means that both men and women can be rape victims and perpetrators. With this definition of rape, the State had to make sure that they proved beyond reasonable doubt that the woman did not consent to sexual intercourse. To some extent this was problematic because, from the public’s perspective, this gave the impression that those who are victims of rape are put on trial to prove that they did not consent to the act. Consequently, the recommendations of the South African Law Commission (1999: v) stipulate that the absence of consent to sexual intercourse will no longer be an element of the offence, because the accused can claim that there was consent given during sexual intercourse so as to justify his or her unlawful conduct. In this regard, the accused will only carry the burden of proof against him/her.

Artz (2009) states that in 1997, there was the beginning of reform of the existing law on rape. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, No. 32

of 2007 was passed on 13 December 2007 by Parliament and signed by the president. The new Act has included a number of new offences and manages to deal with incidences relating to the management of sexual offences. In all the changes brought about by the new Act, the most significant one, according to Artz (2009), is the new definition of rape. The old Sexual Offences Act (No. 23 of 1957) stated that “only a woman could be raped and only by a man” (Artz, 2009), thus framing rape within a heterosexual context. This meant that forced oral sex did not constitute rape and neither did the “all too common insertion of objects into the victim’s vagina or anus”.

According to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, No. 32 of 2007, the newly adapted definition of rape is that which states that the crime of rape is committed when “[a]ny person (“A”) who unlawfully and intentionally commits an act of sexual penetration with a complainant (“B”), without the consent of B, is guilty of the offence of rape” (Artz, 2009). Artz proclaims that the new law states that any sexual violations of men, women, and children by a man or a woman are equally acknowledged as a devastating injury to the victim’s physical, psychological and sexual integrity. This means that the new law of South Africa now protects and stands against any violation of any individual regardless of their sexual orientation (Artz, 2009).

Furthermore, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, No. 32 of 2007, also makes space for issues of compelled rape. It is said that compelled rape is committed when “[a]ny person (“A”) who unlawfully and intentionally compels a third person (“C”), without the consent of C, to commit an act of sexual penetration with a complainant (“B”), without the consent of B, is guilty of the offence of compelled rape” (Artz, 2009).

The content of the new definition of rape also applies to every form of sexual penetration without consent, regardless of the victim’s or perpetrator’s gender identity and/or sexuality. This new definition is also relevant to the idea put forward in the South African Law Commission (1999: 63), where it is clear that rape is a crime that not only

violates a victim-survivor's physical safety, but their sexual and psychological integrity as well. It is stated that this violation is not only marked by violence, but by a form of "sexual terrorism" and that it is invasive, dehumanising, humiliating and is akin to torture.

### 3.2.2 The meaning of hate crimes

According to scholars such as Dunbar, Quinones and Crevecoeur (2005) and Wesley (2012), a hate crime is any incident that constitutes a criminal offence motivated by prejudice, hate, or bias. In this regard the most important element that differentiates a hate crime from other crimes is the motive. Wesley (2012) argues that the South African Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights (2009) points out that, with regard to hate crimes, the perpetrator always targets a person who is from an out group. Wesley (2012) claims that the basic motive of the perpetrator is to demean and dehumanise their victims based on their actual perceived race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, health status, nationality, social origin, religious convictions, culture, language, or other characteristics. According to Wesley (2012), the American Psychological Association (APA) (1998) identifies that a hate crime not only targets the person physically but that the hate is directed toward their identity.

One can assume from this discussion that victims are attacked because of what they represent within society. From a societal perspective victims represent something that is not seen as normal, acceptable or falls under the "correct" codes that have existed as part of society's long tradition or way of life. Hence, perpetrators of hate crimes continue as part of society seeking to correct that which is considered "unnatural".

Helen Wells and Louise Polders (2006: 22) define hate crimes as "any behavioural expression (verbal and/or physical) that derives from homophobia, prejudice, discrimination, stigmatisation or heterosexism and is expressed towards homosexual or heterosexual individuals who are erroneously perceived to be gay." Wells and Polders argue that in South Africa there is no separate crime register that is kept to record the

statistics on hate crimes and for that reason it is difficult to have accurate statistics on hate crimes based on sexual orientation (Wells and Polders, 2006: 22).

Roberts et al. (2013: 3) assert that hate crimes are also known as bias crimes and are based on four categories of motives, that is: thrill; defensive; mission and retaliatory. There are different types of hate crime offenders. Firstly, there are offenders who commit crimes for the excitement or the thrill; secondly, there are offenders who commit crimes because they see themselves as defending their turf; thirdly, there are offenders who commit crimes because they believe that their life's mission is to rid the world of groups they consider evil or inferior; lastly, there are offenders who commit crimes because of a perceived degradation or assault to their group. Even though the categories "defensive" and "retaliatory" share similar features, McDevitt et al. (2002: 306), believe that they are isolated because of the "different precipitants that spark violence in each." McDevitt et al. (2002: 306) maintain that all these categories have the basic underlying factor called bigotry. This factor is considered a primary motivation in order for the hate crimes to occur. Nevertheless, every offender typology differs according to the conditions and both psychological and environmental factors that eventually lead to a violent attack. For example, with thrill crimes, the offender is set off by a desire for excitement and power; defensive hate crime offenders are triggered by a need to protect their resources because of the perceived threatening conditions; retaliatory offenders are motivated by a desire to avenge a perceived assault or humiliation on their group; and missionary offenders think of themselves as crusaders who hope to purify the world of wickedness (McDevitt et al. 2002: 306).

The types of offender typologies and the factors that drive offenders to commit their crimes bring us to the types of men that a society produces. Every society dictates the type of man it considers to be ideal or acceptable. In most cases, this type of man is not supposed to show any attribute that can be associated with a woman. If this happens to be the case, then this situation or this man will be considered non-normative. Society is made up of different types of men who perform different types of masculinities in relation to the perceived norm.

### 3.3 Issues of masculinity in South Africa

Men and women exhibit distinct gendered social behaviours which are preconditioned to suit society's conventions. It is because of these differences that men and women have been treated and represented differently in society. Stereotypically, women, or rather females (because young girls are also included in this stereotype) are expected to be more sensitive and compassionate, whereas males are expected to be more aggressive and dominant (Wood, 2007: 23). In South African black communities for example, boys are taught that their role in society is to show signs of leadership and control, and that it is their birthright as future men to know that in a family structure they are the decision makers (Boonzaier and De La Rey, 2003: 1013). These gendered roles often result in women assuming subservient positions in relation to men. South Africa may thus be defined as a patriarchal society, which is bound by traditional and cultural practices to a large extent.<sup>3</sup>

Masculinity should not be seen as a direct result of maleness, but should be related to gender constructs. In other words, masculinities are patterns of practices which men engage in in order to enact the specific roles prescribed by society. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 832), hegemonic masculinity is dependent on three claims. First, that "hegemonic masculinity was understood as patterns of practices which included for instance, all things done (these include any type of activity or task a person engages in), and not only a set of role expectations and identity" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 832). Secondly, hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, especially those that were considered to be subordinate. Thirdly, hegemonic masculinity embodied the most honoured way of being a man, to a point whereby all other men positioned themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the subordination of women to men globally (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 832 and Schippers, 2007: 87). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 832) claim that men who do not enact this dominant form of masculinity are also considered accomplices to the subordination of women because they inadvertently benefit from a

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<sup>3</sup> South Africa is a nuanced society, as such, this definition will only be applicable to those groups that are more traditional in their practices.

patriarchal system. It is in relation to less masculine men and to women that the concept of hegemonic masculinity is most powerful. However, this does not mean that hegemonic masculinity should be associated with violence, although it does represent dominance.

Schippers (2007: 87) points out that there is no doubt that the three claims made by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) continue to carry much weight in current discussions of hegemonic masculinity. However, Schippers emphasizes that two of the claims (the first one and the last one) identified above are the most effective ideas that relate to the idea that when expressed within a specific cultural situation, hegemonic masculinity is normative. Even so, for most men these patterns of practice specific to hegemonic masculinity are generally unattainable realities. Instead of practicing hegemonic masculinity, men tend to position themselves in relation to it. In this way they are still able to gain whatever benefits may flow from it. For instance, men who align themselves with hegemonic masculinity may benefit from the marginalisation of minority groups, which include women, homosexuals and the disabled. Nejat and Yaghoobi (2014: 158) assert that there are different forms of marginalisation that are blatant or subtle. Subtle forms of marginalisation may occur in discrimination against candidates for employment on the basis of sexuality or sexual orientation. On the other hand, the blatant forms are targeting “out groups” by violence or harsh criticism.

Henderson and Shefer (2008: 5) argue that the concept of power, dominance, control and even violence are factors that encompass hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, these aspects are unfortunately regularly used by some men to ensure that they maintain their dominance within the community. For instance, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 832) assert that the concept of hegemonic masculinity was used in criminology research to show a correlation between the number of crimes perpetrated by men and boys in relation to the number of crimes perpetrated by women and girls. This research showed a greater correlation between masculinities and crimes such as rape. In addition, research showed how certain forms of aggression connect with hegemonic masculinity through the pursuit of hegemony. Men in South Africa have come to a point where they exhibit this type of behaviour daily because of the “threat” to

their “manhood” (Boonzaier and De La Rey, 2003: 1013). This perceived “threat” to masculinity is visible when one considers the violence perpetrated by men against gender non-conforming women. Furthermore, because homosexuality itself represents what is not normal within this heavily culture-bound society, many of the men who represent what is considered to be normal feel obligated to “correct” that which is considered wrong or that which does not follow a “natural order.” To some extent, this may bring one to conclude that this persistent need to “correct” that which has gone wrong symbolises that South African communities are hinged on punitive measures for anything considered “unnatural” or “abnormal”. According to Henderson and Shefer (2008: 2), this is one of the reasons why South Africa has been and persists to be a homophobic and heterosexist society where homosexuality is seen as a pathology, to the point that cultural discourses such as the notion that “homosexuality is un-African” continue to hold sway.

### 3.4 The notion that homosexuality is un-African

The belief that homosexuality is unAfrican has been identified in a number of scholarly articles pertaining to homosexuality in Africa (Wells and Polders, 2006; Muholi, 2004 and Wesley, 2012). For instance, Brown (2012: 51) argues that the common belief that homosexuality is unAfrican has been influenced by colonial discourses. Brown states that the myth has commonly been influenced by the following three factors: the historical Southern African culture where homosexuality was considered taboo; colonial and post-colonial Christian evangelizing; and the view that homosexuality is a product of post-apartheid South Africa (Brown, 2012: 51).

Ekine and Abbas (2013: 78) confirm this and further argue that a combination of religious fundamentalisms, which insist on firm literal interpretations of religious texts, and a culturally essentialist position which pathologises and denies the existence of queerness on the continent strengthens this belief. In addition to this, Crawford (2012: 208) claims that in the early twentieth century lesbians were believed to be “sick” or to have some type of pathology. Confirming this belief, the President of Gambia, Yahya



Jammeh, made a statement against same-sex marriage during the confirmation of a cabinet minister. Jammeh stated:

It's not in the Bible or Qur'an. It's an abomination. I am telling you this because the new wave of evil that they want to impose on us will not be accepted in this country... As long as I am the president, I am not going to accept it in my government and in this country. We know what human rights are. Human beings of the same sex cannot marry or date - we are not from evolution but we are from creation and we know the beginning of creation - that was Adam and Eve. (Ekine and Abbas 2013: 79)

These comments are common to African leaders (for instance, President Robert Mugabe and President Jacob Zuma) and they also contribute to the idea that homosexuality is unAfrican. According to Pambazuka News (2006),<sup>4</sup> there is no apparent contextual reason why the president chose to make the statement during that time. According to Ekine and Abbas (2013: 6), the Evangelicals in Uganda encouraged the drafting of the anti-homosexuality bill in parliament as a private member's bill, which if it were to be passed, would affect the LGBTQI community. This was drafted as a means of protecting the notion of the traditional family structure.

