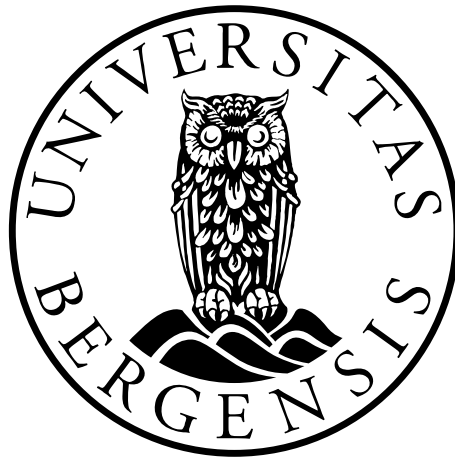


Perceptions of Youth towards Homosexuality in Ghana

Naa Motsoo Allotey



Master of Philosophy in Gender and Development

Spring 2015

Faculty of Psychology
Department of Health Promotion and Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Haldis Haukanes for her patience and guidance throughout the writing of this thesis and her warm and motherly care through the study period.

I would also like to thank Thomas Sogaard for his insightful suggestions and contributions. I am also grateful for the input and support of my colleagues in the GAD programme, especially Gloria Buabeng and Gervin Apatinga. To my parents, I say a big thank you for always pushing and supporting me to pursue my dreams and aspiration.

Thanks to Edward Sackey and my daughter Nkumin Sackey for providing me with the needed emotional support and understanding throughout the thesis writing period. Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to everyone else whose names are not mentioned here for contributing in all manner of ways to this research.

Bergen, May 2015

Naa Motsoo Allotey

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
ABSTRACT	6
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	7
Introduction.....	7
Localizing Homosexuality in the Ghanaian context	8
The Legal Framework on Homosexuality	10
Dominant and Emerging Discourse of homosexuality in Ghana	11
<i>Media</i>	12
<i>Politics</i>	12
<i>Religion</i>	13
Human Rights Activism on Homosexuality in Ghana	14
Objectives.....	15
Organisation of the Study.....	15
CHAPTER TWO: HOMOSEXUALITY IN AFRICA: A LITERATURE REVIEW.....	16
Introduction.....	16
Studies on homosexuality in Africa	17
Existence of Homosexuality	17
Lesbianism in Africa.....	18
Homophobia in Africa.....	20
Politics and Homosexuality	22
Gay Activism in Africa.....	23
Studies on Youth and Homosexuality	24
Studies from Africa.....	26
Contribution of my study	28
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	30
Introduction.....	30
Study Area	30
Gaining Access, Recruitment of Participants and Challenges Involved	31
Methods	34
Interviews.....	34
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	36
Expert Interviews.....	38
Ethical Consideration & Reflexivity	41

Data Analysis and Limitations of Study	42
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	43
Introduction.....	43
Queer Theory and the Concept of Heteronormativity.....	43
Deviance	46
CHAPTER FIVE: NORMATIVE GENDER IN THE GHANAIAN SOCIETY	50
Introduction.....	50
Traditional Views On Ghanaian Masculinity And Femininity	51
<i>Breadwinner and Caregiver</i>	51
<i>Household Chores</i>	53
<i>Temperament And Behaviour</i>	54
<i>The Reproductive Arena and Marriage</i>	55
Preventing Gender Deviations	56
FLEXIBLE AND CHANGING GENDER ROLES.....	57
<i>Shared roles and responsibilities</i>	57
<i>Gender roles differ from household to household</i>	57
<i>Intergenerational, Locational and Situational Differences</i>	58
<i>Education and Modernisation as drivers of change</i>	60
Crossing Boundaries	61
Capabilities of Men and Women beyond the Private Sphere.....	61
Gender roles Unchanged.....	63
Discussion	63
CHAPTER SIX: RECOGNISING AND ENCOUNTERING HOMOSEXUALITY	66
Introduction.....	66
Spaces for Encountering Homosexuality.....	66
<i>Senior and Junior High Schools</i>	66
<i>Media</i>	67
<i>Parents and Community</i>	68
Religious Beliefs and Social Norms.....	69
Identifying Homosexuals and Describing Homosexuality	71
<i>Defining Homosexuality</i>	71
<i>Behaviour as a Marker of Sexual Orientation</i>	71
<i>Physical/Bodily Appearance</i>	72
<i>Sexual Practices of Homosexuals</i>	73

Cross Dressing vs. Homosexuality	74
Rights	75
Discussion	76
CHAPTER SEVEN: WHY HOMOSEXUALITY?	79
Explaining Homosexuality	79
<i>Environment/Genetics/Socialization</i>	79
<i>Socialization</i>	80
<i>Mental Disorder</i>	81
Homosexual Practices as Strategy.....	82
<i>Money and Peer Pressure</i>	82
<i>Spiritual Possession and Ritual Activity</i>	84
<i>Sexual Pleasure</i>	85
Acceptance or Rejection.....	86
Discussion	87
CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	89
REFERENCES	91
APPENDIX	99

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of the youth towards homosexuality in Accra, Ghana. Data from the study was obtained from male and female student and non-student youth as well as through interviews and focus group discussions.

The thesis draws on the concept of deviance and heteronormativity to explore gender norms and understand homosexuality in the Ghanaian society.

Data showed that young people recognise existing traditional gender norms as well as changing and flexible gender roles in Ghanaian society. Data from the field also revealed largely negative attitudes to homosexuality from both males and females students and non-students. Education was a minor factor in changing perceptions about homosexuality.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Heterosexuality is the most common form of sexual orientation in the world. Other forms of sexual orientations such as homosexuality, bisexuality and asexuality are characterized as abnormal and viewed as deviations from normal sexuality i.e. heterosexuality in many societies. According to Herek (2000), homosexuality encompasses a variety of phenomena related to a same-sex sexual orientation. Homosexuality includes both male-male and female-female sexual relationships. It must be noted that throughout this thesis, the term same-sex relationships will be used interchangeably with the term homosexuality.

Worldwide, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons experience vast amounts of discrimination, harassment and victimization from society. In addition, many places in the world do not provide a safe environment for people of sexual minorities to live and express their orientation freely. The United Nations further reports that, in more than 70 countries, laws make it a crime to be homosexual, exposing millions to the risk of arrest, imprisonment and, in some cases, execution (UNHCR, 2010).

The African continent is seen as a highly homophobic continent with low tolerance for homosexuals and non-normative sexualities. In about 37 countries in Africa, homosexual acts are deemed illegal (Bruce-Jones and Paoli Itaborahy, 2011) . Although some countries such as Cape-Verde, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, amongst others have no explicit laws criminalizing homosexual relations, others such as Benin, Burundi, Cameroun and others have provisions within their laws that make homosexuality illegal and punishable by law¹ (Global Legal Research, ("Laws on Homosexuality in African Nations," 2014) . Although this is the case in Africa, South Africa became and is the first and only country on the continent to legalise gay marriage in 2006 (CBCNews, 2006). In Africa largely, there has been public outrage and outburst against the practice of homosexuality in the form of mass protests, abuse, persecution and killings. For instance, in Uganda, David Kato, a gay activist was murdered in his home in a few weeks after winning a court case against a Ugandan newspaper (Rice, 2011) . In South Africa also, an LGBTI activist, Thapelo Makhutle, was also killed in

¹ By the Staff of the Global Legal Research Directorate Law Library of Congress. (2014). *Laws on Homosexuality in African Nations*. Retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/criminal-laws-on-homosexuality/homosexuality-laws-in-african-nations.pdf>

2012 (Defenders, 2012) . The prevailing situation has also taken a political toll as powerful state actors such as President of Zimbabwe, Namibia, Swaziland, Uganda, Egypt and Ghana have made public statements against homosexuality in the past decade. The on-going debates around homosexuality on the continent often border on the ideas that it is a western concept imported thorough colonialism; a mental illness and un-African amongst other rhetoric targeted at de-Africanizing the phenomenon as we shall see in the following sections and in the literature review chapter. This thesis is an effort to bring to fore the voices and perspectives of the youth in Ghana on homosexuality in order to contribute to the overall ongoing discussions on the phenomenon on the continent.

This chapter shall discuss homosexuality in the Ghanaian society and the legal framework regarding homosexuality in Ghana. It will further discuss the dominant and emerging discourse on homosexuality in Ghana. This chapter concludes by looking at gay activism in Ghana and the objectives of this study.

Localizing Homosexuality in the Ghanaian context

Ghana follows in the footsteps of other African nations to reject homosexuality as western imposition and as alien to Ghanaian culture. However, contrary to popular beliefs, non-normative genders and sexualities has existed and has been practiced in Ghana in both secret and open spaces. Ghanaian culture recognises and labels men and women whose gender performance does not conform to traditional masculine and feminine constructs. Different terminologies from different clans are used to describe non-normative genders in Ghana. In Akan, an effeminate man is called “**Obaa barima**” meaning woman man. Therefore a man who performs his gender as a woman is known as an Obaa barima. In Fante, the term “Kodjo Besia” is also used to describe effeminate man. It literally means man woman (Kodjo, a name for boy born on Monday and Besia, which means female).

However, it must be noted that the performance of a gender different from one’s sex does not necessarily imply a sexual attraction to individuals of the same sex. Asante and Roberts (2014) argue that, “the term [obaa barima] is often used to [describe] androgynous men whose gender performances are neither “male” nor “female” nevertheless; it does not specifically relate to the Westernised construct of “gay” and “homosexual” (p. 125). Asante and Roberts (2014), also state that culturally, an “obaa barima” did not mean a man or a woman was gay or lesbian, but it is also often used as a form of ridicule or playfully referred to by other men.

In addition, Nyeck and Epprecht (2013), argue that the term Obaa Barima, “reflects the transferability of gender” (p. 182). The term Barima is also used to describe women who were manly and brave and also described one’s sexual virility (Clark, 1992, p. 722 in Nyeck and Epprecht, 2013). Clark (1992) further argues that in Asante, women who were called Obaa Barima were women who “achieved financial independence and commanded respect” (cited in Nyeck and Epprecht, 2013, p. 182).

Ajen (1998) however argues that “Kojò Besia” is a local synonym for an males who have sex with males (MSM) in Ghana (cited in Murray and Roscoe, 1998). This term has also been used by local media to refer to homosexuals (Boateng 2011a, Daily Guide 2013, Daily Guide 2013a in Søggaard, 2013) . The derogative term for an MSM is “trumutu.” (Søggaard, 2013, p. 27)

Supi is also another local term for lesbianism. According to Dankwa (2009), “the term supi is popularly associated with the affectionate ties pubescent girls forge at boarding-schools; it describes close female friendships that are emotionally and materially significant. The senior supi protects and supports her junior, while the junior may fetch water, wash, and run errands for her senior. The exchange of gifts is emphasized as the key feature of being someone’s supi” (p.195). Dankwa (2009) further argues that the meaning of supi had changed overtime from mutual care in the past to erotic relationships. Ajen (1998) argues that this practice is common in single sex female schools, although the sexual nature of the relationship would not be known until one party disclosed the information (often due to disagreements) to the public (cited in Murray and Roscoe, 1998).

To add, the performance of a gender different from one’s sex often includes dressing like the opposite sex. As a result, cross-dressing is often confused with homosexuality. In Ghana, cross dressing is practiced publicly in some public tertiary institutions. According to Geoffrion (2012), “festive cross-dressing is understood as a contemporary ritual that mainly serves the purpose of reinforcing and reproducing gender binaries as well as heteronormativity in Ghanaian society. Nevertheless cross-dressing events also provide a subjective, creative and exploratory space – although temporary and circumscribed – for the transvestites as well as for the spectators to deconstruct sex, gender and sexuality through the performativity of transvestism” (p. 48). In addition, Geoffrion (2012), “cross-dressing is

tolerated in society as long as it respects certain rules. It should only be practiced during festive occasions where many other young people cross-dress” (p. 48). Cross dressing within this space is regarded as normal and can therefore not be conflated with homosexuality. It serves an opportunity for males to assert their dominance over subordinate men and women.

The Legal Framework on Homosexuality

In this section, we shall discuss the legal framework of Ghana with regards to homosexuality.

Homosexuality in Ghana is broadly frowned upon by various societies and groups in Ghana. Following the outburst of an alleged conference of gays and lesbians in Accra in 2006, Ghana joined the public discourse on homosexuality on the continent. Although Ghana has no explicit law against homosexuality, the Criminal Code of 1960 has provisions which make the arrest and imprisonment of many gay men and women possible in Ghana.

A closer look at Ghana’s current law on homosexuality reveals its linkages to colonial laws put in place by the British. Generally speaking, colonialism has had a heavy impact on Ghana’s social systems, culture, laws and other spheres of life. Ghana was colonised by the British and gained independence on 6th March 1957. As a British colony, Ghana’s laws with regard to adoption, marriage and related laws were largely influenced by its colonial masters. Its law on same-sex relationships is therefore derived from the British. In the United Kingdom, the same-sex marriage act was passed by its Parliament and came into force on 13th March 2014². In addition, same sex couples are currently also now allowed to adopt children according to the Adoption and Same-Sex Act of 2002. Despite the fact that the former colonial master i.e. United Kingdom has changed its laws regarding this issue; its former colonies including Ghana have not followed suit. Quite contrary, the topic is treated as a western import brought in by colonial masters and this has resulted in heavy resistance and criticisms from many African countries towards the United Kingdom in this matter.