On the other hand, several researchers have argued that there is evidence that indicates that homosexuality has existed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century in African communities. Epprecht argues:

Among humans, the size of minorities who are willing and able to express their same-sex desire varies from place to place and over time depending on a wide range of factors including culture and availability of private space. The number of people who publicly identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation has also changed over time, and indeed, this issue of identity, rather than changes in sexual practices, is the nub of the controversy in much of Africa today. (Epprecht, 2013: 22)

Epprecht (2013: 22) adds that the presence of sexual minorities, despite how they identify, seems to be a relative constant across cultures and throughout history. Africa is no exception to this phenomenon. According to Epprecht (2013: 22), "this is a fact that will not go away despite how strongly people wish for it to go; no matter how many times one quotes the Bible or the Qur'an, and no matter how fiercely one tries to suppress sexual minorities through the law or violence...".

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<sup>4</sup> Pambazuka News 2006: Is homosexuality really "UnAfrican"?

Tamale (2014)<sup>5</sup> contends that the notion that homosexuality is un-African is a myth rooted in longstanding “practice of selectively invoking African culture by those in power”. Furthermore, it stems from the assumption that African societies are homogeneous entities, whereas in reality, these societies encompass a number of ethnic groups with rich and diverse cultures and sexualities. As an example, Tamale (2014) states that the ancient cave paintings of the San people near Guruve in Zimbabwe show how two men used to engage in ritual sex. Additionally, before the colonial era, among the Langi of northern Uganda the “mudoko dako” (also known as effeminate males) were treated as women and were able to marry other men. Although these examples refer to men, they still indicate that same-sex relationships predate the colonial era.

Another point that might symbolise the long-standing presence of same-sex relations is the vocabulary in traditional languages that is used to describe same-sex relationships. For instance, the Shangaan of Southern Africa refer to same-sex relations as “inkotshane” (male-wife) and Basotho women in Lesotho engage in socially approved erotic relationships called “motswalle” (special friend) (Tamale, 2014). However, Tamale also points out that “the context and experience of relationships did not necessarily mirror homosexual relations as understood in the West, nor were they necessarily consistent with what we now describe as a gay or queer identity” (Tamale, 2014). According to Tamale (2014) this is because same-sex relationships within African societies were far more complex than the picture depicted by the creators of the myth that homosexuality is un-African.

### 3.5 Corrective rape in South Africa

The LGBT community in South Africa is often reported as threatened by homophobic violence (Dosekun, 2007; Wells and Polders, 2006). It is rare that one hears about the everyday lives of the LGBT community, especially within the black community in South Africa. To some extent the lives of homosexuals within African countries can be

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<sup>5</sup> Sylvia Tamale’s article, titled “Homosexuality is not unAfrican” is available online at <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/4/homosexualityafricamuseveniugandanigeriaethiopia.html>

regarded as invisible. Epprecht (2013: 5) points out that the issue of same-sex sexuality is also marginal in most of the scholarship and development practices. However, when something negative happens to lesbians, the myth around their existence is exploded. For instance, this is demonstrated by the violence widely reported against black lesbians and rationalised by the perpetrators. It is also evidenced by the anti-homosexual politics which often overlap with anti-condom, anti-sex work, and anti-abortion campaigns (Wells and Polders, 2006: 24). Obviously, such tidings come across as discouraging for people who want to see Africa as a place that exhibits healthy democratic and prosperous cultural life-styles. In addition, Epprecht (2013: 7) points out that the West tends to take advantage of negative aspects in Africa and these are regularly reported in the media. Usually they focus on the continents' frustration and setbacks but fail to praise success stories. By doing this, they are unintentionally promoting stereotypes of "Darkest Africa—homophobic, violent, irrational, and childlike in their vulnerability to manipulation by foreigners, fundamentalists and evil-doers in general" (Epprecht, 2013: 7). This is mostly achieved through newspapers and social media platforms, where literally millions of ill-informed consumers watch "handpicked" African homophobes held up to disapproval and mockery (Epprecht, 2013: 8).

Epprecht claims that, with such a limited description of African countries, one has to ask the following questions:

Is it fair to make generalizations about homophobia as a kind of stand-alone project uniformly affecting the whole of Africa based on the extremist statements of select fundamentalist Christians or 'demagogic politicians?' Is it also fair to say that the situation in the whole of Africa is 'going from bad to worse', and that 'chaos' is 'universal' in the struggle for sexual minority rights, as does the International Lesbian and Gay Association in its 2011 annual report? (Epprecht 2013: 8).

Corrective rape is a phenomenon that has come to be known and experienced in countries such as Zimbabwe, Uganda, Jamaica and predominantly in South Africa (Brown, 2012: 47). With the fact that South Africa has recently undergone a major political transition it is important to highlight the influence that this transition has had on the South African nation.

Based on the discussion above that states that South Africa has many overwhelmingly patriarchal attitudes, one can attempt to explain why there are so many incidences where women (or any minority group such as LGBTQI) are discriminated against based on their sex or sexual orientation. For example, in 2012 News24 reported that with the alarming rape statistics of 2012, Interpol had named South Africa the world's rape capital. Research suggests that South Africa is a rape-prone society. Crawford (2012: 373) draws from Peggy Sanday and notes that a rape-prone society is one that has high occurrences of rape, where rape is connected to factors linked to hegemonic masculinity and where rape is viewed as an acceptable tool for punishing and controlling women.

In a rape-prone society hegemonic masculinity is used as a tool to marginalise those that are considered a minority because of their so-called unacceptable sexuality (Wood, 2007: 24; Boonzaier and De La Rey, 2003: 1013). In South Africa the new form of abuse that has emerged over the last decade is known as corrective rape which targets a minority group of women, namely black lesbians. The section that follows provides a few examples from South Africa where black lesbian women have been targeted because of their sexuality. The stories are taken from newspaper sources called the *Independent News* and *The Hub*.<sup>6</sup>

Pearl Mali is a corrective rape survivor from Khayelitsha, Cape Town. She was raped for the first time in 2004 by an elderly man whom her mother knew from the church they attended. The rape first occurred when Mali was 12 years old, but was repeated till she was 16. Mali states that because her mother didn't want her to be gay she requested the man to move into her daughter's bedroom and hoped that this would change her daughter's sexuality. Mali claims that when the older man told her that he was going to sleep there with her and started slapping her she screamed, bringing her mother to the door. However, her mother only responded by telling her that she's making a noise and that she should "shut up" (*Independent News*, 2014).

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<sup>6</sup> *The Independent* 2014: *Crisis in South Africa: the shocking practice of 'corrective rape' –aimed at 'curing' lesbians*; *The Hub* 2014. Photo essay: the horror of "corrective rape" in South Africa.

Simphiwe Thandeka is from Pietermaritzburg. Thandeka claims that when she was 13 years old she identified as a tomboy. A male relative started asking her why she dressed in a masculine way. One night he raped her in bed, and put a pillowcase over her mouth. Thandeka claims that he told her to keep quiet and that at that time she didn't know it was rape. The next day Thandeka told her mother about the incident because she was bleeding heavily. She said her mother responded by saying that "it is a family matter." Thandeka found out three years later when she was pregnant with the relative's friend that she had contracted HIV. Thandeka was forced into a relationship with this man because her relative tried to get them married as a last attempt to "correct" her sexuality. Thandeka claims that after the man had repeatedly raped and beaten her with a coat hanger, he returned her to her uncle as he had realised that she would never change (*Independent News*, 2014).

Zukiswa Gaça from Khayelitsha, Cape Town states that in December 2009, she left a party to buy cigarettes when a man who she had just met accompanied her and led her to a shack where someone was sleeping. Gaça narrates that the man said he was going to show her that she is a woman, so he took off his pants and put a blanket over the man sleeping on the bed. The man raped her in front of his friend, who just lay there under the blanket (Photo essay: the horror of "corrective rape" in South Africa, 2014).

According to Wesley (2012), 31 lesbians have been murdered for their sexuality since 1998. For instance, Zoliswa Nkonyana was murdered for her sexuality in 2006 in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. Wesley (2012) states that during that time Nkonyana had been living openly as a lesbian and received constant taunts and threats from her community. Finally five years after her murder, judgement was delivered. Out of the nine men convicted, only four of them were found guilty, while the other five were released. According to Wesley (2012) this case became infamous because of the various failures of the criminal justice system. For instance, the proceedings were postponed more than forty times, suspects escaped, evidence had been collected improperly, and cases against most of the accused were dismissed for lack of evidence.

Within black communities, socially sanctioned gender roles are considered significant. As a result, men and women are expected to live according to the specified set roles. However, black lesbian women are perceived as deviating from the norm. For this reason, corrective rape has become a power tool that is used by black men against black lesbian women as a punishment for their sexuality. In addition, Ekine and Abbas (2013: 10) argue that corrective rape is used as a political weapon against its victims. Furthermore, it is seen as a political weapon in the hands of people who were once victims of an unequal economic system that has induced violence among the economically marginalised. For instance, in a situation whereby a “corrective rape” victim manages to gather courage to go to the police after the incident, some of the victims may find themselves being mistreated and victimised by the police because of the policemen’s beliefs about homosexual identities. For these reasons, black women live in fear within township communities and this research aims to explore if this is the case in a different environment among different groups of black lesbians.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

### 4.1 Introduction

This study is informed by a qualitative research design as it is a suitable tool to answer the research question. This design is adopted as it emphasises the exploratory nature of this study, where the experiences and stories of black lesbian women from the University of the Free State are recorded. The researcher has also decided to use a non-probability sampling method. For example, black lesbians in South Africa are perceived to be a sexual minority group that is vulnerable to homophobic violence and attacks. According to Denscombe, researchers use a non-probability approach because they want to explore the expertise and experiences of participants who may be “unusual or different from the norm” (Denscombe, 2010: 25). In other words, the researcher was looking for research participants with specific characteristics. This study focuses on the experiences of young people who form part of a minority and who may also be affected by this belief that their sexuality is unnatural or deviant. In addition to this, Denscombe (2010: 25) argues that one may avoid using probability sampling when there is insufficient information concerning the population under study. It may, for instance, be difficult for the researcher to determine how many people form part of the population and how to locate them.

To obtain the data, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews which enabled the participants to express themselves freely. The questions were open-ended, enabling the interviewees to elaborate on points of interest. In addition, the interviewer prepared the set of questions and issues which were going to be discussed beforehand. This prepared set of questions provided the interviewer with a clear direction for the interview. Rubin and Rubin (1995: 1) argue that using qualitative interviews is a way of finding out what others feel and think about their worlds.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, the researcher wanted to understand black lesbians’ experiences of homophobia and hate crimes in their communities and society. Participants were selected by means of snowballing, whereby known participants were asked to refer to other potential participants who

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<sup>7</sup> Within this context, the word “world” refers to the realities of the participants in this study.

would be interested in participating in the study. Black lesbians are not always visible in society and therefore this approach was deemed the most appropriate method for identifying participants.

Furthermore, the LGBTQI organisation at the UFS known as Out@Kovsies was approached to distribute information about the study in order to gain more research participants. According to the coordinator of this organisation, Zanele Thela,<sup>8</sup> Out@Kovsies is an organisation that exists to create a “talking space” for the LGBTQI population on campus. She proclaimed that the aim of this organisation is not to “out” any homosexual individual, but rather, to assist people who are already “out of the closet” or individuals who want to publicly identify as homosexual on how to deal with everyday challenges of homophobia and discrimination. This “talking space”, Thela stated, “is not for counselling or a support group, but a space of empowerment for people who have come to be identified as not normal or natural”.

According to Thela, Out@Kovsies provides students who identify as homosexuals with an opportunity to discuss their fears and challenges safely and comfortably without feeling like they are outsiders. The existence of this organisation, with its emphasis on diversity and open-mindedness, means that LGBTQI individuals feel more empowered and that a space is created where individuals can feel less threatened.

A thematic analysis formed part of categorising the transcribed data. This is a method that relies on identifying, analysing and reporting emerging patterns or themes within the data. Braun and Clarke also point out that thematic analysis “minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, it also goes further than this, and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 6). In this regard, the study provides a detailed and nuanced account of a group of themes within the data. This type of analysis is known as a semantic approach. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 6) and Clarke and Kitzinger (2004: 6), this type of analysis can relate to a specific question or area of interest within the data.

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<sup>8</sup> Zanele Thela, the coordinator of Out@Kovsies, gave permission for her name to be used in this study.



## 4.2 Qualitative research design

Pilot and Hungler (1995: 139) conceptualise research design as a “researcher’s overall plan for obtaining answers to the research questions and it spells out the basic strategies that the researcher adopts to develop information that is accurate and interpretable”. A research design is made up of three comprehensive techniques which the researcher employs in conducting research – the recruitment of participants, the data collection process and the analytic tool which is to be used to explore the data (Durrheim, 2006: 48-49).

Therefore, the qualitative research design is appropriate in relation to the individual’s lived and observed experiences and emotions (Jayaratne and Stewart, 1991: 85). As Vithal and Jansen (1997: 50) point out, qualitative research focuses on how individuals and groups view and comprehend the world and create meaning out of their experiences. This qualitative research design provides detailed and thick descriptions of the perceptions that define and shape these young women’s worldview and social reality – in particular their perceptions, understanding and sense-making mechanisms when faced with corrective rape within an HEI (Higher Education Institution). Thus, qualitative research design is unique in that it produces findings without resorting to statistics, because its main aim is to highlight how individuals construct their everyday world – of everyday discrimination and subordination related to their homosexual orientation (Patton and Cochran 2002: 2; Kuada, 2012: 93).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 3) define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative research consists of set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011: 3). Therefore, qualitative research is concerned with providing detailed accounts of life stories, experiences and perceptions of the world (Marvasti, 2004: 7).

### 4.3 Collection of stories

#### 4.3.1 Setting

The research setting is the geographical location where the data was collected, which must be the participants' natural setting (Pilot and Hungler, 1995: 142; Bui, 2009: 142). The setting also includes the participants' feelings, behaviour and how they respond to the questions, and this is significant to the chosen design that is suited to the context which the participants find themselves in (Pilot and Hungler, 1995: 142). The natural setting for this study was the University of the Free State and the participants were given the opportunity to choose the actual space, where they wanted to be interviewed. Some women preferred to be interviewed in lecture halls, whereas others preferred to sit under secluded trees. Those who opted to be interviewed in lecture halls felt it was private as there were no distractions from other students at that particular time. Furthermore, the lecture halls were comfortable as it is a familiar space and this contributed to their feeling free to share their stories.

The reason for selecting a Higher Education Institution as a setting for this study is to allow the researcher to gain an insider's perspective regarding a community within a setting that has not been investigated. This is also a familiar place for the researcher who has studied and works at the university. Many of the research studies that report on LGBTQI violence in South Africa focus on the experiences of black lesbians living in South African townships. To some extent this has created a perception that homophobic attacks can be associated with townships. The second reason for selecting this setting is that the university environment is considered a space that is more accepting towards students who may demonstrate more liberal views regarding sexuality. The final reason concerns convenience of access to the UFS as the researcher is a registered student there.

#### 4.3.2 Research population and sampling

A population is defined as a total of all the individuals who have certain characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. The population consists of all the subjects (race,

gender, registered university students from both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes) that the researcher wants to explore. For example, high school teachers and teenage delinquents. In this case, the research subjects are black lesbian students who are 'out of the closet' and study at the UFS, Bloemfontein (Trochim and Donnelly, 2008: 34; Yount, 2006: 2).

The snowballing sampling method was used to recruit these participants with the help of a gatekeeper. Sampling in qualitative research refers to the actual units or cases being selected for a study (Curtis, Gesler, Smith and Washburn, 2000: 1002; Trochim and Donnelly, 2008: 34). For this investigation, nine participants were selected. The researcher knew three of the participants and they were asked to refer the researcher to other people known to them. These participants were able to refer the researcher to four other participants. These participants were approached by the researcher and requested to take part in the research. Another two members of the target population were accessed through the gatekeeper at the Out@Kovsies organisation.

Lecompte and Schensul (1999: 6) define a gatekeeper as "an individual who controls access to the community, group of people or source of information". In this study, Miss Zanele Thela, who works for the organisation that deals with the LGBTQI community on campus, served as the gatekeeper. Thela was responsible for the researcher's first exposure to these women and then these women made recommendations to their peers. The gatekeeper played a major role in the recruitment of these women as she distributed information about this study to those who might have an interest in taking part in this study. The recruitment strategy was not only limited to this organisation: anyone was welcome to participate, as long as they fit the criteria of being a black lesbian student from the UFS.

After establishing contact with all of the participants, only six participants were able to meet for their interviews. During the sixth interview the researcher felt that little new information was generated from the questions that were asked. However, in order to ensure that the data had reached saturation, two more interviews were conducted. Thus, eight participants proved to be sufficient for the study. This factor is confirmed by

Strauss and Corbin (1998: 10), and Kuada (2012: 93) who argue that numbers are unimportant in ensuring the adequacy of the research findings. Rather, the focus is on the quality of information obtained from the participants.

Some of the interviewed participants were raised in a township area while other participants were raised in the suburbs. Participants' ages ranged between 24 and 27. Some participants mentioned that they have been "out of the closet" for a while and others have just recently come out. The backgrounds of the participants are considered important because they provide the researcher with a more holistic image of the participants.

#### 4.3.3 Participants

The table below provides background information on the participants who took part in this study. This includes: age, where participants grew up and the number of years they have been "out of the closet". This information was gathered from biographical questions posed during the initial stages of the interviews.

**Table 1: Data of Participants**

	<b>Township resident</b>	<b>City/suburb resident</b>
<b>Age (years)</b>	24-27	24-25
<b>Identification (femme/butch/both/neither)</b>	two participants identified as butch, two identified as femme, one identified as both, while the other one said neither	one participant identified as butch, while the other one did not specify
<b>Number of years being “out” of closet</b>	three participants have been out of the closet for over five years, the other two participants have only been out for less than five years, while one participant is not ‘out’ yet	two participants have been out of the closet for over five years

Identifying a sample by the snowball method was influenced by the fact that the lesbian population is often invisible within black communities. As Trochim and Donnelly (2008: 34) argue, one of the advantages of the snowball method is that it does not require a sampling frame when being utilized in the study. However, one disadvantage is that it has low external validity. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) argue that this is when the results or conclusions of the study do not hold for people or a population outside or around a different time frame. They argue that sampling is a significant part of every social research process. As a result, every researcher needs to ensure that the sample holds for external validity so that the inferences that are made are as valid as possible. However, in this case the study only aimed at analysing the situation for the group of black lesbian students who took part in this study. In other words, the findings will not be generalised to a larger population.

#### 4.3.4 Research Instrument

This study made use of an interview schedule as means of collecting data. These interviews were conducted in a face-to-face manner with a semi-structured format. Maree (2007: 55) explains an interview as a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the participants questions for the purpose of collecting data and to learn about the ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviours of the individual. In this regard, the researcher conducted interviews so that the world could be seen through the participants' eyes.

According to Denscombe (2010: 175), semi-structured interviews provide the researcher with a number of issues to be addressed and questions to be answered. During the interviews the researcher realised that she had to be flexible in terms of the order of the questions and to provide a platform where participants could further develop ideas and experiences related to the topic (Denscombe 2010: 175).

The interview schedule is divided into two sections. The first section of this schedule involved recording biographical data about the participants, while the second section

focused more on specific questions related to the topic.<sup>9</sup> Each interview continued for approximately two hours at different places selected by participants. No participants were required to come for a follow-up interview because each participant responded to all questions to the satisfaction of the researcher within the set time.

The audio-recordings allowed the researcher the opportunity to check data for accuracy and relevance as it was collected. The researcher was able to go back to other questions that were not answered adequately while the interview was in session and ask for clarity from the interviewees. Also, the researcher was aware of the importance of listening to the interviewees and acknowledged that their voices were very important in obtaining rich data on the topic.

These interviews were digitally reordered, and were later transcribed word for word. The researcher also made field notes during and after the interviews. This further added to the data as participants are a valuable source of information that provides the researcher with rich descriptive data. In addition, it was also important that the researcher become aware of the dynamics of the interaction, including her own contributions and influences.

#### 4.3.5 Data Analysis

Data collection and data analysis in qualitative evaluation are not considered to be distinct stages. Consequently, data analysis began soon after the first interview was conducted. Maree (2007: 78) argues that the process of gathering data and analysing it are two parts of the same process, which are merged so that the beginning stages of analysis can influence and mould the continuing data collection. The reason for this is to “provide the researcher with the opportunities for increasing the density and saturation of recurring categories and themes” (Maree, 2007: 78). According to Maxwell (2013: 105), the first step to analysing data in qualitative research is reading the interview transcripts, observational notes, or documents that are going to be analysed. Accordingly, during the data analysis process the researcher started with a detailed

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<sup>9</sup> The interview questions are attached as Appendix B on p. 92

inspection of transcripts and memos generated throughout data collection. During data collection the researcher relied on both operational and coding memos. These are types of memos that helped to record what the researcher did, how she did it and why she chose that particular course of action. They also explain what each code or category contained and why it belonged there. The inspection of transcripts and memos led to an identification of recurring themes and a development of critique regarding data that was gathered. The themes were then generated to assist in explaining the underlying reasons for discourse that persistently references the incidence of corrective rape in society. These themes were constantly compared as new data was generated and compared against the literature that was compiled in chapter two. The process of developing categories was based on reading through the informants' responses line by line, while generating codes and labels. The codes were grouped together to formulate a list of codes.

Thus, this data was analysed using a thematic analytical approach to provide a detailed and nuanced analysis of a group of themes that emerged out of the data. Thematic analysis can be referred to as a method of identifying, reporting and analysing themes as they emerge from the raw data (Braun and Clark, 2006: 77). According to Thomas and Harden (2008: 2), thematic analysis is usually utilised as a method of analysing data in primary qualitative research. In other words, when a researcher uses this method, the aim is to compile the results into categories of research in order to provide reliable answers to particular questions.

The other reason for utilising thematic analysis lies in its being a flexible method of sorting data into nuanced sections. This means that the researcher will not experience any constraints that result from being bound by a specific or detailed theoretical framework and technical knowledge of approaches. As a result, the study will produce a rich and detailed, yet complex account of the data. In addition, thematic analysis is used because it offers a more accessible form of analysis, especially for individuals who are still in the early stages of their qualitative research career.



#### 4.4 Ethical considerations

The University of the Free State's policy on research ethics requires studies of this nature to obtain clearance from the Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee (see Appendix A). The main purpose of this Committee is to protect the interests of the participants under study, and to ensure that the participants do not undergo any form of exploitation from the researcher. The granting of ethical clearance meant that this study adheres to all the protocol of conducting research.

##### 4.4.1 Objectivity and integrity in research

The study was conducted in an objective manner as all the technical standards of research were followed. This ensured that all the respondents were treated fairly and according to the conditions outlined by the ethical committee. Also, the study retains objectivity and integrity by outlining the limitations of the study and the methodology which was utilized.

##### 4.4.2 Dissemination of research results

As mentioned on the ethical consideration form, when the research is finally completed a report will be compiled, which will be made available to the following stakeholders: the participants who took part in the research; the university library so that the report could be used for any academic work; and the community in order to enhance knowledge for whatever reason there may be.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter represents the results of the empirical findings of the data gathered from interviews conducted with black lesbian students at the UFS regarding their experience and understanding of corrective rape. The data analysis process involved transcribing the interviews, and coding and categorising emerging concepts. During data analysis, the themes that started to emerge included some of the following: silence around lesbian identity; visibility and lesbian identity; and the physical environment and lesbian identity.

Each participant was asked the same questions as stipulated in the questionnaire and sometimes it was necessary to pose follow-up questions regarding certain themes/issues that emerged in the interview. I encouraged participants to talk freely because important personal data emerged which I consider relevant to their experience of homophobia or hate crime. The interviews were semi-structured to allow for greater flexibility and ultimately richer data.

I started the interviews with a few standard biographical questions. It was important for me to establish the age of the participants and where they came from. I also asked the students how they identified in relation to their sexuality. These questions provided some insight into how students identified and which labels or names were used for students to feel comfortable in their sexuality.

All interviews ended with a broad and general question that asked the participants about possible solutions to the issue of violence against lesbians in South Africa. This question assisted both the interviewer and the participants to end the interview in a calm emotional state because the focus was no longer on the participant's personal experiences.