Ghana’s constitution criminalises what is referred to as unnatural carnal knowledge in its Criminal Code, 1960 (Act 29), the amendment to 2003 Section 104 on Unnatural Carnal Knowledge states,

“(1) Whoever has unnatural carnal knowledge— (a) of any person of the age of sixteen years or over without his consent shall be guilty of a first degree felony and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years and not more than twenty-

² "[Marriage \(Same Sex Couples\) Bill](#)". (2013). House of Commons. Retrieved on 2nd April 2014.

five years; or (b) of any person of sixteen years or over with his consent is guilty of a misdemeanour; or (c) of any animal is guilty of a misdemeanour.

(2) Unnatural carnal knowledge is sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal.

"Unnatural carnal Knowledge", is a term that is generally understood to cover sexual behaviour other than the penetration of a naturally born male's penis into a naturally born female's vagina. It is also defined at common law to involve penile penetration of anything other than a vagina and also extends to include many sexual practices of heterosexuals. Moreover, the law is also silent on female to female sex relationships. Due to the fact that, the definition of the term, "unnatural carnal knowledge" and extent of the law is unclear and contestable, several arrests of homosexuals have been made in Ghana.

In 2010, the Constitutional Review Commission set up to review the 1992 constitution, received submissions on the issue of homosexuality. A majority of submissions received suggested that homosexuality was not to be recognised in Ghana³, arguments from the public suggested that homosexuality was unnatural; could lead to extinction; was against the laws of nature laws of God; that animals did not engage in homosexuality amongst others. At the end of the review of the constitution, the Commission in making its recommendations, suggested that, "the legality or otherwise of homosexuality be decided by the Supreme Court if the matter comes before the Court"⁴. As a result, various interpretations of the law exist and the arrests and persecution of of homosexuals still continues with the basis on this law.

Dominant and Emerging Discourse of homosexuality in Ghana

As indicated earlier, in 2006, the subject of LGBT became a hot topic of public discussion in Ghana following a conference on homosexuality slated for that year (BBC, 2006). Following massive media reports on the upcoming event, the government of Ghana banned the conference claiming that it would promote the spread of homosexuality (GhanaWeb, 2006). Since then, various campaigns including demonstrations have been organised in the country against the practice of homosexuality.

⁴ Constitutional Review Commission Report. 2010. Available at http://www.ghana.gov.gh/images/documents/crc_report.pdf, Retrieved on 15th October 2014

Media

Using the print and electronic media, many publications tended to present the views of the Ghanaian public as a unified voice although no public poll had been conducted on the issue. The Ghanaian media which is a powerful tool often presents a stereotyped image of homosexuals and more than often presents homosexuality in a negative, inhumane manner which often sparks negative public debates on the issues thereby contributing to the marginalization of the group (Quist-Adade, Bates, & Wathanafa, 2014). In the month of February this year, two incidents about homosexuality surfaced on the media after a long period of silence on the topic. A popular music producer suspected to be gay was beaten by a mob in Nima, a suburb of Accra (GhanaWeb, 2015). This incident was recorded and later published online to serve as a deterrent to other homosexuals. In another incident, two students accused of engaging in sodomy were nearly lynched by the student body. Police attempts to protect the accused students led to rioting which resulted in the death of one student (CITIFM, 2015) .

Politics

The topic of homosexuality cannot be discussed devoid of its political dimension as many of the laws and policies of country make the practice unacceptable. In 2011, British Prime Minister David Cameron threatened to limit aid to countries which were anti-gay (DailyMail, 2011). The British Government had subsequently cut aid to Malawi by £19million after two gay men were sentenced to 14 years hard labour (DailyMail, 2011). The British Prime Minister, David Cameron, also received a lot of negative criticism on this course of action from many countries in Africa including Ghana. The Ghana Government led by the Late President Atta Mills responded by stating that said the UK could not dictate to Ghana and that he would never legalise homosexuality (BBC, 2011). Various state and non-state actors also made public pronouncements against the Prime Minister's utterance. The Minister of Trade and Industry, Hannah Tetteh also added that "every society has its norms and what it considers to be acceptable. In the Western world, it is acceptable to have gay relationships and even move on to the next level to gay marriages; in our society, it is unacceptable," (GhanaWeb, 2011). She further stated, "all efforts are being made to get rid of these people in the society," (GhanaWeb, 2011). Paul Evans Aidoo, Ghana's Western Regional Minister also asked landlords and residence of western region to report any homosexual to the police for arrest (Sidibe, 2011).

The current President Mahama of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, represented by Information Minister Ayariga on assuming office after the death of Atta Mills, also stated that the President's position on homosexuality was that it was criminal and punishable under the laws of Ghana (MyJoyOnline, 2013). This statement was made following negative criticisms the president had received because of his ties to Andrew Solomon, an American gay lobbyist.

Religion

Religious leaders have not been left out of the ongoing discussions. From 2006 till date, Christian and Muslim leaders have condemned homosexuality calling it an abominable act contrary to the laws of the Bible and Holy Quran. In 2006, the Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Nuhu Sharubutu, National Chief Imam, congratulated the Government for banning the alleged conference and further called on religious leaders to support the Government (GNA, 2006). The Metropolitan Archbishop of Accra, Reverend Charles Palmer-Buckle, also backed the President's decision on a local radio station stating that Ghana should maintain its values despite the situation (GhanaWeb, 2011). A member of the Chief Imam's Educational Fund in Ghana, Alhassan Abdulai added that muslims in Ghana would stage a demonstration against announced plans by the British government to push for legitimization of homosexuality in Ghana (GhanaWeb, 2011).

Another religious leader, Reverend Stephen Wengan stated, "If homosexuality is tolerated, very soon the human race will be extinct (Sidibe, 2011) . The Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church, Most Reverend Professor Emmanuel Asante, said that human beings could not justify the act of homosexuality and added that even animals do not practice it (GhanaWeb 2011). In addition, The Presbyterian Church of Ghana which was associated with the United States Presbyterian Church also severed ties with the USA's branch of the church following its decision to recognise same-sex marriage (GhanaWeb, 2015) .

Furthermore, some religious bodies have made attempts to transform homosexuals. A representative of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Rt. Rev. Amenu stated that the "E.P. Church would through prayers and counselling seek to transform its members who might be homosexuals but punish them if they persist in the practice. He said homosexuals cannot justify their status as normal and a craving to satisfy their desires because God does not encourage us to satisfy all our desires" (GhanaWeb, 2011). In 2011, the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana asked for the government's clear stance on homosexuality in

order to provide necessary support such as the establishment of a therapy centres for homosexuals to undergo counselling and rehabilitation (GhanaNewsAgency, 2011) .

Human Rights Activism on Homosexuality in Ghana

In spite of the dominant negative views on homosexuality, a few individuals, religious leaders and human rights organisations have come out in support of gay rights. Despite the unified voice of religious leaders on homosexuality, a Ghanaian Vatican cardinal criticised Uganda's anti-gay law and called for the repeal of its severe penalties (HuffingtonPost, 2014) .

In Ghana, gays and lesbians rely on human rights organisations such as the Human Rights Advocacy Council (HRAC), the Gay and Lesbian Association of Ghana which is under the Centre for Popular Education and Human Rights Ghana (CEPHERG) and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) to provide social and legal support for them. The Human Rights Advocacy Council (HRAC) provides various services such as legal services, human rights education, and representation for LGBT people on various levels including the media and government. The organisation has handled a number of cases involving homosexuals. In one instance, the former executive director, Nana Oye Lithur took over the legal aspect of a case where LGBT persons in James Town were brutalised. In another case where a homosexual was lynched; the organisation took care of the victims hospital bills and assisted the victim to make a police report. It is surprising however that the former Director Nana Oye Lithur now the Minister for Gender, Children and Social protection since assuming office in 2013 has not been at the forefront for minority issues in Ghana. This may be because her position as minister would be compromised if she used her office to promote gay rights.

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) is legal arm of the Government charged with safeguarding the rights of individuals in Ghana. The organisation has a special desk called the HIV & Minority Desk which occasionally meets to discuss matters of the minority group.

Amidst the politically charged environment, there is an emerging but subtle discourse on the continent which supports gay rights. The discussion on homosexuality presented in this chapter indicates a strong dominant outlook on homosexuality in Ghana. However, the activism and support for homosexuals in Ghana is present although minor cannot be overlooked. This thesis therefore seeks to highlight the voices of young people in Ghana on the topic of homosexuality.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to find out how youth in Accra perceive same-sex relationships. The following are sub-objectives to be explored under the study:

- Explore and describe young people's perceptions of homosexual relationships and the factors that shape young people's ideas of same-sex relationships.
- Determine what characterizes youth's perception of normative male and female identities in Ghana and how they inform expected behaviors and gender roles.
- Explore and discuss the possible change in perceptions of young people on same-sex relationships and identify what is informing this new discourse.
- Explore gendered and educational differences in perceptions towards same-sex relationships amongst youth.

Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into 8 chapters. The first chapter contains the introduction and background to the study. The second chapter reviews the relevant literature on homosexuality. The third chapter describes the methodological tools used in the study. The fourth chapter focuses on the conceptual frameworks identified for the interpretation of the empirical material. The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters discuss the empirical data. Chapter fifth discusses normative gender in the Ghanaian society. Chapter sixth discusses how young people recognise and encounter homosexuality. Chapter seven answers the question: Why Homosexuality? And the final chapter concludes with a summary and an account of the major arguments of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: HOMOSEXUALITY IN AFRICA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Researching homosexuality on the African continent can prove to be very challenging because of the nature of the topic. As discussed earlier in the introduction and background chapter, dominant public discussions on homosexuality are mostly negative although, homosexuality and non-normative genders have been recognized and localized in the Ghanaian language and society. However, the prevailing denial of its existence and the heated political and social tensions surrounding the topic makes researching difficult. As we shall see in this chapter, some incidents of presence of homosexuality have been recorded in ancient documents and in oral history. However, in spite of the evidence of homosexuality on the continent, subjects of research, some Africans scholars and some members of the African diaspora in the United States have been quick to deny its existence in the African society. These inconsistencies about the origin of homosexuality and this denial of its existence has led to its tabooization of the practice on the continent (Murray and Roscoe, 1998). Aderinto (2008) also states that this was further exacerbated by the fact that early twentieth century anthropologists tended to dismiss findings when they observed evidence of homosexual behaviors, and refused to accept the practice as an institutionalized or indigenous sexual orientation

In this chapter, I give an overview of studies related to homosexuality conducted in Africa and Ghana. I begin by giving an account of historical studies on the existence of male to male homosexuality in Africa and Ghana, followed by studies on lesbianism and the problem of labelling of sexual identities/categories. The chapter goes on to discuss homophobia and outlines some of the reasons contributing to mass homophobia on the continent. We then discuss the political dimension of homosexuality, and the rise of gay movements in Africa. Studies on youth and homosexuality spanning across various continents will then be presented, followed by studies from Ghana and Africa and finally the contribution of my study.

Studies on homosexuality in Africa

Existence of Homosexuality

A common belief about homosexuality expressed by most Africans is that homosexuality is alien to African culture. Antonio (1997) argues that the homosexual discourse is flooded with arguments that homosexuality is “unAfrican” and absent in pre-colonial Africa. In his work, Antonio (1997) is reluctant to use the preposition 'in' to locate homosexuality within African culture, but chooses rather to align the practice in relation to culture. Antonio claims that the 'absence' of homosexuality in pre-colonial Africa is used by those who oppose homosexuality to proscribe it as a deviant practice (p. 295) .

In the book *Boy-Wives and Female Husbands: Studies of Homosexualities*, Stephen O. Murray and Will Roscoe (1998) provide a groundbreaking discussions and evidence of existence of African homosexual practices and non-normative gender. The book presents a collection of essays highlighting the historical presence of same-sex practices throughout the African continent. They explore woman–woman marriages in their many forms, transgendered spiritual leaders who for centuries guided their tribes, female warrior "kings," alternative gender identities among the Swahili, the regulation of sexuality in colonial Zimbabwe, the evolution of male homosexuality in modern West Africa, and much more, reflecting the astonishing diversity of the African GLBT experience. Murray and Roscoe (1998) further argue that homosexuality existed both in pre-colonial and modern times despite missionary measures to curb and criminalize homosexuality which were later on picked up by colonial and postcolonial government (Murray and Roscoe, 1998).