As a point of departure to the analysis of the data, an introduction of the participants in the study and their general background information will be provided (all participants are

given pseudonyms for their protection). This is followed by a presentation of the themes. Quotes are used to substantiate the themes and, since they are verbatim transcripts from the interviews, they may contain grammatical errors. In addition, a discussion based on these categories will be presented.

## 5.2 Meeting the participants

The section that follows provides an overview of the informants who participated in this study. This is done to ensure that the reader has a clear picture of who the participants are. This also provides the reader with a better understanding of the diverse perspectives offered by the research participants. As such, I provide the ages of the participants, how they identify as lesbians (butch/masculine or femme), whether they have been victims of a homophobic attack, and lastly, the geographic location where they were raised (township or suburb).

### **Brenda**

Brenda is a 25-year-old female who grew up in a township. She is a post-graduate student who is interested in art, particularly the production and dramatisation of real-life issues that affect young people regardless of how they identify. She states that she does not identify as butch or femme because she does not find that relevant to her identity as a lesbian. Brenda is open about her sexuality among friends and her family and she has experienced a homophobic attack on campus. This is part of her story:

*I publicly declared<sup>10</sup> sexuality in 2009 after Zoliswa Nkonyana was brutally killed for being lesbian (I saw this on third degree). I felt I was being missed, so I started wearing butch to be noticed. The aim was for me to be part of the problem so that I can also be part of the solution. I had a brief homophobic attack from some guy with his friends on campus and they said I think I have testosterone because I was with a lady that guy had his eye on. This brief attack made me feel sorry for guys who had no game. To be honest being accepted is not an issue to me, I was accepted into this world when I took my first breath and I don't get why I should be apologetic about my sexuality. As far as home is concerned I only felt*

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<sup>10</sup> By using the phrase 'publicly declared', the participant was actually referring to "coming out of the closet" as a lesbian.

*difficulties to be myself there when I took my girlfriend home but then again no one has ever brought their partners home not even my older brother so that could have been the problem.*

## **Nandipha**

I met Nandipha at an LGBTQI launch event. She is a 26-year-old lesbian who identifies as both butch and femme. She says she is a bit of both because of her masculine dress code and the fact that she likes “taking a back seat” (Nandipha associates femininity with reduced control) in the relationship. Nandipha grew up in a township as a reserved person, keeping to herself. She once experienced a homophobic attack when a friend of hers called her names before she decided to come out to other close friends of hers. During the first few minutes of the interview, Nandipha seemed rather uncomfortable. She became more uncomfortable when she spoke about her sexuality. For instance, she kept on laughing when she had to respond to questions that focused on her sexuality which seemed to be related to her anxiety when talking about this issue. This is part of her story:

*It's a bit easier for me to be me because most people do not notice that I'm a lesbian...eish the thing is I'm not sure also if I knew I was a lesbian because I have a child and obviously it was with a guy (she laughs). I was nineteen at the time, but now I know that women interest me and I can see when they are attractive and I enjoy being with them. Back at home they are strict and cultural- we are Xhosas, so I can't tell them. They don't notice either, maybe it's because they know that I am a girl and I have a child, so they see me as their daughter who will one day marry a man. [Then she laughs again and says] “What a shock they will get one day”.*

## **Zee**

I met Zee at the Out@Kovsies LGBTQI launch. She is a 25-year-old who identifies as a masculine lesbian, who dedicates her time to finding ways in which the University environment can be more inclusive for gays and lesbians. Zee is open about her sexuality among her friends, students and family. She grew up in the suburbs<sup>11</sup> and has once experienced a homophobic attack that she does not feel comfortable talking about.

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<sup>11</sup> Suburban districts in South Africa, for instance, offer a “formally white” and predominantly English environment. They are occupied by middle-class residents who are distinguished by occupational status, behaviour, life-style and world view (Rudwick; 2008:113 and Ndletyana; 2014:2).

However, Zee seemed very comfortable to talk about her sexuality. This is part of her story:

*I grew up in the suburb. It was a very cool neighbourhood, "very chilled". So I really never experienced problems with regard to my sexuality or anything like that. I think it's because culture plays a big role in homophobic attacks in the black community. White communities are generally more accepting. My parents are very accepting also, they were never cultural, so when I came out to them when I was 16, they were accepting, it has never really been an issue.*

## **Lira**

Lira is a 25-year-old feminine lesbian who grew up in the township and is only open about her sexuality to her close friends. She feels it has been better to be open about her sexuality at the university because other students mostly mind their own business. Lira has not experienced direct discrimination due to her sexuality other than when she once attended a lecture that discussed sexuality and discriminatory comments were made about lesbians. This is part of her story:

*It is much easier to be out especially at [sic] the university environment because people or should I say students don't really care about ones sexuality, even though every now and then I still see people stare or look shocked whenever I talk about my sexual preference. I have not experienced a direct discrimination, but to some extent I have, like for example, in one lecture we were discussing sexuality, and some students made discriminatory comments that no one is born lesbian, rather we become lesbian because we have fought a losing battle with the opposite sex, so we turned to lesbianism. Or at times we don't have the right body, so we become lesbians.*

## **Pinki**

Pinki identifies as a butch lesbian. She grew up in the location and has been out of the closet ever since she was fourteen years of age. Pinki is 24 years old and has never experienced any problems being herself (she states that she always knew who she is and accepted herself). She says she has always felt safe at her university and in her home town.

Pinki was a very introverted participant. As a result, her answers were very short and lacked detail. In fact, she mostly answered by “yes or no” . Still, I chose to include her contribution because I felt that she represented many of the butch black lesbians who are reluctant to talk about their sexuality openly but strongly believe in the equality of mankind and human rights. However, it could be that Pinki does not feel entirely comfortable to speak about her sexuality at length.

## **Kelebogile**

Kelebogile is a 27-year-old who identifies as a feminine lesbian and grew up in a township. She is a bit different from other participants in this study because she has never told anyone about her sexuality, not even her family or close friends. Kelebogile has never experienced discrimination due to her sexuality, but she feels it is because people do not know her true sexuality. This is part of her story:

*I am not yet out of the closet. As a result, my experience of being a lesbian has not been bad because people do not know that I am a lesbian. Some people have suspected and confronted me about being a homosexual but I never had the courage to confirm the suspicions. You see, where I grew up, in the location, most of the old generation parents believe that being a lesbian is religiously wrong and generate these beliefs to their kids who act out the beliefs, thus by raping lesbians.*

## **Nthabi**

Nthabi is 23 years old. She identifies as a masculine lesbian and has been out of the closet since she was in primary school. She grew up in the township and she points out that she has never felt a need to be ashamed of her sexuality. However, she has experienced some difficulties along the way. This is part of her story:

*When I first got here in 2011, I was a resident at Welwitschia and obviously like any other ordinary first year I had to do what was required from me. This included attending “inters”<sup>12</sup> between female and male residences. From my perspective the purpose of such were for the male students to look amongst the ladies who they liked and maybe ask them out. Myself homosexual being the only masculine lesbian in my first year group [here the participant was explaining that amongst her first year resident group, she was the only masculine lesbian], I would feel very left out. It was really sad!*

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<sup>12</sup> A social gathering for residence students.

*In 2013, my girlfriend and I were in a taxi from Langenhovenpark.<sup>13</sup> We were abused verbally by 2 men who were passengers with us for holding hands in public (Nthabi says the men were using vulgar words to describe them). That 15 minute trip from Langenhovenpark to Universitas was the longest in our lives. All the passengers including the driver were all quiet while these two men humiliated us like we're not human enough.*

## **Dk**

Dk is 24 years old and she feels that, if she had to choose, then she would say she identifies as both butch and femme, but that if she could answer as she feels, she would just remain a lesbian because she is not big on “titles”. Dk is open about her sexuality and she asserts that she has never encountered any problems or better treatment because of her sexuality. Dk grew up in the suburbs, where she feels people are open-minded enough to let others be who they want to be as is the case at the UFS. However, her parents were not as open-minded. This is part of her story:

*At university one is free to be who they want to be, after all this is a place one is supposed to explore and get to a definition of whom they are. So no one treats me like I'm doing something wrong. At home it's different because my folks are religious and my sexuality is seen as sin. So I'm not at liberty to act as I wish, with the fear of being treated like the devil's advocate. I think this is a reason why lesbians continue to be affected by corrective rape. I mean I can't speak for the mass because I don't have such conversation[s] with fellow homosexuals. I can say it affects me because I feel I could never be free to be who I am, fearing that someone lurks in the background with the intention of harming me. I live in fear, not crippling fear that makes me stay locked up, but a general sense of being sceptical of everyone around me.*

During the initial stages of the interviews, participants seemed reluctant to take part in the study. My impression is that they felt that violence against lesbians is not a direct threat in their lives. This might have been brought about by the fact that they have never been confronted with an opportunity to talk about their experiences within this context. In fact, one of the participants, Dk, mentioned that it is rather difficult for her even to understand why black lesbians in general feel affected by corrective rape because she

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<sup>13</sup> Langenhovenpark is a suburb in the city of Bloemfontein, South Africa.

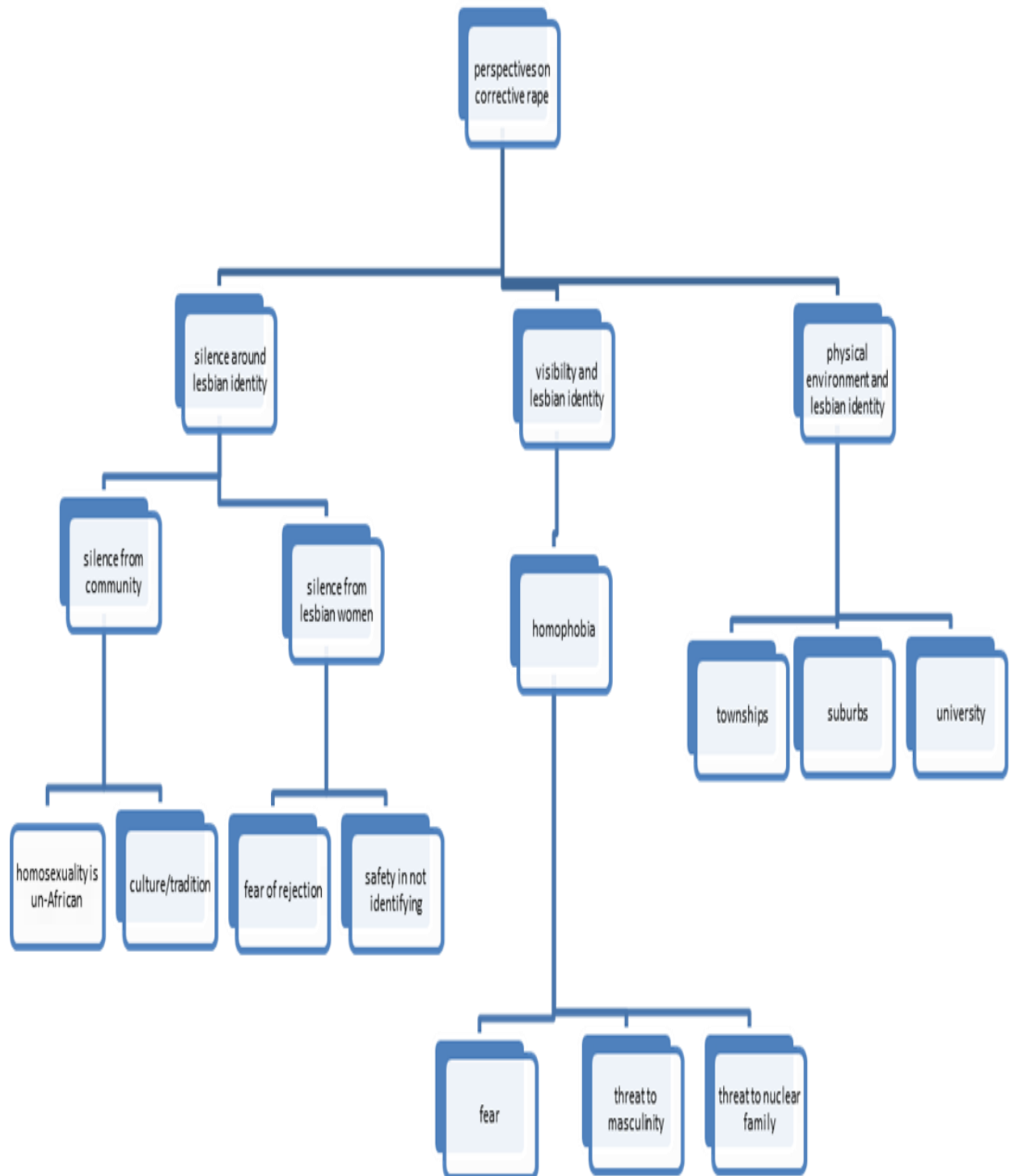
has never found herself having “such conversations with fellow homosexuals”. In addition, the participants seemed to have an understanding that discrimination against one’s sexuality in the university is non-existent because people who occupy universities are educated and “have reputations to protect” (Brenda). However, it becomes clear that during the interviews participants became aware that they have been victims of homophobia, discrimination and cruelty because of their sexuality. Also, it became evident as the interviews continued that, while issues such as homophobia, sexual orientation and safety concerns were raised, more context regarding the lived reality of these black lesbians emerged.