Murray and Roscoe (1998) go on to cite examples of pre-colonial existence of same-sex social and sexual relationships among several different Ugandan ethnic groups, including the Langi, the Iteso, the Baganda, the Bahima, and the Banyoro. Referring to, E.E. Evans Pritchard amongst the Azande of Northern Congo, they argue that same sex practice was institutionalized to the extent that warriors paid “bride price” to the parents of boys (Murray and Roscoe, 1998). This goes to show that the practice was longstanding and part of tradition in these places.

Murray and Roscoe (1998) also account for homosexual practices in West Africa. Murray and Roscoe (1998) argue that the Ashanti who reside in present - day Ivory Coast, “used male slaves as concubines, treating them like female lovers” (p. 91). According to Hutchinson

(1861), “male concubines wore pearl necklaces with gold pendants. When their masters died, they were also killed (p. 129 – 30 cited in Murray and Roscoe, 1998, p. 91). Also, in the early 19th century, the Ashanti and other Akan people were said to have engaged in crossdressing and homosexual practices which were accepted, although this changed with the influx of missionary activity (Murray and Roscoe, 1998).

Paul Parin (1980) said, “In every village there are some men who, for neurotic reasons, do not have sexual relations with women. A number of them are known to practice occasional reciprocal masturbation with boys” (p. 204 cited in Murray and Roscoe, 1998). He argued that bisexuality is also more common among women.

In the early 1970s, Itala Signorini (1971) also describes “age - stratified homosexuality” among the Nzema (Nzima) in Ghana (cited in Murray and Roscoe, 1998, p. 91). In addition, “the husband pays bride wealth to the male wife’s parents, as he would for a female bride, and celebrates with a wedding banquet. The same incest taboos that restrict availability of women apply, and divorce requirements for male couples are the same as for male - female ones. The male wives are younger than their husbands, but usually the difference is not generational — for example, a thirty-year-old marrying a twenty-year-old” (Signorini, 1971 cited in Murray and Roscoe, 1998, p. 91). However, Signorini (1971) also reported that Nzema men acquired same - sex partners for “social, not sexual consumption” and that they persistently denied practicing “sodomy” (Murray and Roscoe, 1998, p. 91).

Lesbianism in Africa

Although much of the literature on homosexuality in Africa focuses on males, there are a few studies on female homosexuality. In Kendall’s study on lesbian women in Lesotho, she stated that at the end of her research, she was unable to locate individuals labelling themselves as lesbians although Lesotho women practiced deep kissing, mutual manipulation of labia majora, dildo play, and female to female marriage. What she discovered rather was a ‘widespread, apparently normative erotic relationships among the Basotho women [she] knew, in conjunction with the absence of a concept of this behaviour as ‘sexual’ or as something that might have a name’ (Kendall, 1998, p. 157). In addition, women who were both wives and mothers often had equally passionate, loving relationships with other women. From this Kendall argues that same-sex practices in Africa are not foreign impositions, but rather that homophobia, in the Western sense of the word, was an imposition (Kendall, 1998, p. 157)

Various researchers have also recorded woman to woman marriages in about 40 pre-colonial African societies and in West, South and East Africa as well as Sudan (Mbiti, 1974; Maillu, 1988; Cadigan, 1998; Ngaruiya and O'Brien, 2000; O'Brien, 1977 in Atanga, Ellece et al., 2013 ; Amaduime, 1987). Although some researchers argue that even though some woman to woman marriages may have the element of lesbianism (Herkovits, 1937 in Atanga, Ellece et al., 2013), not all researchers agree with this claim (Krige, 1974; Obbo, 1976; Amaduime, 1987 in Atanga, Ellece et al., 2013).

In *Tommy Wives, Lesbian men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-sex practices*, Morgan and Wieringa (2005) discuss traditional institutionalised forms such as female bond friendships, women marriages, transgender and same-sex identified healers, girl's erotic play at boarding schools including 'mummy-baby' relationships, initiation rites, elongation of the labia and kitchen parties, contemporary forms such as political lesbian organisations and homophobia.

Ife Amaduime (1987), a Nigerian Sociologist, in her book, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands*, stated that female-to-female marriage among the Nnobi Igbo should not be confused for lesbianism, arguing instead that support and cooperation between women, "do not imply lesbian sexual practice" (Amadiume, 1987, p. 7). She explained further by directing her remark at black lesbians who adopted "prejudiced interpretations of African situations to justify their choices of sexual alternatives which have their roots and meanings in the West" (Amadiume, 1987, p. 7)

Both Kendall and Amaduime's individual studies brings to the forefront the problem of labelling (categorisation of individuals on the basis of what is perceived as sexual) in research. Kendall whose study revealed women who refused to call themselves lesbians but engaged in what could be referred to as lesbian practices and Amaduime work which rejected the labelling of female to female marriage as lesbianism shows the discrepancies in the labelling of sexual identities in practices across different contexts. The question arises as to who defines what and which terms can be used in which contexts. Can 'western' labels be appropriately used in African contexts? Why do participants refuse such label? Is it for the fear of been persecuted? It also raises the question of labelling sexual identities as individuals who do not fit into what is viewed as 'normal heterosexuality' are seen as deviants. What is considered deviant often attracts negative stereotypes as in the case of homosexuality.

To add, those who 'come out'/identify themselves as homosexuals are often the target of abuse and social ridicule in some parts of Africa. Instances of corrective rape (individuals are

raped because of their sexual orientation in attempts to transform them into heterosexuals), assault, sexual and verbal abuse of a number of lesbians were brought to the public domain in 2003 in South Africa (Aggleton and Parker, 2010). In Namibia, the issue of corrective rape has also been discussed and documented by lesbians in local forums and video documentaries (Aggleton and Parker, 2010).

Homophobia in Africa

What, according to social science research, is the reason for the mass homophobia that exists on the African continent? Some studies link homophobia with colonialism others argue that homosexuality is rather a colonial import. In an attempt to dispel the presence of homosexual practices on the continent before colonialism, former colonial master countries have been accused of introducing homosexuality unto the continent. However studies discussed above show the presence of homosexuality on the continent before the arrival of the colonial masters. Morgan and Wieringa (2005) argue that “homophobic post-colonial governments perpetuated colonial policies in denouncing same-sex relations, and that it seems a perverse distortion of African history to label same-sex relations as a ‘western import’ ” (Morgan and Wieringa, 2005, p. 13). Many African governments are still using colonial policies against homosexuality that were in place before the colonial masters left their countries. Many governments fail to question why the colonial masters put in place such laws if there were no homosexual practices prior to colonialism.

In *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*, Marc Epprecht documents the history and tradition of sexuality in Southern Africa and discusses how queer culture has been shaped and influenced by colonialism. *Hungochani*, means *homosexuality* in the indigenous chiShona language of Zimbabwe and was adopted for common use in the 1990s by gay rights activists to underscore a “proto-queer identity firmly rooted in history” (Epprecht, 2004, p. 4). Epprecht (2004) in line with Kendall (1998) and Roscoe and Murray (1998) argues that “dogmatic revulsion against same-sex behaviours, acts, relationships, and thoughts (that is, homophobia) was introduced into the region by European colonialists and preachers” and that “Africans were encouraged through these discourses to equate homophobic constructions of sexuality with civilization and progress” (Epprecht, 2004, p. 225). Thus Africans sought to achieve civilization by denouncing certain practices such as homosexuality as instructed by colonialists.

The impact of western preachers on the African way of life cannot be overlooked. Colonialism also introduced Christianity to most parts of Africa and this altered the African way of life. Klinken's article on "*Homosexuality, Politics and Pentecostal Nationalism in Zambia*", focuses on the role of religion in determining post-colonial nationalist beliefs that seek to control homosexuality in the Zambia. He argues that "the Zambian case presents a mobilisation against homosexuality that is profoundly shaped by the local configuration in which Christianity defines national identity—and in which Pentecostal-Christian moral concerns and theo-political imaginations shape public debates and politics" (Klinken, 2014, p. 259). Since the Christianity preaches against homosexuality, many African Christians support the criminalization of homosexuality. Christianity plays a strong role in many of these countries as indicated in Zambia where the Zambian identity is now conflated with the Christian identity.

One of the reasons for mass homophobia on the continent is linked to the HIV/AIDS pandemic which hit the continent. In Epprecht's second book *Heterosexual Africa?* which builds on Hungochani, he explores the idea that homosexuality is alien to Africa. He traces the historical trajectory of this idea which he argues was constructed—by anthropologists, ethno psychologists, colonial officials, African elites, and most recently, health care workers seeking to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic in some parts of Africa. He further restates his argument that it was rather homophobia and racism that were introduced unto the continent by European colonial authorities, settlers and scholars as opposed to homosexual practices. He argued that this idea has seeped into studies on African sexuality and has resulted the pervasive myth of a timeless, "singular African sexuality" defined by "heterosexual promiscuity, gender violence, and [a] lack of...internalized moral restraints" (Epprecht, 2008, p. 2). He further stated that a "blind spot", that is the discounting of possible male to male HIV/AIDS transmissions was created in AIDS prevention programs during the HIV/AIDS pandemics which swept across Africa in the 1980's. Epprecht (2008) was of the view that the reification of homosexual relations by AIDS researchers is a contributing factor to homophobia on the continent today (p. 48).

Awondo et al (2012) argue that the debate around homosexuality in Africa has encouraged a stereotypical image of one homophobic Africa devoid of the internal debate and disagreements among Africans on the subject of homosexuality. By juxtaposing 4 countries, namely; Cameroun, Senegal, Uganda and South Africa, Awondo at al (2012) argue that there

are varied ways (power, witchcraft and occultism) in which homophobia is politicised in these countries (Ibid). They further argue that western countries which are viewed as supposedly tolerant express homophobic sentiments in everyday life citing Netherlands as an example (Awondo, Geschiere et al., 2012).

Politics and Homosexuality

The topic of homosexuality cannot be discussed devoid of politics. African government's views acceptance of homosexuality and pro-homo activism as a form of neo-imperialism in which western countries dictate to African countries through policies. Thus the backlash from both state and non-state actors is seen as a resistance to western imposition. Oliver Phillips' article, *Zimbabwean Law and the Production of a White Man's Disease* provides an overview of the government's role in the homosexual discourse in Zimbabwe and the rejection of homosexuality as un-African by its President Mugabe and his supporters. Phillips argues that the marginalization of gays in Zimbabwe serves to "reinforce the frontiers of a consensual hegemonic national identity" (Phillips, 1997, p. 485). Phillips further argues that gays as a minority group has undergone a "process of exclusion" and have been labelled as the "other" which is outside the Zimbabwean identity (Phillips, 1997, p. 485) . Phillips argues that although the attack on gays was delivered in the same fashion as that of the boycotting and redistribution of white businesses in 1994/5, the greater goal is to foster "a stronger sense of normative identity through the censure of marginal groups and the reinvention of tradition" (Phillips, 1997, p. 485).

In *Constituting the Global Gay: Issues of Individual Subjectivity and Sexuality in Southern Africa*, Phillips (2000) also argues that President Mugabe's ideas of a fixed gender binary system and his position of privilege has resulted in his belief that homosexuality is deviant to Zimbabwean culture thereby indirectly affirming heterosexuality as universal.

Sylvia Tamale (2011) shows in her book on *African Sexualities* that African leaders have used homosexuality as a political tool and as a diversion from the continents socio economic problems such joblessness, extreme poverty, and bad governance. In *Out of the Closet: Unveiling Sexuality Discourses in Uganda*, she claims that "homosexuality threatens to undermine male power bases in the Ugandan "private" sphere (at the level of interpersonal relationships and conventional definitions of the "family"), as well as in public discourses (where myths abound about what it means to be a man or a woman)" (Tamale, 2003, p. 19).

She further argues that “homosexuality presents a challenge to the deep-seated masculine power within African sexual relations, and disrupts the core of the heterosexist social order” (Tamale, 2003, p. 19).

In Ghana, the political toll of the issue was explored when Essien and Aderinto (2009) examined how a proposed conference on gays and lesbians “created tensions and repercussions from the social, cultural, religious and political factors, which worked to repress same-sex discourse in the country”. They observed that the resulting contestations which arose revolved around what was considered “African” and “un-African” sexuality. They found that “the government of Ghana and religious institutions did not view homosexuality as a human rights issue as in the case of South Africa, but a form of ‘sexual colonialism’ or Western imposition on Ghanaians” (Essien and Aderinto, 2009, p. 121).

Gay Activism in Africa

Despite being labelled as one of the worst continents to live as a homosexual, the activism of gay rights movements on the continent is on the rise. In South Africa, lesbians are reported to have organised themselves along political and social lines in the 70’s and 80’s (Zimmerman, 2000). Barnard argues that although homosexuality has never been illegal in South Africa, members of the minority group practiced their activities covertly for fear of public persecution until 1982, when the Gay Association of South Africa was formed (Ibid).

These organisations also face many challenges in mobilising and funding. In Awondo’s, *The Politicisation of Sexuality and Rise of Homosexual Movements in Post-Colonial Cameroon*, he examines the rise of ‘homosexual’ organisations in Cameroon and explores the linkage between a critical political analysis of the concept of homosexuality and the emergence of the homosexual movement in Cameroon. He argues that the connectedness and dependence of the pro-homosexual movement on international support of two main organisations, the *Association pour la Défense des droits des homosexuels* (the Association for the Defence of Homosexual Rights) and *Alternatives-Cameroun* is both a resource and a constraint (Awondo, 2010).

Currier’s *Out in Africa* examines lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) organizations in Namibian and South African and explores their usage of visibility and invisibility as strategies to aid in their work. She argues that intentional invisibility allows

“movement organizations temporary respite from repression, prying gazes, or unfavorable media coverage” (Currier, 2012, p. 4). She further states that it is a daunting task as activist in South Africa and Namibia struggle to use their visibility strategies to dispel the myth that homosexuality is un-African whilst at the same time using historically foreign concepts of sexuality and gender in their advocacy in order to receive funding from the West (Currier, 2012).

These organisations often fall to the west for funding for their activities. As a result, the organisations come under attack as they are seen as perpetuating a western agenda. They also are forced to use western labels of sexual identities in order to access funding.

Studies on Youth and Homosexuality

In this section, I present studies on youth attitudes and perceptions towards homosexuality. I start from studies United States of America (USA), Singapore and narrow down to studies from Africa and then finally studies from Ghana. Many of the studies presented here were conducted using qualitative and mixed methods; however these studies set the foundation for possible similar responses from this study.

Studies show that students’ level of study in school affects their attitudes towards homosexuality. In a study in the United States, 10th and 12th grade adolescents and college-aged young adults participated in a study to assess their beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality, their comfort with gay and lesbian students, and their judgments and reasoning regarding the treatment of gay or lesbian peers in school (Horn, 2006) . The results of this study suggested that middle adolescents (14–16) were more likely than older adolescents (16–18) and young adults (19–26) to exhibit sexual prejudice related to social interaction with gay and lesbian peers (Horn, 2006). In this study the level of education affected respondents’ attitudes towards homosexuality as younger students exhibited more prejudice than older students. Horn’s study shows how respondents relate to gay peers in the school environment and uses social interaction to assess their ideas about homosexuality which is similar to this research. This research goes beyond exploring participants relationships with gay persons within and outside the school environment to determine how it influences their attitudes.

Young people are also noted to be open minded about homosexuality. In national survey conducted in 2013 in the US, it was found that there has been a shift in attitudes towards same-sex marriage. This was attributed to the fact that 70% of young adults, described as the

Millennial generation (born in the 1980's) are more open to gay rights than previous generations (PewResearchCentre, 2013) .

Studies show that gender differences occur in views on homosexuality. Females often tend to have more positive views on homosexuality than males. In a study conducted in the US on the linkages between heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men and their interpersonal contact experiences, it was revealed that “interpersonal contact was more likely to be reported by respondents who were highly educated, politically liberal, young, and female. The data indicate that interpersonal contact is strongly associated with positive attitudes toward gay men and that heterosexuals with characteristics commonly associated with positive attitudes are more likely than others to be the recipients of disclosure from gay friends and relatives” (Herek and Glunt, 1993, p. 239). Herek’s study showed that when individuals come into contact with homosexuals they are more open and welcoming towards them. Females with higher levels of education had positive attitudes. Another study conducted at a Midwestern University in the US, geared towards finding out gendered differences of college students attitudes towards homosexuality, it was indicated that more female college students were supportive of homosexual community than males (Lehman and Thornwall, 2013). In a survey conducted amongst Black American heterosexual adults, the results indicated that negative attitudes toward homosexuality are widespread, and that men’s attitudes toward gay men were more negative than their attitudes toward lesbians or women’s attitudes toward gay men (Herek and Capitano, 1995). Similarly, this study seeks to examine the gendered differences in young people attitudes towards homosexuality.

In other cases, gender does not play a role in determining attitudes towards homosexuality. A study on homosexuality in Singapore involving 365 student respondents sought to examine individual attitudes towards homosexuals and also whether gender differences in attitudes towards homosexuals existed (Lim 2002). The results of the study generally suggested that respondents harboured negative attitudes towards homosexuals. The study also concluded that the prevalence of such ambivalent attitudes seemed to suggest that respondents were still generally quite conservative in their attitudes towards gender roles and homosexuality (Lim 2002). In this study both male and female students expressed negative attitudes towards homosexuals. Their ambivalent attitudes implied that respondents sought to maintain existing traditional gender roles of males and females.

Maintenance of traditional gender roles and gender role conformity has been found to influence sexual prejudice. Whitley (2000) found that respondents negative attitude towards homosexuals was linked to by a desire to maintain traditional gender-role distinctions. In another study, it was found that the sex and gender role characteristics of the participants influenced perceptions of the gender role attributes and homosexuality. It was also discovered that “men who deviate from gender-related expectations society has for them are more likely to be judged as homosexual than women who deviate from their socially-determined gender role prescriptions. Men who act the way society expects are seen as masculine, and therefore, heterosexual; men who do not act like men are perceived in a manner similar to women and are, therefore, thought to be homosexual” (Wong, McCreary et al., 1999, p. 29). Men who exhibit masculine characteristics would not have their sexual orientation questioned as opposed to men who acted in effeminate ways. Women on the other hand are judged less harshly. Likewise, this study explores study participants notions of gender roles and how it shapes their ideas about homosexual behavior.

Religion also plays a role in determining attitudes towards homosexuality. The study further revealed that “religiosity, adherence to traditional ideologies of family and gender, perception of friends’ agreement with one's own attitudes, and past interactions with lesbians and gay men” shaped participants attitudes (Herek, 1988, p. 451). According to studies conducted in both Western countries and non-Western countries, religion serves as one of the strongest predictors of attitudes towards homosexuality (Adamczyk and Pitt, 2009; Arndt and De Bruin, 2006; Schulte and Battle, 2004 ; Tan, 2012 in Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al., 2014).

Studies from Africa

A few studies from Africa are presented here. In a study conducted amongst University students in Zimbabwe on their attitudes and perceptions towards homosexuality, it revealed that students were hostile towards homosexuals. The study also discovered that some respondents were accepting and tolerant towards homosexuals (Mtemeri, 2015). In another study conducted amongst students at the University of Zululand in South Africa on their attitudes towards homosexuals it was revealed that, “while students possess high levels of aversion toward homosexuals, the level of ostensible acts of discrimination is low” (Ncanana and Ige 2014, p. 569). Even though students in this institution expressed negative attitudes towards homosexuals, they were aware of the presence of homosexuals on the university

campus and did not discriminate against them. Students believed that homosexuals were human beings being who deserved rights and freedoms like anyone else.

In a survey of 880 heterosexual students on attitudes towards homosexuals at a University in Gauteng in South Africa, it was discovered that heterosexual students have negative attitudes towards lesbians and gay men (Arndt and De Bruin, 2006). It also revealed that “gender and religiosity has an influence on attitudes towards lesbians and gay men, and that no differences exist between race groups concerning attitudes towards lesbians and gay men” (Arndt and De Bruin, 2006).

From the literature reviewed above, from studies conducted in Europe, United States, Asia and Africa on perceptions, attitudes, view and beliefs about homosexuality, results show that whilst some exhibit negative attitudes towards homosexuality, others show positive attitudes towards homosexuality (Arndt and De Bruin, 2006; Herek, 1988; Mtemeri, 2015; Ncanana and Ige, 2014; Lehman and Thornwall, 2013). Studies in the United States and South Africa show that religion influences perceptions and attitudes towards homosexuality (Herek, 1988; Arndt and De Bruin, 2006). Studies from the US and South Africa also show that females express more positive attitudes towards homosexuality (Herek and Glunt, 1993; Lehman and Thornwall, 2013; Arndt and De Bruin, 2006). On the contrary, a study from Singapore showed that female students expressed similar negative attitudes as male students towards homosexuals (Lim, 2002).

Few studies exist on youth and homosexuality in Ghana. In a quantitative study aimed at exploring the incidence of homosexuality practices in the senior high schools, it was revealed that homosexuality is practiced among the senior high schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis (Ofori, 2014). In another study conducted amongst students of the University of Development Studies, it was revealed that levels of awareness of homosexual practices among students were very high (Haruna, 2015).

Studies have also shown that Ghanaian students exhibit negative attitudes towards homosexuality. In a quantitative study conducted at the Ghana Technology University on students’ attitudes toward homosexuality, it was found that students expressed high levels of negative attitudes towards homosexuality (Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al., 2014). Haruna (2015) also revealed that perceptions and level of tolerance was negative of students towards

homosexuality was negative. Findings of these studies are similar to Lim (2002) and Herek and Capitanio (1995) which revealed negative attitudes towards homosexuals. Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al.'s (2014) study also revealed that, gender and religiosity had influences on attitudes. Females, first and second year students expressed higher negative attitudes than male, third and fourth year students. This is similar to results from studies from the US and South Africa (Herek and Glunt, 1993; Lehman and Thornwall, 2013; Arndt and De Bruin, 2006). It was also revealed that Christian and Moslem students showed greater negative but similar attitudes compared to those who belonged to the Traditional African religion (Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al., 2014). This is also similar to studies in the United States and South Africa (Herek, 1988; Arndt and De Bruin, 2006).

On the other hand, in another study by Essien and Aderinto (2009) on general attitudes towards homosexuality, it was revealed that a cross section of students at the University of Ghana do not subscribe to the ideas of regulating sexual behaviour of homosexuals. Findings of this study are similar to outcomes from the Pew Research centre (2013). Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al.'s (2014) study is similar to this study as this study seeks to find out youth's views on homosexuality and identify the factors that shape their perceptions. This study is however qualitative in nature and goes beyond statistics by bringing out the participants views through the use of interviews. This study expects to find similar outcomes from these studies (Ofori, 2014 ;Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al., 2014; Haruna, 2015; Essien and Aderinto, 2009).

Contribution of my study

The issue of homosexuality which was initially not spoken about openly has entered into the public discourse with discussions around it occurring in various arenas including the state, church, media amongst others. Much of the discussions focuses on male same sex relationships, although the term encompasses both men and women same-sex relationships. While there are few studies on homosexuality in Ghana and Africa in general, fewer studies focus on the youth (Tamale, 2010; Amaduime, 1987; Murray and Roscoe, 1998; Epprecht 2013; Kendall, 1998; Morgan and Wieringa, 2005; Ofori, 2014; Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al. 2014; Haruna, 2015; Essien and Aderinto, 2009). These few studies focusing on voicing out youths opinions on homosexuality from the Ghanaian context employ both quantitative and mixed method approach to the phenomenon (Ofori, 2014; Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al. 2014; Haruna, 2015; Essien and Aderinto, 2009). This thesis employs a qualitative approach in

order to look deeper into the phenomenon and also includes the perspective of non-student youth. This thesis therefore serves as a contribution to existing literature on homosexuality in Africa as a whole and expands the literature in this field by specifically understudying homosexuality in the Ghanaian context. This thesis also goes beyond proving the existence of homosexuality on the continent and goes further to explore the perceptions of the younger generation in Accra. This study also includes the perceptions of non-student youth on homosexuality in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Yin states that “qualitative research involves studying the meaning of people’s lives under real world conditions, and has the ability to represent the views and perspectives of participants of participants in a study” (Yin, 2011, p. 8). Furthermore, Denzin and Lincoln (2010) argue that, “the aim and function of qualitative inquiry is to understand the meaning of human action by describing the inherent or essential characteristics of social objects or human experience (cited in Lindlof and Taylor, 2010, p. 23). In addition, Silverman indicates that, “...if you are concerned with exploring people’s life histories or everyday behavior, then qualitative methods may be favored” (Silverman, 2013 p. 13).

One of the main aims of this study was to explore how young people perceive and understand gender norms and what shapes their ideas about homosexuality. In order to meet the objective of this study, this research adopted a qualitative approach in order to illuminate and provide an insight into youths understanding towards the phenomenon of homosexuality. In this chapter, I will describe the methods used in gathering data for this study. I will also give an account of the study area, accessibility, recruitment of participants and challenges encountered on the field, reflexivity and ethical considerations involved in the study.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Accra, the capital of Ghana which is located in the Greater Accra Region in the South. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census(PHC), the region is the second most populous region recording 4,010,054 people(GSS, 2013b). Accra the highest population density in Ghana (GSS, 2013). The regions’ age structure is a youthful one with adolescents and young adults(15-29) totalling 74.5% (GSS, 2013). The three main religions practiced in the Accra metropolis are Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion.

The study took place at two sites in Accra, the University of Ghana, Legon (Ayawaso Central) and Adabraka Sahara (Osu Clottey). The University of Ghana is the oldest and largest of the five public Universities in Ghana. There are two campuses for the University of Ghana, the Legon campus which caters mainly for regular fulltime students and the Accra City Campus of the University which provides part-time education for adult persons and for persons who prefer not to study full time.