### 5.3 Conceptual framework

This section will focus on the themes that emerged during data analysis. These themes are presented in conjunction with existing literature on the subject for the purpose of elucidating how they conflict or agree with other research. The first theme, *silence around lesbian identity*, provides insight regarding how some black communities who are still rooted in culture and religious traditions, including some black lesbians, choose not to talk openly about homosexuality. *Visibility and lesbian identity* looks at the reaction/response of those particular communities confronted with black lesbian visibility. The last theme, *environment and lesbian identity*, then explains how the environment influences the decision to ‘come out of the closet’. Before I start to present and discuss the findings I provide a visual representation of the themes and subthemes.



**Figure 1: Conceptual framework**



## 5.4 Silence around lesbian identity

In this section I discuss how issues around lesbian identities are kept silent within communities. This is because many people living in black communities choose not to talk about the presence of homosexuals as part of their community. Some of these reasons are apparent in the media. For instance, some people claim that homosexuality is un-African, whereas other people point to the fact that homosexuality is against their culture and/or tradition. Furthermore, it has become evident that even black lesbian women sometimes choose not to talk about their identities. This is due to factors such as fearing rejection and realizing that there is some sense of safety when people do not know one's real sexual identity.

### 5.4.1 Silence from the community

Numerous factors contribute to silence around lesbian identity in South Africa, particularly in black communities. As indicated in chapter two, this is because community members believe that homosexuals represent something that does not fall into the normal codes of relationships. According to Harris (2005:1), this view that claims that sexuality is biologically determined or is judged by standards of morality and truth is rejected by queer theorists. As Butler (1993: 7) argues, gender is not naturally given but is culturally constructed. Additionally, Zanele Muholi argues that homophobia is under-researched in South Africa and that black lesbians suffer from inequalities due to their social location (in the townships) (Muholi, 2004: 118). A preliminary overview of newspapers reporting on corrective rape and homophobia in South Africa (e.g. *The Independent*, 2014; *The Witness*, 2008; *Star*, 2014)<sup>14</sup> also demonstrate that communities regard homosexuality as unAfrican, against culture/tradition, and that it is regarded as unnatural or deviant.

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<sup>14</sup> *The independent* 2014: *Crisis in South Africa: the shocking practice of 'corrective rape' –aimed at 'curing' lesbians*. *The Witness* 2008: *'It's not un-African'*. *Star* 2014: *Gay healers and a place in tradition*.

#### 5.4.1.1 Homosexuality is un-African

The notion that homosexuality is un-African is used as an excuse by those who seek to reject the LGBTQI community. For instance, Gambia's president Yahya Jammeh said, "[w]e will fight these vermin called homosexuals...the same way we are fighting malaria-causing mosquitoes, if not more aggressively" (Laccino, 2014: 1), and South Africa's President, Jacob Zuma, said, "When I was growing up, unqingili (a gay person) would not have stood in front of me. I would knock him out," (Hawke, 2015: 1). Both Rukweza (2006: 1) and Laccino (2014: 1) argue that by defining homosexuality as unAfrican a complex debate emerges. This debate concerns cultural and political logics that expose tensions and contradictions around terminology. For instance, Matebeni (2013: 409) points out that, despite the fact that post-apartheid South Africa may present a a society that promotes and celebrates policies and laws that symbolize freedom and democracy, "same-sex sexuality, even along racial lines, is still considered a 'new' or foreign phenomenon, unAfrican...or put simply, copying white people's behaviour" (Matebeni, 2013: 409). This is further illustrated by the Ugandan president, Yoweri Museveni, when he signed the Anti-Homosexuality Bill in 2014, declaring that homosexuality was Western-imposed (Tamale, 2014). By signing anti-homosexuality laws, it becomes clear that African presidents align themselves with the belief that homosexuality is unAfrican and thereby homosexuals are marginalised and are defined as non-citizens. Although South Africa accepts same-sex marriages and homosexual relationships, as is stipulated in the Constitution, it is clear that this is not the case in reality. The rise of homophobia, homophobic attacks, and corrective rape seen in post-apartheid South Africa is evidence of this.

Some of the participants in this study felt rejected because of their homosexual status and also described how people perceived their sexuality as diseased. The following examples demonstrate this:

*Lira: they (people within the communities) see us as some sort of disease that can be passed on to others.*

*Pinki: they (the community of South Africa) need to realize that being lesbian is not a sickness and they are human and need to be happy.*

As Ekine and Abbas (2013: 78) and Crawford (2012: 208) point out, the reason people pathologise homosexuality is because they want to eradicate its existence. According to Tamale (2014), African culture is invoked and strengthened by denying the existence of homosexuality. Tamale (2014) also argues that African people reject homosexuality under the false assumption that Africa is a homogeneous nation when it is in fact highly diverse. She points out that this is shown in the ancient depictions of both erotic and non-erotic same-sex relationships on cave paintings of the San people near Gurusu in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Chapter 3 makes reference to some of the words in traditional languages that predate colonialism which further prove the long existence of homosexual behaviours within African cultures. However, the context and the experiences of such relationships may have not necessarily reflected homosexual relations as understood in the West. McKaiser (2012: 1) asserts that basic same-sex attraction occurs and/or exists in all societies, even without the proof of existing linguistic markers.

#### 5.4.1.2 Culture and/or tradition

Certain religious, cultural and traditional prescripts contribute to gender-divisive behaviour (Raday 2003: 665). According to Ngubane (2010: 22), a number of men in South Africa believe that women are inferior to men and that their rightful place is in the home where their main duty is to bear and raise children. This custom of men exercising power over women has been evident throughout history. For instance, at an early age, girls are viewed as property by their own fathers and when they are married they are required to obey their husband's commands without questioning. On the other hand, men and/or husbands are provided with the opportunity to exercise power over women by punishing or beating women when they believe they have misbehaved or disobeyed them. The acceptance of this belief has allowed for the perpetuation of patriarchy and the subordination of women (Ickes, 1993: 79; Ngubane, 2010: 22).

To illustrate this point, one participant revealed that her sexual identity remained a secret because of the role that culture plays in her family.

Nandipha: ...back at home they are strict and cultural- we are Xhosas, so I can't tell them. They don't notice either...maybe it's because they know I am a girl...

It became evident from Nandipha's statements that because culture plays a central role in everyday life choices, black lesbian women often find themselves defined outside these cultural practices and traditions. Nandipha feels that culture was the reason why she could not tell her family about her real sexual orientation and that it was also a reason why her family could not even realise that she is gay.

Although South Africa has a liberal Constitution which embraces sexual minorities, it is clear that black lesbians are defined as outsiders and that this is influenced by culture and tradition. This, according to Cohen (2004: 27) and Muholi (2004: 117), can be illustrated by the fact that black lesbian women are still not allowed in some public spaces because of their same-sex desires and relationships. Additionally, Muholi argues that lesbian-identified women, particularly those who reside in the townships where cultural norms still dominate, remain subordinated (2004: 117). She states that their social and geographical locations impact on their marginal status in society and their access to health care, legal assistance, and education. In other words, Muholi is arguing that the intersection between race and lesbian sexuality in South Africa makes lesbian women more vulnerable to violence and homophobia in their communities.

Furthermore, it is not only the community or family members who remain silent on the issue: lesbian women themselves often feel it necessary to conceal their identity. The following section focuses on some of the reasons that lesbians feel compelled to hide or remain silent about their sexuality.

#### 5.4.2 Silence from lesbian women

During the interviews I realised that some of the participants chose not to talk about their sexuality or sexual identity with their loved ones or community. Their silence is not because they deem their lesbian sexuality unnatural, but, as explained by Muholi and Gunkel, lesbians become vulnerable once they are open about their sexuality (Muholi, 2004; Gunkel, 2010). For example, the interviews revealed that participants felt a fear of rejection and a threat to one's safety in relation to being open about their sexuality.

##### 5.4.2.1 Fear of rejection

Socialisation plays an important role in many aspects of one's life, particularly identity (Shah, 2013: 1). In other words, the way people are introduced or exposed to the norms within certain cultures and ways of life can have a significant impact on how they end up identifying (Kocoska, 2015: 65). Furthermore, if a child is raised by a community that rejects homosexuality then it is possible that that child will grow up feeling ashamed and reject her identity if she identifies as lesbian. Judith Butler, as cited by Salih (2006: 55), argues that all bodies exist "within a highly rigid regulatory frame", whereby subjects can't choose their "sequence of acts" but rather, have to enact the already existing script of an already existing gender type within that specific frame. She argues that this is because everybody, from the beginning of social existence, is "always already determined" by previously or already existing gender styles (Salih, 2006: 55). Furthermore, Harris points out that "queer theory insists that all sexual behaviours, all concepts linking sexual behaviours to sexual identities, and all categories of normative and deviant sexualities, are social constructs, sets of signifiers which create certain types of social meaning" (Harris, 2005: 1). Harris argues that queer theorists view sexuality as a compilation of various codes and forces, forms of individual activity and institutional power (such as family), which all work together to come up with ideas of what can be considered as natural (Harris, 2005: 1).

The impact of socialization on identity acceptance is illustrated by some of the participants, who mentioned that they have never told their family members about their true identity or felt proud of being lesbian because of the beliefs held by their families and communities. The following examples reveal this fear of being rejected.

*Nandipha: ...I sometimes feel like I don't know where I belong, because my family doesn't know about my sexuality yet...black communities believe that being a lesbian is not cultural and one must conform to the norms of society.*

*Dk: at home it's different because my folks are religious...my sexuality is a sin. So I'm not at liberty to act as I wish, with the fear of being treated like the devil's advocate.*

The points of view of these participants indicate that they have chosen not to embrace or articulate their true sexual identities because they fear that their family members will reject them because of religious and cultural beliefs. On the other hand, one participant felt that due to the level of acceptance in the culture where she grew up, she has never had a reason to hide or feel ashamed about her identity.

*Brenda: To be honest being accepted is not an issue to me, I was accepted into this world when I took my first breath and I don't get why I should be apologetic about my sexuality.*

Based on these findings, one can deduce that both the fears and pride of these lesbian women regarding their sexual identity is a product of how they were socialised and the type of environment they grew up in. In other words, women who grow up in an environment that does not allow the expression of one's sexuality, in whatever form it may take, will contribute to the silence around it (Matebeni, 2009: 102). However, sometimes the bonds of socialisation can be broken. For instance, many black lesbians in South Africa grow up in areas where the community believes that homosexuality is unAfrican: however, they still identify as homosexuals.

#### 5.4.2.2 Safety in not identifying

In addition to the fear of rejection, lesbian women choose to remain silent because of individual safety. The issue of safety is one of the most prominent reasons to remain silent about one's sexuality. For instance, one participant said:

*Nthabi: ... if you are a homosexual woman, that is, a woman sleeping with another woman, then you have stepped out of your purpose, and therefore you are not human enough, hence they have a right to rape you, that rape will somehow "fix" you, and make you straight.*

The participant points out that if one's status as a lesbian woman becomes public knowledge, then one's safety is threatened. She claims that men prey on lesbian bodies because they believe that they have strayed outside of their boundaries. The men force themselves sexually on them and claim that it will cure them. In the above-mentioned example, it seems like Nthabi has also internalised the belief that corrective rape is a legitimate way to 'correct' or 'cure' sexuality.

Since hate crimes are not only directed to the physical self, verbal abuse can be an issue that contributes to lesbian women remaining silent about their sexuality. For instance, Nthabi and Brenda mentioned that they have been victims of verbal abuse simply because they were not conforming to a societal standard of heterosexuality.

*Nthabi: In 2013, my girlfriend and I were in a taxi from Langenhovenpark. We were abused verbally by two men who were passengers with us for holding hands in public.*

*Brenda: I've had a brief homophobic attack from some guy with his friends on campus and they said I think I have testosterone because I was with a lady that guy had his eye on.*

Both incidents indicate that some men are still against the idea of seeing a woman in control of her sexuality, especially outside the presence of a man. For example, in Brenda's story, one can clearly see that her sexuality is a threat to masculinity. Nthabi's



case indicates that men feel threatened because they believe that there is a strict gender order where women are seen as men's property.

On the other hand, another participant (Dk) has never experienced direct verbal abuse, but she states that she does not feel comfortable when she walks around the streets. She says that there are people who are against homosexuality and so they say bad things when they see homosexuals.

*Dk: At home I feel safe...because I'm indoors most of the time, but I'm not comfortable when I do go out, people stare and make snide comments.*

Some of the views that are shared by the lesbian students who took part in this study are similar to those that are shared by some other lesbian women who have also participated in similar studies. For instance, Matebeni (2009: 209) and Muholi (2004: 118) point out that some women actually keep quiet about their sexual identity because of the trauma that they have experienced such as rape, attempted rape, physical assault, verbal abuse and experiences of abduction. In this regard, it is clear that, like the Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights (2009) and the American Psychological Association (1998), Muholi believes that hate crimes sometimes take the form of psychological abuse, intimidation and fear. Therefore, due to traumatization, they do not feel comfortable talking about their sexuality. This is illustrated by one of the participants' views when she mentions that she lives in constant fear that her life might be in danger.

*Dk: ... because I feel I could never be free to be who I am, fearing that someone lurks in the background with the intention of harming me. I live in fear, not crippling fear that makes me stay locked up, but a general sense of being sceptical of everyone around me.*

Dk pointed out that she has never experienced any violation specifically, but that she still feels like she needs to fear for her life because of what has happened to other lesbians. This point is made by Dosekun (2007:90), who argues that in South Africa,

even if a woman has never experienced rape, she always lives in fear of its possibility because of her gender and/or sexuality.

In her article titled “We live in fear, we feel very unsafe: Imagining and fearing rape in South Africa”, Dosekun asserts that “women reported limiting their movements and activities, avoiding strange men and managing their self-presentation in public” (Dosekun, 2007: 96). Six of the fifteen women she interviewed talked about the feeling of being safe and unafraid as a right they are supposed to be enjoying daily in democratic South Africa. However, contrary to those rights, the life that women in South Africa experience possesses a diminished quality. One of the participants in her study addressed the fellow participants and said:

*“We live in fear, we feel very unsafe... so that’s sad actually that you have to live a life where you constantly have to make, you know, measures for in case [violence] happens’.” (Dosekun, 2007: 96)*

One of the participants in this study confirmed this belief when she said: “I live in fear, not crippling fear that makes me stay locked up, but a general sense of being sceptical of everyone around me”. The statements of these participants indicate that black lesbian women do not feel safe in their own environments. They always fear that something or someone is out there ready to harm them.

### 5.5 Visibility and lesbian identity

In 2007, South Africa was recognised as a rape-prone country (Dosekun, 2007: 89). However, in 2008/9 the “overall sexual offence decreased by 11.2%” and 70 514 cases were recorded. In 2013/14, 62 649 cases were recorded. Reported cases of rape stabilised, with a slight decrease of 3%, since 2008/9 from 47588 to 46 253 in 2013/14” (ISS Crime Hub 2014: 3). In comparison to men, children and women are more vulnerable targets. Even though there is an indication of a slight decrease in the number of rape cases from 2008, researchers such as Lisa Vetten (1996) and Lisa Vetten, Rachel Jewkes et al. (2008) point out that this is because victims are not inclined to report the crimes.

Furthermore, black lesbian women experience rape that is motivated by hate. As mentioned in chapter two of this dissertation, corrective rape is a form of a hate crime that is perpetuated with the motive of attacking an out group member based on their sexual orientation (Wesley, 2012). This form of attack has not only left black lesbian women scarred for life, but it has also contributed to the strife of black lesbian women's movement from invisibility to visibility and back to invisibility again. For instance, one participant mentioned that she ended up coming out of the closet due to an unfortunate brutal incident she observed involving another black lesbian.

*Brenda: I publicly declared sexuality in 2009 after Zoliswa Nkonyana was brutally killed for being lesbian (I saw this on third degree). I felt I was being missed, so I started wearing butch to be noticed.*

Something that emerges in this statement is that it is not only lesbian women who are attacked that are influenced by homophobia and hate crime, but that the threat of violence impacts on many lesbian women in different ways. Brenda chooses to resist the violence by publicly identifying as a lesbian and claiming visibility by dressing in a butch way.

In contrast to Brenda's resistance by becoming more visible in society, other lesbians find themselves retreating because of a fear of being discriminated against. In other words, threatening actions that are directed towards lesbian women contribute to whether lesbians feel comfortable exposing their sexuality. For instance, one participant mentioned that even though some other people do know about her true sexual identity, she does not feel comfortable in revealing her sexuality to new people.

*Lira: ...because I still hear whispers about who I am...at times I don't feel free to disclose my sexuality to those who don't already know about me.*

Lira's attitude might be an indication of an internalised fear that results from the continued marginalization, attacks and pathologising of lesbian women (Cohen, 2004: 33).

### 5.5.1 Homophobia

Although South Africa adopted a more liberal stance toward same-sex marriages and sexual orientation in 1996, it has made slow progress in terms of delivering on the promises enshrined in the Constitution. It is also clear that homophobia and homophobic attacks remain a problem in post-apartheid South Africa. The sexual rights of women, children and minority groups (e.g. homosexuals) are still not taken into consideration by some members of the government and community (Epprecht, 2013: 33). According to the participants of this study, there are various reasons why members of the community exhibit homophobic behaviour. The following factors are discussed: fear, threats to masculinity, and threats to the nuclear family.

#### 5.5.1.1 Fear

During the interviews, some participants pointed out that they feel that homophobic behaviour exhibited by the public is fuelled by fear. It is also clear that some South Africans believe that homosexuality is associated with white people. It is further explained that culture as one of the contributing factors, tends to pathologise and deny the existence of queerness on the African continent. As discussed in Crawford (2012: 208), some participants mentioned that there are members of the community who regard lesbians as sick or unnatural. For instance, when Lira and Pinki were asked why they think lesbians continue to be discriminated against, they said:

*Lira: ...because they see us as some sort of disease that can be passed on to others.*

*Pinki: South African communities need to realise that being a lesbian is not a sickness and lesbians are also humans who deserve to be happy...*

Both Pinki and Lira indicated in their statements that, because society views their sexuality as unnatural and foreign, they are treated like outsiders. This view is also shared by Muholi (2004: 119), when she points out that black lesbians need to face the reality that in South Africa they have become “outsiders” in their townships and rural communities. As suggested in the scholarship (Muholi, 2004; Rich, 1980; Wesley, 2012), the problem is that homosexuality is perceived and constructed through a

heteronormative lens and is thereby recognised as a phase that is bound to change. This point is also illustrated by one of the participants when she was describing a homophobic experience during the interview.

*Lira: I have not experienced a direct discrimination, but to some extent I have, like for example, in one lecture we were discussing sexuality, and some students made discriminatory comments that no one is born lesbian, rather we become lesbian because we have fought a losing battle with the opposite sex, so we turned to lesbianism. Or at times we don't have the right body, so we become lesbians.*

Comments like the one above make it clear that issues of homophobia are also related to a power struggle between men and women.

#### 5.5.1 2. Threats to masculinity

As discussed in the second chapter, society is comprised of men and women who conform to distinct gender roles. These prescriptive roles confine women to feminine roles with the result that any display of masculinity is regarded as unnatural. According to the Human Rights Watch (2011: 19), there is a close connection between gender expression (“i.e. the expression of femininity or masculinity through dress, hairstyle, and mannerism”) and sexual orientation for butch lesbians. For instance, “their masculine gender expressions signals their sexual orientation and they seldom need to ‘come out’ and tell people that they are lesbians...” (Human Rights Watch, 2011: 19). For this matter, it was pointed out during the interviews by some of the participants that one of the biggest factors they think contributes to lesbophobic attacks is the perceived threat to masculinity.

*Brenda: I've had a brief homophobic attack from some guy with his friends on campus and they said I think I have testosterone because I was with a lady that guy had his eye on.*

Brenda's statement indicates that she is threatened because she is assuming a role that is regarded strictly reserved for men. In other words, she was not assuming her role as a woman and she had consequently rejected the heterosexual female standard. As argued by Dahlstrom and Malmberg (2012: 9), men frequently perceive lesbian women as a threat to masculinity because they believe they are disrupting societal norms and

traditional values that have long existed within black communities. Typically, as argued by De Beauvoir (1989: 223), women in most societies have always been oppressed by the feature of “otherness”, which means a woman is seen as an object whose role in life is determined by men. Lesbian women, on the other hand, are expressing their emotions of love outside the presence of the subject (man). For example, they are seen as women taking responsibility for their sexuality and they thus reposition themselves as different from conventional or stereotypical women who are shaped by culture, tradition and religion. This idea terrifies men, as they sense they may lose their grip on this “otherness”. This sense of loss that men feel when they realize that they have no control over lesbian women’s sexuality is a manifestation of male power (Rich, 1980: 640).

As a response to this fear, participants felt that men react in a way that is only familiar. In that regard, most of the time they try to exhibit power through physical strength. For instance, Lira asserted that some men indicated that the reason she “turned” or became lesbian is because she hasn’t found a man who lives up to the ideals of masculinity.

*Lira: ...some men even go as far as saying maybe it is because I have not yet found a strong man, therefore they say I’m still confused. Once I get to find a real man it’s then that I will find out who I really am so they say.*

#### 5.5.1.3. Threats to the nuclear family

In South Africa, history suggests that the black community believes in traditional and cultural ways of life (Cohen, 2004: 34). The model of the traditional family structure is still considered valuable. In other words, “the nuclear family comprising a mother, father, and children born within their marriage is the exceptional rule” (Human Rights Watch, 2011: 21). This is in spite of the fact that research (Hosegood, McGrath and Moultrie, 2009: 280) shows that there has been a decline in marriage and an increase in marital instability among black South Africans. Hosegood et al. (2009: 280) argue that this issue is related to the oppressive social and political structures and the processes created during the apartheid era. Some policies in the apartheid -era, such as the labour migration system, forced couples from rural areas to live apart and prevented those who took up paid employment from living together or visiting each other.

Hosegood et al. suggest that “[m]igration of both men and women created separate spheres of living, where the different social, physical, and cultural worlds inhabited by the couple were incompatible or even threatening to each other ... Migrant men and women took other partners and formed second families at the places where they worked. Women entered the labour force in large numbers and were able to provide for themselves and their children with or without the support of male partners” (Hosegood et al. 2009: 280).

As a result, migration can be considered one of the factors that contributed to a decrease in the stability of marriages, not only because of physical separation, but because of changes in the roles of husbands and wives.

Participants in this study pointed out that lesbians are attacked or discriminated against because some members in society believe that they threaten the existence of the traditional family structure. That is, they are seen as deviating from their natural gender roles as potential wives and mothers. One of the participants claimed that this belief is so imbedded in the minds of most people that her family fails to see who she truly is because they think that, like any other girl, she will end up married to a man.

*Nandipha: ...I have a child, so they see me as their daughter who will one day marry a man. (Then she laughs and says) “what a shock they will get one day”.*

The fact that Nandipha has a child automatically frames her as heterosexual, with her family believing that she will marry to a man. Although Nandipha may demonstrate that she is interested in women, this is not even considered by her family with the automatic assumption that all relationships should be heterosexual. Nandipha’s case also indicates that, even though black lesbians might be aware of the roles prescribed by community members, they still choose to resist conforming to some of these roles.