The University of Ghana is my alma mater and during my years there as a student and after, I experienced many instances where students were accused of homosexuality (GhanaWeb, 2009). In addition, there are many media claims that there the University of Ghana campus is a hotspot for gay activities (GhanaMma, 2013). As a former student therefore, I was interested in exploring student youth perspectives on this issue.

In addition, I was also interested in juxtaposing the differences between youth with higher education and those with lower education. I expected to find that those with higher education would have more liberal and positive attitudes towards homosexuality than those with lower education. I felt that higher education enables individuals to expand their knowledge and views on issues such as homosexuality and therefore as a result would have more tolerant views as opposed to those with lower education.

To target youths with lower education, I recruited participants from the University of Ghana campus and Adabraka. Adabraka is a locality found in the Accra Metropolitan district, in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Adabraka Sahara is located within Adabraka in the Osu Klottey Sub-Metro of Greater Accra Region. It is an unplanned human settlement without basic social amenities. It also has a high rate of crime and drug peddling (GhanaWeb, 2005). The dangerous nature of the site was unknown to me at the time of the data collection. I had initially targeted Adabraka because majority of the residents spoke my local dialect which is Ga and I was also familiar with the neighbourhood. I also was able to secure a venue to conduct my focus group discussion at an organisation I volunteer for (The American Field Service) which was located in Adabraka. However, because of some challenges discussed below, I had to scout around for research participants and ended up in the Sahara part which I did not know existed in the wider Adabraka locality. As my friend and I were speaking to a group of men at Sahara about my research, a police car arrived on the scene with policemen armed with guns a few metres from us. However, the group of men we were talking to did not seem alarmed and explained that it was rather a frequent occurrence. The police subsequently arrested some individuals and left after about 10 minutes. In spite of this occurrence which mentally upset me, I was able to conduct the interview in the neighbourhood.

Gaining Access, Recruitment of Participants and Challenges Involved

In identifying student participants for my research, I initially visited the city campus of the University of Ghana. After two days of scouting the campus in search of participants to no

avail, I learnt that during the summer, students from the city campus were transferred to the main campus at Legon to continue studies. This was because students from the city campus could take up residence on the main campus and conclude final lectures for examinations which also took place on the main campus. I then shifted my study area to the main campus at Legon.

At the main campus, I visited my former work place, the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA). I volunteered at the Centre as a student and therefore I had relationships with many of the workers. I was welcomed and allowed access to the resource centre and other facilities at the Centre. In addition, I assisted with a number of tasks such as participating and commenting on weekly presentations by National Service Personnel and interns at the Centre. I then recruited the services of one of the National Service Personnel to assist me in the study. She had recently completed her University degree and also had friends in other levels who were still students. The research assistant was to assist me with translation and recruitment of participants for the study. The language spoken by the Ga ethnic group which resides in Accra is Ga, of which I am one. However, since Akan (Twi) is widely spoken in Ghana, many residents of Accra also speak and understand this language. Although I speak and understand both Ga and Akan but I have difficulty with certain terminologies that are used. I asked my research assistant to help me in this area as she also spoke Ga and Twi. The research assistant was not present during the interviews with the students since the mode of communication was English. However, the research assistant was present during two individual interviews with non-students. She took a passive role during these interviews. I conducted those interviews in both Ga and Twi but in the case where I could not express myself well to for the participants to understand the question I had posed, I would ask her to rephrase the question. Also, in cases where the participant said something, I did not understand, I would ask her to explain to me.

I experienced a few challenges at the University campus. Aside the shift in location to the main campus, there was a difficulty with recruitment of students. Since my research assistant knew some students, she made some calls in order to recruit participants for the interview. Unfortunately, it dawned on us that the students she knew were regular students who were on vacation. I therefore resorted to scouting the campus for distance learning students. I would approach students who were walking on campus but they were not interested as most were preparing for their exams and did not have time for an interview.

I later realised that students were usually on their way to lectures or exams when walking around. I therefore decided to try something else, moving from dormitory to dormitory to identify research participants.

My research assistant would sometimes accompany me on these tours, other times, I went around by myself. Because of the busy nature of students, I encouraged them to set their own free times and location for the interviews. Students were also mainly relaxing in their dorms and so some agreed to the interviews to be conducted at the same moment. Some of the research participants also referred other students to me for the research.

Participants for the non-student interview were drawn from the University of Ghana campus. These participants were low-level workers on the campus. I recruited some from the Bush canteen on campus. Three were hairdressers and one male was a shop keeper and the other male was a cleaner.

To conduct the FGD at Adabraka with non-student participants, I was able to secure a venue at the American Field Service Office. Although I had a venue, individuals did not have the time to spare to join an FGD and finding an appropriate time for those who were interested to converge at the venue was also difficult. However after speaking to one of my former colleagues who was now a Teaching Assistant at the University, he agreed become my research assistant to help me recruit participants. This research assistant was present during the recruitment of participants in Adabraka Sahara. He also took a passive role in the research, only participating when I asked him to translate a word or sentence.

An initial challenge I encountered during the initial stages of identifying participants was the use of the term “same-sex relationships”. Prior to going to the field I had reservations about using the term homosexuality in the interviews. I felt people did not like to talk about the topic and that I would face criticisms and resistance to partake in the research. I therefore I changed the term homosexuality to same-sex practices in my research proposal. However, in the field when trying to build a rapport with participants, I noticed that people seemed confused when I used the term same-sex practices and I had to further explain and inadvertently use the term homosexuality, hence I changed the term same-sex relationships back to homosexuality for my thesis topic.

Methods

Data for the study was collected within 3 months from June 2014 to August 2014. Given (2008) states that, “in qualitative inquiry, researchers tend to use triangulation as a strategy that allows them to identify, explore, and understand different dimensions of the units of study, thereby strengthening their findings and enriching their interpretations”(p. 892). I used three different methods in my research. These were individual interviews, focus group discussions and expert interviews. It was essential to use a variety of methods in order to increase the credibility of the findings of this research and also to “identify, explore, and understand different dimensions of the units of study” (Given, 2008 p. 892). The individual interviews and focus group discussions were also conducted according to gender and level of education. This was to meet one of the objectives of the study which sought to account for gendered differences in perceptions and also to account for differences between more educated youth with less educated youth.

Interviews

According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), “the intention of an unstructured interview is to expose the researcher to unanticipated themes and to help him or her to develop a better understanding of the interviewees’ social reality from the interviewees’ perspectives” (p. 2). In addition, Becker and Geer, “in this kind of interview, the interviewer explores many facets of his interviewees concerns, treating subjects as they came up in the conversation, pursuing interesting leads, allowing his imagination and ingenuity fill reign as he tries to develop new hypotheses and test them in the course of the interview” (Becker and Geer, 2009, p. 28).

Prior to going for fieldwork, I planned to conduct ten interviews, five with student and the other five with non-students. However on the field, the total number of participants I interviewed for the research was eleven youth. I interviewed six students and five non-students. Out of the six student participants, four were females and two were males. Out of the five non-students, three were females and two were males. Interviews with students were conducted in English whilst interviews with non-students were conducted in both Ga and Twi.

The participants were between the ages of 19 and 32. The interviews began with an introduction and description of the purpose of the research. Biographic data of participants was also taken. Out of the 11 interviews conducted with both students and non-students, only one female student was married with children.

The interviews lasted about an hour on average. Participants both students and non-students came from had diverse backgrounds, course levels, ethnicity amongst others. Interviews with students were conducted in dormitories, lecture halls and open spaces without interruptions and interferences. Interviews with non-students were conducted at their places of work. There a number of disruptions as participants had to stop and attend to customers every now and then. In some cases, non-student participants would agree to the use of English language as mode of communication, however, I realized sometimes that midway during the interview; they would not understand the questions so I would switch to either Ga or Twi. The use of English language also facilitated discussions. I was assisted by my female research assistant in two of these interviews.

In order to make participants relaxed and ease them into the conversation, I began with broad questions bordering on participants roles and duties performed at home, family life, activities and roles played by each member of the family amongst others. Follow-ups were done in order to probe more and to get a clearer and deeper understanding of the participants' ideas. Participants were then asked about their individual ideas about gender roles and the differences in the roles of men and women. Participants were also asked about society's expectation of gender roles in society. This was followed by questions on homosexuality. The questions posed ranged from views about homosexuality, when they first heard about homosexuality and their reactions and feelings about it. Participants were also asked about general discussions on the topic within the family, amongst friends and society. Participants were asked about the issues of human rights, their religion and how that influenced their ideas about homosexuality. To close the discussions, participants were asked if they had anything to add or say which they felt they did not get the chance to in the earlier stages of the discussion. Generally, discussions went well with participants; however, I noticed that in the interviews with the men, they seemed more vocal whereas the women in the study were not as open. Hence interviews with some of the women were short.

Participants were encouraged to ask questions and raised issues of concern after and before commencement of interviews. Some of the questions that were posed to me were why I was interested in this particular topic and why the need to conduct research on it since the society's stance on the issues was clear. I answered by stating that it was a personal interest of mine that arose out of curiosity and also that I wanted to solicit opinions of a specific category of people, i.e., the youth.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

According to Krueger and Casey (2000), a focus group study is a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, nonthreatening environment”(p. 5). Since focus group discussions have been identified to “work well to determine the perceptions, feelings, and thinking of people about issues”, data about the perception of the youth was collected using this method (Krueger & Casey, 2000 p. 12). FGD’s is a good method for exploring and eliciting social norms. According to Jakobsen (2012), “In FGDs, the goal is that participant’s converse among themselves, questioning, challenging and answering one another” (p. 113). In addition, “what is said reflects participants’ judgments of what is appropriate to say in the group, generating data of dubious individual value, and uniquely useful for exploring predominant social norms and values” (Jakobsen 2012, p. 113). FGDs help bring out what is commonly thought and expressed as acceptable social norms in a given society.

Prior to going for field research, I decided to conduct four focus group discussions, two with students and two with non-students. However, because I was encountering challenges with the focus group discussion for the non-students, I decided to conduct an additional group discussion with male students whilst re-strategizing.

In total therefore, I conducted a five focus group discussions, three were all males and the other two were all female. Each of the gendered groups was further distinguished by level of education. Hence two all-male and one all-female FGD’s was conducted at the University of Ghana campus and the other all-male and all-female FGD were held in Adabraka Sahara. These groups were categorised by gender and education in order to determine the gendered differences and educational determinants in youth perceptions. In each of these groups, participants aged between 19 and 32. The oldest person was 40. I did not limit my selection with an age ceiling since the category of youth in Ghana is very flexible and related to status (whether one is independent or not, is married or not, is employed or not etc.) more than age (Adomako Ampofo and Boateng, 2007; Miescher, 2007 in Karen Geoffrion, 2013). We engaged in discussions covering gender roles and homosexuality in Ghana. I was assisted by my friend in recruiting members for the FGD. The FGD’s lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour and 20 minutes. All FGD’s discussed the same themes.

The most challenging method was conducting the FGD for both students and non-students. As stated earlier, students were busy preparing for examinations at the time of the interview hence identifying individuals to partake in an FGD was difficult.

The first FGD was made up of five male students. As I was preparing to leave the Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) to conduct my usual rounds, I noticed two men heading towards my direction and staring. I decided to use the opportunity to find out if they were students and if they were interested in my research. They subsequently asked their roommate if they were interested and invited me over to their dorm for a discussion. At the beginning of the discussion, four of the students were very open and interacted with each other. In this discussion, there was one dominant participant; I therefore had to pose direct questions to other members in order to hear their opinions. The themes discussed included gender roles, responsibilities, societal expectation of gender roles, and changes in gender roles in society, views on homosexuality, human rights and religion amongst others.

The second FGD comprised of five male students. I was assisted by my research assistant in the recruitment of the members on our usual rounds through the dormitories. The group was initially made up of three students and two more joined from the next dormitory. Participants were in their final year of study but were from different backgrounds (ethnicity, age, study courses). In this discussion, all participants were very vocal and lively in the discussions and did not want the discussion to end as it became very interesting.

The third FGD comprised of six females. The recruitment was done on routine dorm to dorm rounds. All students were in their first year of university and studied the same course. They however did not live in the same dormitory and are of different backgrounds (ethnicity and age). In this group, four members were more interactive, whilst one person did not participate at all even when asked about her opinions. The sixth student occasionally answered a few questions during the discussion.

The last two FGDs took place at Adabraka Sahara. Because some of the non-students had work schedules, it was also difficult to fix a date and time that was appropriate for all other participants. I therefore assisted by a friend to conduct the FGD in Adabraka Sahara. Prior to visiting the locality, I was familiar with Adabraka in general but had never been to the Sahara section of the area. As we were walking in search of willing participants, we ended up at the

said place. The first female group welcomed us but the discussion could not take place because they refused to give their biographic data, even after explaining that their names would not be used in the research.

The first male non student FGD consisted of 5 men with ages ranging between 20 to 40 years. The group was seated at a bicycle workshop and agreed to partake in the discussion. The neighbourhood was very noisy and the sitting arrangement of the men made it difficult to interact well. There were also interruptions as the men were working and attending to clients whilst partaking in the discussion. Some individuals (two women and a man) also were present during the discussions, but did not partake. The main language used for this non-student FGD was Ga, hence my friend assisted in translation. Refreshments were provided at the end of the discussion.

The second FGD with non-students were conducted with women in the same locality. These women ranged from 24 to 29. The group consisted of 5 women who lived in the same compound. The women in this group were quite active in the discussions. There were however interruptions from children playing on the compound and loud music in the locality. The main language used for this non-student FGD was Twi, hence my friend assisted in translation. Refreshments were provided at the end of the research.

At the beginning of each focus group, I indicated the aim and basic guidelines for the discussion such as mutual respect of each person's opinion amongst others. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, some FGD members would not contribute to discussion, hence I would ask them of their thoughts about the issue. Some non-student FGD participants demanded money as compensation for their time; however I indicated at the beginning of the discussions that as a student conducting research could only provide refreshments at the end of the discussions.

Expert Interviews

Beeke (1995) states that an expert is a person who is “particularly competent as authorities on a certain matter of facts” (cited in Flick, 2009, p. 165). Bogner and Menz (2000) argue that, “experts have technical process oriented and interpretive knowledge referring to their specific professional sphere of activity. Thus, expert knowledge does not only consist of systematized and reflexively accessible specialist knowledge, but it has the character of practical knowledge in big parts” (cited in Flick, 2009, p. 165). I relied on contact persons and my

research assistant to connect me with some experts. I interviewed five experts. The interviews lasted for about an hour on average. These were a Pastor of the Presbyterian Church and General Secretary of the Bible Society of Ghana, the Greater Accra Regional Imam and Chairman of Islamic Preachers of Ghana, the Chief Psychiatrist of the Accra Mental Hospital, the Head of the Gender Unit of Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and the Acting Executive Director of the Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC). These experts were identified because they have special/technical knowledge which is related to their professions. I also interviewed them in order to get a socio-political background for the study and also to receive expert opinions on same-sex relationships.

During the interviews, questions were posed about respective fields and positions of experts. I also inquired about their respective institutions experience with homosexuality, I asked about general discussions in the Ghanaian society about homosexuality and the role of their respective institutions in addressing the issue.

I was introduced to the General Secretary of the Ghana Bible society by my research assistant who attended the same church as he did. This interview had to take place outside office hours on a weekend in his home which raised concerns for my parents as I live far from the city and it was dangerous for me to commute at night. My research assistant took me to his house where I re-introduced myself and the aim of my research. He in turn introduced me to his wife and welcomed us into his home. Afterwards, his wife excused us and I conducted the interview myself in the presence of my research assistant.

In contacting the Imam, I asked one of my Muslim friends if he knew any Muslim leader. He then introduced me to the son of the Imam who informed his father about my research. I was then given an appointment in his home and was driven halfway to the residence the Imam's son. The interview was early in the morning so I had to wait for about 30 minutes for the Imam. I re-introduced myself and told him about the aim of my research. I also held the assumption that all experts spoke and were fluent in English. However, my interview with the Muslim leader exposed the lack of fluency on his part in English language. Although the interview went very well, I felt perhaps if I had prior notice, I would have gotten a translator to assist with the interview.

My research assistant also introduced me to a doctor who worked at the Accra Mental Hospital. This doctor in turn set up an appointment for us with the Chief Psychiatrist. On the

day of the appointment, my research assistant and I waited for about 2 hours as he was not in his office and nobody knew his whereabouts. On arrival, I introduced myself and the purpose of my research. He then gave me another appointment. On the morning of the appointment I sent a text to remind him of the meeting and he responded in the affirmative. I arrived for the scheduled appointment and I had to wait for another hour. When he finally appeared to speak to me, he asked me to re-introduce myself and the purpose of my research. I explained again and he asked me how long the interview would take. Afterwards, he agreed to the interview and led me to his office. There was a third party present during this interview. It was apparent the Chief Psychiatrist was working with him. This made me feel uncomfortable as I felt was intruding. This interview was very brief.

I was a bit nervous about the expert interviews. I also felt that the unequal power relations between the experts and me would affect my ability to conduct the interviews properly. However because of familiarity with the HRAC and CHRAJ representatives, I was more relaxed for those interviews. The interview with the representative of CHRAJ revealed that he was former GAD-Bergen student. We had a long chat about the GAD department and Norway in general.

Prior to fieldwork, I had planned to interview a traditional leader. However, because of ongoing festivities and challenges with setting a convenient appointment. We then resorted to email the interview guide as suggested by the traditional leader. However, after many calls and reminders, I did not receive the answers to the guide.

I then used the opportunity to interview a representative of the Human Rights Advocacy Centre (HRAC), a human rights organisation based in Accra. I choose this organisation because it is one of the very few organisations at the fore front of fighting for human rights in Ghana. In addition, its former Executive Director Nana Oye Lithur (now Minister for Women and Gender Affairs) was in the lime light of society for speaking against the abuse of rights of homosexual. It was easy to get in touch with the acting Executive Director as he was my mate from University. I was able to set an appointment for the interview.

I encountered a number of challenges in my expert interviews. Some of the difficulties encountered were difficulty in setting time for many of the experts. I had to wait long hours for some scheduled interviews which were later on cancelled and rescheduled. Some experts were busy and had to conduct interviews in a rushed manner.

Ethical Consideration & Reflexivity

According to Lee and Renzetti (1990), “a sensitive topic is one which potentially poses for those involved a substantial threat, the emergence of which renders problematic for the researcher and/or the research collection, holding and/discrimination of research data”(p. 512). Furthermore, “the sensitive character of a piece of research seemingly inheres less in the topic itself and more in the relationship between that topic and the social context within which the research is conducted” (Lee & Renzetti, 1990, p. 512). Research with regard to homosexuality in Ghana is a very sensitive issue because it deals with Ghanaians view as deviant and abnormal. It was therefore necessary to ensure that codes of ethics were applied throughout the research process.

Participants in the research were informed of the possible implications of the study and permission was sought from them before engaging them in the study. Participants in the study refused to sign consent forms, although oral consent was given. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants, pseudonyms have been used to protect the identities of participants. All interviews and focus group discussions were recorded with the permission of research participants. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any point in time. All personal information which can easily lead to identification of participants has been kept separately and tapes will be destroyed at the end of the project.

I encountered the dilemma of the ‘field’ versus ‘home’ (Sultana, 2007, p. 377). After a year away from Ghana, I returned home to conduct field work in a place I considered home. I felt that so much had changed in a year and it took me quite some time to readjust to my familiar surroundings. I also had to negotiate my various positions as insider and outsider at different points during the research. Jayati Lal (1996) stated that, “the many locations that shape my identity and notions of self, influenced my choices, access, and procedures in research and also permeate the representation of research subjects in my writing” (p. 190). As a Ghanaian ‘insider’, I felt similar connections with my participants as I was able to engage in discussions surrounding the current economy and other general discussions in order to build familiarity and rapport with the non-students before the start of the interview. It was difficult to find myself fitting fully in one category or the other as there was a continuous manoeuvring between the two categories.

Participants in the non-student female FGD saw me as both an insider and outsider. They saw me as an exceptional student who had excelled and gained admission to a foreign university and that made them interested in the study. They even went further to introduce me to another family member who they claimed had just returned from abroad as if to say that we all shared a common bond.

As an insider, I was able to engage students in general discussions about student life on campus to build rapport and bring a sense of familiarity to the table before starting interviews. Many of the students I interviewed asked me about how I was able to get into a foreign university. I sort of became a career coach for them by sharing my experiences and advising them on course work.

During the male non-student FGD, the discussion was frequently interrupted by a gentleman who refused to take part in the discussion and wanted money. I felt 'othered' and a bit irritated as the man believed I was rich by virtue of that fact that I studying abroad. I was however relieved, when one of the participants explained that he had a sister who had done a thesis. He further explained that it was for student research so no money involved unlike huge projects from companies.

Data Analysis and Limitations of Study

All interviews were recorded and anonymised. Interviews conducted in Ga and Twi were transcribed and translated simultaneously into English. Field notes were written by hand into my field note book and transcripts were read numerous times in order to identify emerging themes for the empirical chapters. Data was manually analysed. This study primarily focused on interviews with youth in a locality in Accra, Ghana. This study therefore does not present all views of the youth on homosexuality. In addition, social norms as practiced by participants were not observed; however, participants' opinions on social norms provide an understanding of social norms in the Ghanaian society.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine the concept of heteronormativity to explain the phenomenon at hand in this study. The chapter will also discuss aspects of queer theory and gender in relation to existing hegemonic norms and analyse heteronormativity's influence on the static nature of gender categorisation in society in relation to the concept of deviance.

Queer Theory and the Concept of Heteronormativity

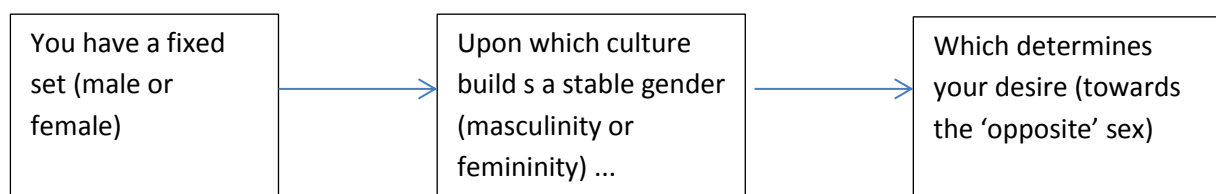
Hausman (2001) argues that, "the core problem with gender is that it is based on a binary, mandatory system that attributes social characteristics to sexed anatomy" (cited in Nagoshi, Nagoshi, & Brzuzy, 2013, p. 3). In the 1990's, queer theory emerged as a critical field of theory which sought to explore questions of desire in relation to identity and often employs poststructuralist techniques of deconstruction to understand how the sexual object is constituted (Watson, 2005). Queer theory challenges the stability of sexuality and the idea that heterosexuality is a norm (Jagose, 1996). Queer theory also questions beliefs about the unavoidability and naturalness of heterosexuality by "rejecting defined categories of male/female, man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual, queer theory deconstructs the hegemonic heteronormative discourse which dictates the intelligible sexes and permitted identities" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 81).

Over the past decade, terms such as 'compulsory heterosexuality', 'heterosexism', 'homophobia', 'heterosexuality' have appeared in feminist discourse in academia as an attempt to delve into issues surrounding non-normative sexual identities. Although these concepts are closely related, they have overlapping definitions and varied meanings. Heterosexuality is a form of sexual orientation in which individuals of the opposite sex are attracted to each other. A heterosexual person is therefore a person who has most of his or her erotic needs met in interactions with persons of the opposite sex.

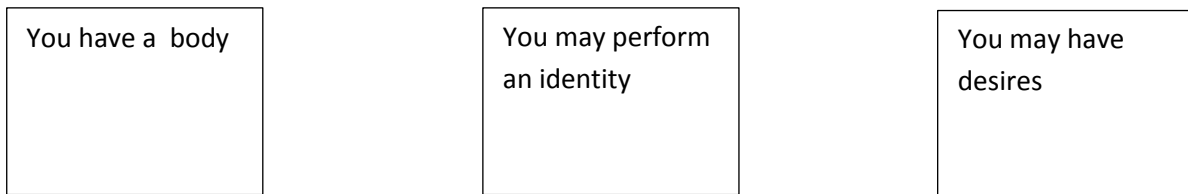
The term compulsory heterosexuality was made popular by Adrienne Rich (1980) in her essay on "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" where she critiqued heterosexuality as an institution and highlighted its negative effects on women. Compulsory heterosexuality is defined as the assumption that women and men are innately attracted to each other emotionally and sexually and that heterosexuality is normal and universal (GLBTQ, 2015). Individuals are therefore by default heterosexual and therefore those who have not questioned

their heterosexuality can be accused of “compulsory heterosexuality”. Jung and Smith (1993) define “heterosexism as a reasoned system of bias regarding sexual orientation. It denotes prejudice in favour of heterosexual people and connotes prejudice against bisexual and especially, homosexual people. They argue that heterosexism is not grounded in emotional fears, hatreds, or other visceral responses, but in a largely cognitive constellation of beliefs about human sexuality” (p. 13). This presumption on which society is built leads to heteronormativity.