Nthabi felt that the expectations regarding female gender roles in society contribute to homophobia. She stated that lesbophobic attacks occur because men think that all women naturally should be in relationships with men.

*Nthabi: I think it is because men think that each and every woman must have a male partner and therefore her duty in that relationship is to satisfy her partners’ needs sexually. I think for men, that is the purpose of a woman.*

According to Natasha Distiller, this is because “the possibility of ‘a sexuality autonomous from the male’... threatens the very core of patriarchy’s sense of itself, of its assumed right to control women’s sexuality, and their reproductive labour” (Distiller, 2005: 47). Additionally, men do not expect women to have an identity outside of them. This is an issue that Nthabi referred to when she was explaining why she thinks corrective rape continues to affect the lives of black lesbians.

*Nthabi: ...They look at a woman and see a sex object, that’s it! So if you are a homosexual woman, that is a woman sleeping with another woman, then you have stepped out of your purpose, and therefore you are not human enough hence they have a right to rape you, that rape will somehow “fix” you, and make you straight.*

Therefore, one can assume that the objectification of women contributes to lesbophobic attacks, which have become a big problem within black communities. Lemelle and Battle (2004: 40) draw from Alson (1974), who states that, in comparison to whites, blacks are more likely to reject homosexual relationships. As pointed out by the Human Rights Watch (2011: 19), lesbian women, particularly butch lesbians, do not conform to social expectations in terms of women’s feminine appearance. As a result, they are more vulnerable to corrective rape. While the literature suggests that lesbian sexuality is less acceptable in black communities it is important to challenge the notion that homosexuality is un-African. The perpetuation of beliefs that homosexuality is un-African and unnatural may fuel intolerant attitudes toward homosexuals.

#### 5.6 Physical environment and lesbian identity

According to Gibson and Macleod (2012: 9), physical spaces (private/public, and rural/urban) are heteronormative spaces. This requires LGBT people to manage their sexual and gender identities constantly, as well as to make decisions regarding their visibility within these spaces. During the interviews it became evident that physical environment played an influential role in the level of confidence that the participants have with regard to their sexual identity. For instance, participants who grew up in the suburbs showed a high level of self-esteem in comparison to those who grew up in the townships. The participants who grew up in a suburban environment are often less



likely to be exposed to violence and threats, and this can contribute to their sense of self-security or confidence. On the other hand, participants who come from township areas viewed discrimination as a daily reality and chose not to disclose their sexual identity. According to the Human Rights Watch, this is because “black lesbians and transgender men living in townships, peri-urban and rural areas, and informal settlements are among the most marginalized and vulnerable members of South Africa’s LGBT population” (Human Rights Watch, 2011: 2). However, in spite of their home town differences, participants seemed to share the same sentiments when it came to the university environment. The discrimination on campus seemed less obvious and it appeared that the university is perceived as a safe environment, even if no evidence has really been offered to substantiate this. However, although some participants noted that the university is regarded a safe environment, lesbian identity is not as visible as some other sexual identities. During the interview with the Out@Kovsies coordinator, it became apparent that there are some students who are still experiencing difficulties in “coming out of the closet”.

#### 5.6.1 Townships

According to Pernegger and Godehart (2007), townships are “commonly understood to refer to the underdeveloped, usually (but not only) urban, residential areas that during Apartheid were reserved for non-whites (Africans, Coloureds<sup>15</sup> and Indians) who lived near or worked in areas that were designated ‘white only’ (under the Black Communities Development Act (Section 33) and Proclamation R293 of 1962, Proclamation R154 of 1983 and GN R1886 of 1990 in Trust Areas, National Home lands and Independent States” (Pernegger and Godehart, 2007: 2). Life in these areas is not easy. It is overcrowded and people are under-resourced to deal with day-to-day challenges. Other factors that are visible in these areas are: high population, reliance on cultural values, poverty, high rates of crime, particularly rape crimes, and illiteracy (Pernegger and Godehart, 2007: 4). During the interviews, some participants pointed out that some of these characteristics are the main contributors to the rejection of homosexuality, particularly lesbian sexuality. For instance, many of them acknowledged that most

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<sup>15</sup> In other countries one may refer to mix race.

people in the townships lacked basic education about sexuality, especially homosexuality. As a result, many of the community members think that homosexuality is a state of confusion that is bound to change (Muholi, 2004: 119).

*Nthabi: ... in the townships people still lack the education on lesbians and gays. In the location you are either a straight male with a girlfriend or a straight female with a boyfriend. If you are lesbian you are confused.*

Nthabi points out that in townships heterosexual conventions dominate people's perspectives. Furthermore, Muholi (2004: 119) and Matebeni (2009: 102) argue that the reality is that black lesbians have become 'outsiders' in their townships. This, Muholi believes, is due to the fact that someone has chosen to define homosexuality in racial and ethnic terms as 'un-African'. Muholi continues by stating that while the journey continues of sharing the stories and realities of black lesbians, certain questions should come to mind. For instance, "[w]hy, in the postcolonial gender trajectory of South African township life, does heterosexual black masculinity appear to be invested in raping black lesbian women?" (Muholi, 2004: 122).

Muholi points out that many anti-colonial feminists argue that all patriarchies, irrespective of whether they operate in colonialist or neoliberal capitalist periods, actually function on what they call 'sameness' and on the

[p]ersistence of fixed identity - heterosexual/homosexual, women/men, femininity/masculinity, black/white/coloured/Indian. They argue that patriarchies must function in this way in order to consolidate masculine dominance within colonial and capitalist processes (Muholi, 2011: 197).

From this Muholi suggests that the lesbophobic rape of black South African women persists due to the disruption of this sameness and the challenge they posit to the 'fixity' of what an 'African woman' is. Furthermore, the continual state of South Africa as a homophobic, patriarchal and heterosexist nation reinforces heterosexuality as the ideal form of sexuality while it ignores and rejects the existence of other sexualities that face the same challenges as the heterosexual ideal. (Matebeni, 2009: 102).

During an interview Nthabi mentioned that in her home town she is always reminded that she identifies outside the conventional fixed identities.

*Nthabi: Back at home I am always being reminded that I am different, either by people staring at me when I pass-by or a group of guys making funny remarks when I pass by the streets. You can't even make female friends because next thing you know the boyfriend will confront you that you are trying to steal his woman. So because of that I feel unsafe back at home.*

Nthabi highlights that her sexual preference for women has placed her in danger. Participants in this study are in agreement that, when rapists rape black lesbians, it is an attempt to reconsolidate and reinforce the so-called constructed and artificial fixed identity of 'African woman', that is as "heterosexuals, as mothers and as women" (Muholi, 2004: 122). Raday (2003: 670) agrees and asserts that a number of practices that are defended in the name of culture are gender-specific. For instance, they restrict women to the roles of housewives or mothers.

#### 5.6.2 Suburbs

Life in the suburbs is populated by the middle-class. This community is set apart by its occupational status and life-style. According to Ndletyana (2014: 2), this population derives its livelihood from a salary earned on the basis of its specialised skills and expertise. It is also a community that is differentiated by its behaviour and world view. Ndletyana continues to assert that a middle-class lifestyle offers its community two primary benefits: economic development and democratic stability. This means that members of the community in these areas are focused on matters that contribute to their social and economic development.

Contrary to the community in the townships, the community of the suburbs comprises a high number of literate members who are more well-informed and sensitised to issues of identity and sexuality. Life in these areas allows for civil liberties, such as free speech, sexual and religious expression and freedom of association. Ndletyana points out that parents in these families socialise their children into a middle-class existence. Ndletyana furthermore argues that, "[f]rom early on in life, middle-class kids come to believe that middle-class is [the] only way of life, which they can easily attain and even advance further up in life" (Ndletyana, 2014: 12). This makes them middle-class children confident and secure because their physical environment provides them with a sense of

safety and security. Dk mentioned that, in her middle-class neighbourhood, her sexuality has never been regarded as a problem.

*Dk: maybe I'm oblivious but I've never encountered problems or better treatment because of my sexuality...In my experience most masculine lesbians from the locations end up seeming to come across as men, whereas the ones from the suburbs have no desire to come across as men they are comfortable with being female.*

The statement made by Dk indicates that the middle-class community may be less concerned with people's sexuality. It may also indicate that identifying as a butch lesbian in the township is a way of making oneself visible and affirming one's sexuality. Coming out of the closet in a suburban area is not as difficult as it is in the townships. This is because people do not face up to the many judgments and rejections that are witnessed in the township.

Likewise, Zee mentions that coming out in her middle-class neighbourhood was never an issue.

*Zee: my neighbourhood is accepting. It has never really been an issue.*

In addition, safety is not a big concern in the suburbs, compared with the townships where the majority of rape and hate crimes take place. Consequently, lesbians do not have to hide their true identity in fear of their safety. From these statements, one can also assume that, if a hate crime were to occur in this type of environment (middle-class), a higher level of support and protection would be available. However, many women do not have this comfort. As argued by Dosekun (2007: 90) most women in South Africa live in constant fear because they are women.

While differences emerged among participants based on their social location, one thing that remained the same irrespective of the environment was their view on corrective rape.

*Dk:...the definition of corrective rape is more or less the same for everyone, they are trying to fix what they think is incorrect. Whether you are in the location, suburb or high institution of learning, it is still the same thing.*

From the above statement one can conclude that some people believe society wishes to cure or correct lesbian sexuality while the participants in this study were more critical and realised that men see female sexual autonomy as a threat.

### 5.6.3 University

Issues of homosexuality, and especially black lesbian identity in South Africa, has attracted limited research over the years. Also, most of the women who have featured in these limited studies have fewer opportunities in terms of formal education in higher education (Blessol, 2013: 220). In addition, some of these women who participated in these studies had experienced secondary victimization either from law enforcement or from their families after hearing about the initial incident.

Every environment has an impact on an individual's identity construction and higher education institutions are no different. This study focuses on the UFS as one of the environments where students feel comfortable to express their sexuality. This is also a setting that is expected to be accommodating to all students, regardless of their sexual orientation. One of the participants felt that the university environment provides every individual with the sense of comfort, knowing that they can be who they want to be without being discriminated against.

*Dk: At University one is free to be who they want to be, after all this is a place one is supposed to explore and get to a definition of whom they are. So no one treats me like I'm doing something wrong.*

The university consists of students from diverse racial and socio-economic backgrounds and comprises many individuals with different points of view. The types of people who are found in this environment are considered to be more open- minded and accepting than those found in other environments (for example, in the townships) where lesbian identities have to be constantly negotiated or explained. Participants point out that being around educated people such as in the university makes *being different easier*.

*Kelebogile: Educated people are often open-minded about differences.*

However, Macleod (2012: 3) argues that even within institutions, there are heteronormative practices and policies which exist to favour heterosexuality and reject the existence of LGBT people. Kitzinger, in similar vein, points out that these heteronormative practices and policies shape heterosexism and reinstate heterosexuality as “the normal, natural, taken-for-granted sexuality” (Kitzinger, 2005: 477). For these reasons, some participants pointed out that they think that the perspective regarding corrective rape is the same irrespective of the environment. However, some participants hold the belief that things are different at university. For example, they state that the way that their fellow students define or understand corrective rape is different from how people in the townships define and understand corrective rape. For example, Lira provides her perspective with regards to how people view lesbians in the townships, while Brenda explains how lesbians are perceived by other students in the university environment.

*Lira: They see us as some sort of disease that can be passed on to others.*

*Brenda: A university student won't act the same way as a man from the township because they have reputations to protect.*

The statements above provide a clear indication that students in a university environment are more accepting than those who reside in townships. However, Brenda's statement suggests that university students may not openly act in homophobic ways because it is not accepted in this environment. In other words, there may be a level of prejudice but there is also a higher level of accountability dependent on social location.