The concept of heteronormativity was coined by Micheal Warner (1991) to criticise mainstream social theory for its one sided heterosexual culture. Inghram (1994) defines heteronormativity as “the view that institutionalized heterosexuality constitutes the standard for legitimate and prescriptive sociosexual arrangements” (p. 204). As discussed earlier, feminists argue that gender is a social construct which is tied to sexuality. Rubin (1975) argues that "gender affects the operation of the sexual system” (p. 308). Gender norms are social expectations for appropriate behaviours of men as compared to women. Gender norms ultimately create and regulate sexual norms and these sexual norms dictate acceptable dominant sexual behaviour of men and women i.e compulsory heterosexuality. Gender norms reinforce stereotypes about men and women. Foucault (1978) argues that “societies control sexuality through the construction of dichotomised or gendered sexuality”. These sexual norms are enforced through the creation of appropriate gendered behaviour i.e. gender roles. The reverse also applies for females. Butler (1990) argues that performativity leads to a generation, production and reproduction of societal norms governing sexuality. The repetitive act of imitation therefore produces and reproduces hegemonic heterosexuality. Butler argues that based on the heterosexual matrix where sex is seen as biological given and gender, a cultural construct, heterosexuality becomes the implicit sexual orientation. Gauntlett (2008) illustrates Butler’s model in the following diagram:



Butler therefore argues that sex, gender and sexuality must be viewed as independent of each other and proposes a new model where as illustrated by Gauntlett (2008):



Gauntlett (2008) therefore argues that under this model, “your body does not determine your gender or identity [which in turn] does not predict your desires” (p. 149)

Weiss(2001) argues that, “the heterosexual norm is the idea that people are, by virtue of heredity and biology, exclusively and aggressively heterosexual: males are masculine men, and are attracted only to feminine women” (Weiss, 2001, p. 123). Ingraham (1994) argue that, “heterosexuality—like masculinity and femininity—is taken for granted as a natural occurrence derived from biological sex”. Thus social institutions imbibe heterosexual expectations thereby “guarantee[ing] that some people will have more class status, power, and privilege than others” (cited in Schilt & Westbrook, 2009, p. 443). The biological difference between male and female and its automatic assumption of innate heterosexuality places all individuals as heterosexuals. Butler (2004) argues that “gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine and produced and naturalised ”(p. 42). But she goes further to add that “gender is the same apparatus by which notions of masculinity and femininity can be deconstructed and denaturalised” (Butler, 2004 p. 42).

The concept of heteronormativity will be used throughout the thesis to explore the both normative and non-normative gender relationships and manoeuvre contestations between normalcy and illegitimate relationships in the Ghanaian context. The concept of heteronormativity grew out of queer theory and although queer theory seeks to unsettle heteronormativity by deconstructing hegemonic categories of sex, gender and sexuality. Queer theory in this discourse as serves as building block in the construction of the concept of heteronormativity. Heteronormativity as a concept will be useful in explaining participant’s hegemonic views on heterosexuality and further examine heterosexuality as the only accepted form of sexual orientation resulting in largely negative attitudes towards homosexuality. Unmasking heteronormativity in this study will help in explaining normative assumptions on sexuality and gender held by participants in the study.

Deviance

Deviance is any behaviour that violates social norms, and is usually of sufficient severity to warrant disapproval from the majority of society. Deviance is defined socially and will vary from one group to another. What is considered deviant, differs from society to society, therefore what one culture may see as deviant many be acceptable in another society. Why is homosexuality seen as a deviant behaviour in many societies? Homosexuality is seen as a violation of existing hegemonic gender norms. These existing gender norms as explained earlier are the by-products of the causal linkages made between existing binary categories of male and female and human sexuality. The heterosexual norm views heterosexuality as natural and inborn. Sanchez, Crocker et al. (2005), argue that “adherences to gender norms and engagement in the socially sanctioned execution of one’s gender offer [some benefits in the form] of social acceptance and approval (p. 1446). On the other hand, violations of the norm attracts various sanctions in many societies.

Emile Durkheim is attributed with developing the concept of deviance. He developed his concept of deviance in his two works, the division of Labour in Society (1956) and The Rules of Sociological Method (1950) where he discussed crime. He argued that healthy societies required crime in order to function and that crime is an inevitable and normal aspect of life. He further stated that since society comprises of different individuals exposed to different experiences, influences and circumstances, not every member will be committed to the collective sentiments i.e. the shared values and beliefs of society (Durkheim, 1938). He advances his argument by explaining that all social change begins with some form of deviance. Therefore, an act viewed as a deviance in the past can become normal in the future. This social change requires moderate energy for it to occur.

Durkheim highlighted four important functions of deviance.

1. Deviance affirms cultural values and norms. When individuals in a society see individual punished for a deviant act, it reinforces what the community views as acceptable and unacceptable (Brent, Brent, & Lewis, 2013).
2. Deviance defines moral boundaries, people learn right from wrong by defining people as deviant. When individuals view how the whole community responds to a deviant act, it enables them to distinguish between right and wrong (Brent et al., 2013).

3. A serious form of deviance forces people to come together and react in the same way against it. Deviance brings unification in society (Ibid).
4. Deviance pushes society's moral boundaries which, in turn leads to social change. Deviance can cause dominant group in society to consider alternative norms and values (Ibid).

Durkheim's contribution to the study of deviance and crime was critical for the establishment of deviance and criminology as subfields in sociology (Franzese, 2009). His writing proved essential in the 20th century as a major breakthrough in the understanding of deviance. It is important to note that Durkheim way of looks at deviance is from a functionalist perspective. This functionalist way of understanding deviance looks to society as the source of deviance rather than the biological explanations or psychological nature of the individual. This perspective places an emphasis on social structures and explains why deviance occurs.

Durkheim's concept of deviance has evolved and has been used differently by other authors. Orcutt (1983) highlighted two perspectives to deviance namely normative; "which is behaviour that violates social norms" and relativistic; "behaviours that are defined by the social audience viewing them" (cited in Loue, 1999, p. 2). In addition, Howard Becker (1963) states that, "before an act can be viewed as deviant, and before any class of people can be labelled and treated as outsiders for committing the act, someone must have made the rule which defines the act as deviant" (p. 162) . Becker's definition places emphasis on the social norms that define what is deviant and also places the viewer's role in the recognition of the act of deviance. Horwitz (1990) also argues that social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying to those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not the quality of act that person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to the 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behaviour is a behaviour that people so label.

According to Loue (2007), the term deviance has been used by several authors to refer to a "broad range of sexual behaviours which are generally outside the norm or perceived to be outside the norm... in the context in which they occur" (p. 6). Simon (1994) defines sexual deviance as the inappropriate or flawed performance of a conventionally understood sexual practice" (cited in Loue, 2007, p. 6). Harry (1983) further distinguishes between sexual

deviance and gender deviance by defining gender deviance as “behaviour that violates the norms for gender-appropriate behaviour; this deviance is to be distinguished from sexual deviance, which may or may not be gender deviant”(p. 350) . He further states that “while transvestites and homosexuals are gender deviant, prostitutes and rapists are sexual deviants who are quite conventional” (Ibid, p. 350).

Based on this distinction, sex between two consenting adults of the same sex does not constitute sexual deviance, but gender deviance because the individuals are merely transcending gender norms which dictate that normal sexual activity must occur amongst heterosexuals. Therefore although rapists are involved in forced sexual activity, and prostitutes are profiting from sex, it is a conventional act. There are a few flaws with regard to this distinction. Harry (1983) fails to recognise that rape and prostitution can occur within members of the same sex.

In addition, one can argue that homosexuals are both sexual and gender deviants. Firstly, homosexuality is sexual attraction between members of the same sex. Homosexuals often are involved in sexual acts which are viewed as unconventional because sex is seen to be an activity involving members of the opposite sex. As discussed earlier, conceptions about sexuality are linked to the existing gender binary which assumes compulsory heterosexuality of individuals thereby rendering any act devoid of male and females as abnormal. Secondly, homosexuals are seen to be transcending existing hegemonic gender norms.

Greenberg (1990) opines that “deviance lies in the eye of the beholder” (p. 2). He argues that deviance is a matter of perspective and that in a society where individuals do not view an act as deviant, it would not be considered deviant regardless of the number of times that act is perpetuated. He further states that “beliefs that homosexuality is evil, sick and undesirable- and the corresponding efforts to punish, cure and prevent it make it that make homosexuality deviant”(Greenberg, 1990, p. 2). Horwitz (1990) argues that deviance amongst females and other lower status persons is tolerated because it does not threaten social institutions or male control and this is seen in individuals reaction towards male homosexuality.

This study will not be using the concept of deviance to explain why homosexuality occurs and what it does to the Ghanaian society. On the contrary, the concept of deviance will be used to focus on the existing norms in the Ghanaian society. The norms being produced and reproduced are derived from conversations with participants on their perceptions of the norms in the Ghanaian society. Social institutions are systems of rules and practices –social

arrangements—that are organized around important social values or needs (Spencer, 2014). Social institutions such as schools, family, often serve as areas where deviance occurs and is corrected. These institutions serve to control and prevent deviance whilst at other times provide opportunities for it. This study will identify the arenas for deviance and explore how participants have encountered reactions to deviance which have made them maintain their views or reject them. Through the rejection or reproduction of norms from different sources, the deviance perspective can add to more specific understanding of the inculcation of norms by individuals.

CHAPTER FIVE: NORMATIVE GENDER IN THE GHANAIAN SOCIETY

Introduction

Beauvoir (1952) argues that gender is a cultural construction which one presumes at birth. Gayle Rubin (1975) also describes gender as the “socially imposed division of the sexes” (p. 179). Gender roles therefore dictate how men and women in a given society should behave. These gender roles are often imposed through the process of socialization. Butler (1990) argues that we are not born with gender but as a result of continuous performance, we produce and reproduce gender and our identities.

Rubin (1975) states, the “the sexual division of labour is implicated in both aspects of gender—male and female it creates them, and it creates them heterosexual” (p. 180). Masculinity and femininity in the Ghanaian society is closely tied to division of labour and expected gendered roles, responsibilities and behaviours of men and women. In traditional Ghanaian society, men largely control and retain power in household, community and other important areas (Salm & Falola, 2002). Women on the other hand, largely perform duties which include running the household and taking care of the family (Salm & Falola, 2002). Adomako and Boateng (2011) further argue that the stratification of gender roles is re-enforced by traditions passed on from one generation to the other. They add that “male characteristics that were approved included virility, strength, authority, power, and leadership, the ability to offer protection and sustenance, intelligence and wisdom and the ability to bear emotional pain” (p. 423). Boys were also taught to lead and control women (Ibid).

In contemporary Ghana, the conventional breadwinner/housewife roles exist in many homes in the Ghanaian society. It is common for a man to provide an income for the upkeep of the household and for the woman to take care of the emotional and reproductive needs of the household although women have been economically active in Ghana in the past and in the present. Marinova (2003) argues that, “culture prescribed authoritative roles for males whereas females were responsible for caring roles within the household. These stereotypes place greater emphasis and value on the role of men and boys in public life and in the work place, as opposed to women’s role in unpaid family labor, care giving and community work” (cited in Gyeke & Owusu, 2013, p. 485).

However, traditional women have been involved in the supporting the family economically. Amu (2005) argues that traditionally, women’s roles and participation in economic activity in the traditional sense has to a large extent been defined and restricted along biological and

cultural lines. However, he add that “women’s role in the Ghanaian economy have not been limited to the home alone but has spanned all sectors of the economy with its impact felt more in the agricultural sector and services (wholesale and retail sub-sector) sectors” (Amu, 2005, p. 9). However, the influx of women in the public domain does not equate to an increased participation of men in the private domain. Household chores are still largely expected of women in many communities in Ghana especially rural areas. In urban setting however, there has been in gender roles in urban settings. Busy work schedule, education, exposure to other cultures influence such changes and as a consequence, gender roles have become less strictly defined as a result of changes in economy and men’s involvement in household chores and childcare is gradually increasing although at a slow rate (Mokomane, 2013).

As discussed above, Ghanaian masculinity and femininity is seen in the performance of certain tasks and the adherence to societal prescriptions of gendered behaviour. Therefore, men/boys and women/girls who were unable to fit under idealised idea of masculinity and femininity are often ridiculed and branded (Adomako & Boateng, 2011) . As seen in the introduction, local terms are given to individuals whose performance of a gender differs from traditional constructs of masculinity and femininity. Silvia Tamale (2011) indicates that in order to understand sexuality, it is necessary understudying gender dynamics of a given society. In addition, Butler (2004) as stated earlier argues that gender and sexuality can be seen as both constituted by and dependent on norms and critically linked to them.

In this chapter, we will explore young people’s notions of normative gender in the Ghanaian in order to further understand what is viewed as deviant gendered behaviour. In addition, this chapter explores traditional views on masculinity and femininity in the Ghanaian society and the flexibility and changeability of gender roles in Ghana. The quotes used in this chapter typically represent gender norms in the Ghanaian society as held by participants.

Traditional Views On Ghanaian Masculinity And Femininity

Breadwinner and Caregiver

Data from the field revealed that participants likened roles of man/husband and woman/wife with parts of the body parts. Participants also assigned gender roles based on the division of labour in the household. For instance, a male student stated in a discussion:

“I would also like to agree with what he said, in Ghana and most of our traditional homes; the man is the head of the family. There is a saying that the woman is always the neck of the family so the man is supposed to be like ... he takes care of everything in general but categorically the woman is a sub division of the man. The man goes to work, brings the money which he uses to care for the house. The man gives the money so the woman also knows that this is what my family needs, nutritional value and all that so she would prepare the food”.