Secondly, participants feel that they receive better treatment at university in comparison to where they grew up. They point out that in this environment they are not afraid to be themselves because most people do not discriminate against them. Furthermore, the university environment is made easy and bearable because of the LGBTQI organisation that exists on campus and provides a safe social space for homosexuals. It is clear that this environment is seen as a safe space for most black lesbians. This is how some participants put it:

*Lira: On campus things are a bit different than in the location. I feel like a human being.*

*Nthabi: In the locations people still lack the education on lesbians and gays. In the location you are either a straight male with a girlfriend or a straight female with a boyfriend. If you are lesbian its either you are confused...*

Lastly, participants pointed out that on campus they are much safer than back at home. Despite the fact that the LGBTQI rights are enshrined in the Constitution, many homosexuals still experience discrimination. However, participants in this study indicated that their experience on campus has indicated that education is a vital key to the acceptance of individual difference. In other words, participants believe that if people have some understanding regarding homosexuality and/or sexual orientation, then their chance of being homophobic is limited. Participants have also expressed that they would rather spend their time on campus than in their home towns.

*Nthabi: On campus, I feel much safer and understood here in Bloemfontein than back at home. This is one of the reasons I spend most of my time in Bloemfontein than at home.*

*Lira: I will rather be on campus for my entire life than the location. On campus, I don't feel entirely scared of being insulted for being who I am, rather some students embrace my sexuality and want to be my friend, they see me as a human being, and don't question my sexual preference.*

From what the participants have stated, one can argue that the university environment is more accepting and allows LGBTI individuals more freedom to express themselves. That being said, not all LGBTI individuals were able to take part in this study. However, the study considered the individual experiences of discrimination to be important and thus a qualitative methodology proved useful in this regard.

## 5.7 Conclusion

Some black lesbians do not find it easy to be themselves within their black communities. This is because black communities sometimes choose not to acknowledge homosexuality because of the belief that it is unAfrican. Consequently, black lesbians also find themselves unable to come out of the closet, fearing that they will be rejected or violated. As discussed above, being open about your sexuality in

South African black communities sometimes means putting your life in danger. Corrective rape has become one of the crimes used against lesbians to further delegitimise their sexual agency.

In this context, the university environment emerges as a better space for participants to feel free and to express their sexuality without fearing for their safety. This is because when people are in the university environment they feel obliged to be more accepting of individual differences because of the open-minded culture that has been created. However, this does not mean that the same people who are part of this university environment do not act in homophobic ways when they are not in this space.



## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter I revisit the research aims and objectives of the study mentioned in chapter one. This is done to establish whether they have been accomplished or not.

The study aimed to explore and analyze the perspectives of the UFS black lesbian students regarding the occurrences of lesbophobic attacks, particularly corrective rape. The study was driven by the fact that much of the existing research is based on violence against black lesbians who reside in the townships. As a result, studies focusing on corrective rape concentrate on the experiences of women who do not have access to formal education and/or higher education, who are located within South African townships and those who are exposed to discourses that prescribe heterosexuality as a normative way of life. This study, however, considered it important to include the perspective of black lesbians in a South African university; a group that has been largely under-researched and who have access to higher education institutions, but also identify as black lesbians. This choice allowed for an opportunity to assess the types of threats that these women experience.

The study aligned itself with the following objectives:

- Evaluating existing variants of definitions of “corrective rape” amongst the LGBT community within a higher education institution
- Examining how homophobic attitudes may manifest differently in diverse social contexts
- Investigating how social attitudes influence lesbian identification and expression
- Exploring implications of the belief that homosexuality is unAfrican

Data was analyzed using a thematic approach. Three main themes became prominent concerning the occurrence of lesbophobic attacks within an HEI and were grouped as follows: Silence around lesbian identity, Visibility and lesbian identity, and Physical environment and lesbian identity. The discussion of these themes led to the achievement of the set objectives.

The study has shown that discriminatory and homophobic behaviour towards black lesbians is found in the townships, to a certain extent in the university community, and is less prevalent in the suburbs. The study explored the perspectives of black lesbians who grew up in different geographic areas. Nonetheless, in spite of this difference, their understanding of what corrective rape entailed seemed to be common. According to the participants, corrective rapes happen because some people believe that lesbian sexuality can be changed through intercourse with a heterosexual man. Participants argue that lesbophobic attacks can occur anywhere, but they are mostly prevalent in townships. This is because township communities are still rooted in culture and/or tradition. This resonates with Harris and Salih's (2006) arguments that some men and women in society believe that women who are dating or have sexual relations with other women are acting outside their gender types and this behaviour is considered unnatural (Harris, 2005: 1; Salih, 2006: 55).

In addition, the study proved that physical spaces have an influence on people's behaviour. This has been confirmed by the experiences that the participants had in different physical spaces. It has become necessary for the LGBTI community to ensure that they express their sexuality and sexual identities within spaces that allow for sexual diversity. For instance, one participant said that whenever she goes back to the township she is always reminded that she is different because people are always looking at her and making "funny remarks" when she passes.

On the other hand, another participant said that when she is at the university she feels free because no one treats her like she is doing something wrong. The study therefore revealed that some physical spaces, like the university, are considered more positive and freer spaces. For instance, some participants asserted that the university institution is filled with many open-minded people who are more sensitised to issues of identity and sexuality. Homophobic individuals may feel compelled to adjust their behaviour or attitudes when they are in the university environment. For instance one participant said a "university student won't act the same way as a man from the township because they have reputations to protect." Participants who grew up in the townships claim that life is therefore better in the university environment. They state that when they are in the

university environment it is easier to be themselves. Participants say this even though research has proved that there are still some heteronormative practices and policies that exist to favour heterosexuality and reject the existence of LGBTI people within some institutions (Macleod, 2012: 3).

In addition, the results lead to an understanding that physical environment also plays a vital role in how individuals identify themselves. For instance, some participants indicated that they have not come out of the closet because they fear that they might be rejected by their family members. This fear exists because some black communities believe that homosexuality is a state of confusion that is bound to change. In other words, people reject homosexuality because they believe that it is not a real or a natural sexual identity. Other participants also pointed out that being a lesbian or gay in the township is difficult because people still lack education and therefore they believe that a person is either a straight male or female. Anything else is a symbol of confusion. On the other hand, one participant pointed out that most people in the suburbs are more accepting and do not have a problem with homosexuality.

Corrective rape is a form of hate crime that is predominantly experienced by black lesbians who reside in South African townships. This is because black communities in the townships associate certain cultural views and social norms with specific gender roles (Boonzaier and De La Rey, 2003: 1013). As such, many of the community members believe that each gender has to depict certain attributes. As a result, when some lesbians, particularly masculine lesbians, are perceived as not conforming to heteronormative standards they are confronted with homophobic acts. Furthermore, some participants felt that one of the biggest issues contributing to the occurrences of homophobic attacks in the townships is lack of education on sexuality.

### 6.1 Recommendations

Lesbophobic attacks remain a serious issue within black communities. Based on the findings of this study, it became apparent that the university environment also contains people who are homophobic. Some of these people have also played a role in the

homophobic attacks that the participants have experienced. For these reasons the following recommendations are made to address the existence of homophobic attacks at the university environment:

- The university should emphasise the importance of supporting the LGBTQI community. This can be achieved by ensuring that both lecturers and students play a role in the Out@Kovsies organisation, either by becoming activists or simply assisting to make sure that it contributes to the achievement of the mission of the organisation.
- The university should implement a policy that ensures zero tolerance of homophobic acts on campus.
- Furthermore, the university should ensure that homosexuals are able to fully express themselves in the same manner that heterosexual students are able to. This will show that there is equality amongst the students and that the homosexual students are not further discriminated against or isolated.

## 6.2 Limitations

The study relied on a qualitative methodology, which can be considered a limitation because the findings of the study cannot be generalized to larger populations. Furthermore, qualitative studies use relatively small samples. This study included nine participants, and consequently the opinions of the participants who took part in this study do not necessarily represent the opinion of the broader LGBTI community on campus. Also, there might be students who have experienced homophobic discrimination in the university environment but who did not take part in this study.

Despite its limitations, this study also has various strengths. Firstly, it provides a basis for further research concerning policy implementation involving homophobic attacks against homosexual students on campus. Secondly, even though the study comprised a small sample, the use of qualitative methodology ensured rich data.

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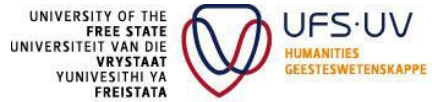
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## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



25 March 2015

Miss N Moleko  
Centre for Africa Studies (Gender Studies Programme)  
UFS

### **Ethical Clearance Application: Perceptions and attitudes regarding “corrective rape” among lesbian students at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein**

Dear Miss Moleko

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of the Humanities, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research with the following stipulations:

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is:

**UFS-HUM-2015-81**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension in writing.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted in writing to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Katinka de Wet

Research Ethics Committee (Faculty of the Humanities)

Copy: Charné Vercueil (Research Co-ordinator, Faculty of the Humanities)

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### Research Questions

#### Biographical questions:

1. What is your name?
  2. How old are you?
  3. Do you identify as a femme or a butch lesbian?
  4. How long have you been publicly identifying as a lesbian?
  5. Did you grow up in the location or suburb?
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1. Are you open about your sexuality among friends and other students at the University?
2. What has your experience been of identifying as a butch/femme lesbian at the UFS?
3. Have you ever been a victim of homophobic discrimination? If yes and you feel comfortable to speak about it, can you please describe what was said or done to you?
4. Do you feel accepted by other students at the University of the Free State?
5. Do you feel different as someone who identifies as lesbian when you go back home?
6. Please explain the different treatment that you have experienced at the UFS compared to when you are at home.
7. If the answer is yes, why do you think you experience being treated differently in these two environments?
8. What is your understanding of “corrective rape”?
9. Why do you think “corrective rapes” continue to affect the lives of black lesbians?
10. Do you think that people who reside in the locations have a different perspective about “corrective rape” in comparison to your fellow students?
11. Do you think that lesbians who reside in the locations receive different treatment from those who are here on campus/ in the suburbs?



12. In terms of comfort and safety, would you rather spend your days here on campus or back at home?
13. What solutions would you propose to the issue of “homophobic discrimination” on campus, in your community and in South Africa?

## **APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM**

**Researcher:**

**Nnuku Moleko**

**Cell # 082 406  
5798**

**Email:  
molekone@ufs.a  
c.za**

**Research  
Supervisor:**

**Ms Nadine Lake**

**T: 051 401 3813**

**Email:LakeNC@  
ufs.ac.za**

### **INFORMED CONSENT:**

Dear Participant

I would like to invite you to take part in the following research project:

“Perceptions and attitudes regarding “corrective rape” among lesbian students at the University of the Free State. Bloemfontein.”

This study is about the lived experiences of lesbian students at the UFS regarding homophobic discrimination and violence.

I would like you to participate in this research because as a minority sexuality group your opinion and experiences of “corrective rape” and homophobic discrimination will provide insight into understanding the way in which homophobia is experienced by black lesbian students in different environments.

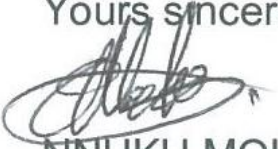
If you agree to be part of this research and feel emotional distress or experience any trauma from speaking about sensitive issues, I have arranged that you speak to a trained counsellor at the University of the Free State.

I appreciate your participation in this important study and the valuable contribution that you can make. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part in it. If you do choose to take part, and an issue arises which makes you uncomfortable, you may at any time stop your participation with no further repercussions.

If you experience any discomfort or unhappiness with the way the research is being conducted, please feel free to tell me, and also note that you are free to contact my study supervisor (indicated above).

Should any difficult personal issues arise during the course of this research, I will make sure that a qualified expert is contacted and able to assist you.

I assure you that all information which you have shared will be dealt with ethically and responsibly and that your identity will remain confidential. All of the data collected and analysed during the interview process will be kept in a safe place and the data will be destroyed after the research process has been completed. The findings of the research will also be made available to all participants and I hope that this study will create awareness around the issue of “corrective rapes” and homophobic violence and the way in which these issues are understood and impact on the lives of black South African lesbians.

Yours sincerely,  
  
NNUKU MOLEKO

Please fill in and return this page. Keep the letter above for future reference

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Study: Perceptions and attitudes regarding “corrective rape” among lesbian students at the University of the Free State. Bloemfontein.

Researcher: NNUKU MOLEKO

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Name and Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

(Criterion type): BLACK LESBIAN STUDENTS

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

- I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the abovementioned research study.
- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and what the risks and benefits are.
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation, subject to the stipulations he/she has indicated in the above letter.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_