In support of the above opinion, another female student in an interview said, *“In a typical Ghanaian context, you would see a man as somebody providing, being the breadwinner of the home. And if you are not doing that, if you are not performing that role, even counsellors, marriage counsellors see you as you are not performing your role as a man”.*

The quote explains that in many traditional homes in Ghana, participants viewed men roles to be confined in the public domain, providing financial support for the family, whilst women were relegated to the private domain to deal with emotional, social and nutritional needs of for the family.

Young people were of the view that women’s roles have been relegated to the background and are not important. Participants indicated that a man loses respect if he is unemployed whereas an unemployed woman is seen as normal. This is largely as a result of societal belief about the man as the bread winner of the family. An example can be seen from a statement from a male student in a discussion. He said, *“It seems abnormal because you are not even recognized and you shouldn't even work. They have this perception about a woman just being at home and just live the house wife life”.*

Fiavey, Izugbara et al (2014) argue that, “As in some other African societies, the notion of ‘responsible man’ or ‘responsible woman’ goes to the very core of sexuality in Ghana. The concept of the responsible woman includes issues of good and personal hygiene practices, good housekeeping including good cooking and training of children (this is expected of the man as well), hard work, modesty, humility, “motherhood” and marital fidelity” (p. 1). This was clearly expressed by both student and non-student male and female participants in the study.

The data from the field also conveyed the notion that gender roles are forms of social conventions that represent the level of strength and weakness of men and women respectively

in the typical Ghanaian society. This is for instance denoted in the following extract by a female married student:

“We have always been seen as the weaker part and since we have been told to be submissive then no matter what we are always under the men. And it is not our fault, we can’t change it, we can only work around it by proving that we can do something but cannot over take them”.

This quotation illustrates how in the Ghanaian society, gender roles are used to depict the level of strength and weakness of men and women.

Data from the field also showed that man and women were expected to care for and protect their families. A man was expected to be responsible and financially stable in order to fend for his family. As illustrated by a male non-student, *“A man is someone who takes care of his family and is responsible for his family. A man helps a woman take care of the family. In short, a man makes sure his family is well taken care off”.* Another male non-student in an interview also stated, *“You must be responsible. You must take care of a woman; give her the little money you have”.*

Household Chores

From, the data, it was revealed that gender roles were often related to the performance of chores in the household. Discussions and Individual interviews revealed varying opinions on the performances of household chores amongst both males and female students and non-students.

Some participants held traditional views of gender performance in the household. A female student in an interview stated, *“It is believed that the girl should be in the kitchen, cook, clean the house and do all like the social, more of the social work and then the boys should do the hunting and farming and the football and all the unimportant roles in the house”.*

Females in the non-student discussions said agreed with the statement above. One non-student female said, *“As for women, we do a lot of things at home. We do laundry; we also take care of the kids. We help them prepare for school.”* Another added, *“Women are responsible for washing, we take care of the chores at home, we also look after children, we cook for our husbands”.*

Male students in a discussion also alluded to the arguments presented above. A male student participant stated, *“For boys, it’s washing of cars, for girls its generally cooking”.* Another male student participant added, *“Some young boys/young men also help in decision making in*

the family, sometimes their parents ask their consent on certain actions or things they want to do in the house". The role of head of household is imparted into boys at an early age as they are consulted in decision making as indicated by the participant. Another participant added, *"Yea basically the ladies sweep and the guys, they help when it comes to being around in the house"*. The statement of helping around in the house indicates a not so strong or definite duty/role of boys at home mainly because home duties are generally expected of women/girls.

The discussion above are in line with a study conducted among adolescents on masculinity in Ghana, participants saw household chores such as sweeping or cooking as a sign of femininity (Boateng et al., 2006). It further revealed that males could perform such duties as a form of assistance to the wife or woman if married and in cases where males were unmarried (Ibid). The study further indicated that girls were socialised into domestic work whilst boys were pushed into the public domain with more time for social activities outside the home.

Temperament And Behaviour

In every culture, there exists certain characterises or traits that are associated with a particular sex. Participants described gendered behaviour and expectations of females and males by in Ghanaian society. Participants described feminine characteristics as submissiveness, care, weakness, passiveness amongst other softer expressions, whilst masculine characteristics were described as aggressiveness, strength, activeness, and violence amongst others.

For instance, a married female student in an interview said, *"When men say someone is a woman, it means someone who is humble, patient, caring, hardworking, and serviceable. That is their description of a woman. Even the way you behave, the way you comport yourself, the way you interact. Most of the time, when you are young, people do not know your temperament, so when you are cool and calm, like the introvert type, as a woman I think they like it more and they say 'wo di3 oy3 obaa oo' meaning this is a woman."*

In addition, male characteristics' were opposite that of female characteristics. A male student stated, *"I see aggressiveness as a man's characteristics, being aggressive, also taking responsibilities too, and taking responsibilities as a man. For the woman I would say you would have to be supportive"*.

Domestic violence perpetuated against a woman by a man was seen as normal. However, the reverse was seen as abnormal as participants expected men to be physically stronger than women and therefore be able to avoid physical abuse by them. In a female student discussion,

a participant stated, “A man seen fighting is normal, a woman seen fighting is bush in Ghana”. Similarly, another female student in the discussion said, “A man seen beating a lady is okay but a lady beating a man is abnormal. It will be as if the man is “a girl”: a girl in a man’s coat”.

On contrary, others viewed men as non-violent. A male non-student in an interview explained that a man is someone who exercises restraint and does not physically abuse a woman. He said, “It’s not any man who is a man. Sometimes your girlfriend does something to deserve slaps but you rather apologise to her, which makes you a man. A man does not hit a woman.

Temperature and behaviour varied for both men and women. Both male and female student and non-students described different characteristics of men and women. Participants also indicated that men and women, who behaved in ways contrary to society’s ascribed behaviour, were deviant from the norm.

The Reproductive Arena and Marriage

In this study, participants viewed the ability of a man and a woman to procreate as signs of manhood and womanhood. For example, a male non-student in an interview said, “When you menstruate in Akan, we say, *‘we duru ni mmaa mu’*. If you can give birth, you are a woman”.

For the men, the phallic ability was seen not only as a symbol of male strength and directness, but also a sense of male self-worth. The importance of a man’s phallic ability as a determinant of manhood is seen in the following statements by participants. A female student in a discussion said, “A man is someone who is potent and can impregnate a woman too”.

Likewise a study conducted showed that Ghanaian men are burdened with the weight giving birth to prove their masculinity and that lack of the failure of such proof of phallic potency leads to a doubt in real masculinity by society. The study, “an especially important anchor of the experience of maleness is that of biological fatherhood-not only because of the authority and control fatherhood portends, but also because of the symbolic significance of a competent, heterosexual, performative phallus. The absence of evidence for the competence of the phallus, in cases of infertility, can lead to a questioning, or anticipatory questioning, of a man’s masculinity” (Ampofo, Okyerefo, & Pervarah, 2009, p. 1).

However, participants also noted that mere male potency was not a prerequisite for manhood in Ghanaian culture. Men are believed to responsible for the sex of a baby, therefore a man a man whose wife delivers baby girls is viewed as lesser/subordinate man. For instance, a

female student participant in a discussion said, *“In my family, it’s not just about being potent but giving birth to boys”*. Another student then asked, *“Are you calling my daddy a woman?”* The participant answered, *“No, in certain societies, giving birth to males make you the man you are... because it is believed that males are really the “real human beings”, so if you give birth to females, they actually wonder what kind of man you are”*.

In addition, marriage, which is an important institution in Ghanaian society, is also seen as a rite of passage from boyhood to adulthood. Marriage meant that a man was capable of taking on the responsible of taking care of a woman. For instance, a non-student male in an interview stated, *“After the age of 18/19, you are an adult. If you marry a woman, you are a man. In Akan, when you say, ‘Miyiri Ni’, it means, ‘wo yiri woho’ meaning you can take care of a woman”*. According to Miescher (2005), *“In Akan societies, adult masculinity as mediated by male and female elders signified a free man’s independence and permission to marry”* (p. 11).

Preventing Gender Deviations

In the male non-student discussions, there were stronger expressions of the performance and enforcement of normative gender roles. Majority of the participants including single and married indicate that they did not perform household chores. Women were the enforcers of the prevailing notions of traditional divisions in a man and woman’s work. These women act to prevent a deviation in the established existing gender norms and proceed to sanction the deviator for digressions. An example is seen from a male non-student participant said, *“As an unmarried man, I do nothing at home. The women in the household do everything. They will even get angry with me if I try to. They will say I’m a man so why am I doing women’s work?”* Another male non-student participant added, *“Me too, I don’t do anything. As a footballer, I just wake up and go for training. The women do everything.”* The preceding statements illustrate women’s roles in the maintenance of hegemonic gender roles.

To sum, young people exhibited strong ideas about gender differences with regards to gender roles in society. Gender roles were clearly segregated between men and women in the and also largely related to the performance of tasks. However in the next section, we shall discover in detail that although young people express traditional gender norms, they also view gender roles as flexible and changing.

FLEXIBLE AND CHANGING GENDER ROLES

Shared roles and responsibilities

Despite some participants reporting the existing of traditional gender roles as discussed above, other participants indicated that in their homes there existed shared roles and responsibilities between them and their opposite sex siblings. A female student in an interview stated, “*because we have only one guy, my mummy doesn’t make the guy do only guy roles and the girls do only girl roles. We sometimes switch roles*”. Another male student in an interview stated that, “*In my house there’s only one female, so do the cooking, we do cleaning, the washing of dishes*”.

The quotes above illustrate a deviation in gender roles in the both participants’ households. In both situations member of the opposite sex performs household chores interchangeably. In the first scenario, the mother acts as the enforcer and producer of the gender deviation. Individuals in both household perform different roles in the household with no restriction.

A female married student also indicated that her husband helps her in household chores when she goes to school and when he returns from work. She said, “*My husband helps me. Even though he works when he comes home, he helps me. Even in going to the market and helping me with the load I have to carry. On certain days when I have to go to campus, if there’s tie, we go the market together. And even that same weekend that I am coming for lecturers he would have to cook and do certain things*”.

Participants show how gender roles ascribed to males and females are not set in stone. The fluidity of gender roles by both sexes also shows how the performance of gender roles is negotiated and reformulated in various homes. This is in line with Butler’s (2004) argument that “gender is the same apparatus by which notions of masculinity and femininity can be deconstructed and denaturalised” (p. 42).

Gender roles differ from household to household

Gender roles also vary across different societies and different households within a given society. A male student in a discussion stated that, “*But generally there is that perception that the woman is supposed to cook, the woman is supposed to clean the house and the man is supposed to go to work and bring the money home. That is the general perception but that is what is out there but again I’ll come to the fact that it differs from home to home because there’s some places that I know that you have guys who clean plates, guys who cook food and all*”.

Another student agreed with him saying that, *“Well, I think it depends on where you are coming from... It varies; personally, at home I do a lot of weeding. I mean, I do fetch water as well, paint the house and when my dad goes to work, there are some stuff that I help out with. Personally that’s what I do at home. I know it differs from home to home”*. He argued that every home was different and that in his case, he did a lot of activities in the home.

Another male student in a discussion also added, *“Yea, sometimes we do sweep, we help in cooking. As the first born of my family I did a lot of sweeping and I did a lot of cooking”*. The student explained that as the first child he occasionally engaged in a lot of activities at home.

In addition, in homes where there is an only child, that child is involved in activities regardless of sex. Another male student in an interview stated, *“Well it means a lot depending on which side you are from. Let’s say you are the first born, you are a man; you know you have a whole lot of responsibilities. You have to take care of your dad someday when you are grown, your siblings, your mom even when you are married and have kids. Yeah, depending on which side you fall”*. This participant was of the view that your positioning as a child in the family determines your responsibility regardless of your sex. He further added that first-borns are burdened with the responsibility of taking care of their families even after they have their own families. In the homes of these male participants, they engaged in activities believed to be for females.

Intergenerational, Locational and Situational Differences

Participants indicated a change in generational performance of gender roles. Participants noted that gender roles in the olden days differed from what they were experiencing currently. For example, a male student in an interview stated, *“Yes, there is a difference. I think there is a difference because, from what I have heard from my grandparents and then my parents, girls were not supposed to go to school but be in the kitchen all the time and then the guys were supposed to be in the schools. But this time you see more girls being in the schools and sometimes being much cleverer than guys. So... and men are also learning to do more house chores. So it hasn’t changed totally, its reforming”*.

Females in the non-student discussion agreed when a participant stated, *“These days a lot of things have changed because even during the early days, women were relegated to the kitchen and not the given the opportunity to go to school but these days there are more women in schools just as the men”*. She added that, *“It is unlike the olden days when our fathers came back from the farms, take their bath and go out of the house. These days when you come back*

from the farm with your husband, the man can even help you with the preparation of food for the children. The men also bath the children when you are busy preparing the meals. So indeed, a lot of things have changed” stated a female non student in a discussion. However, there seems to be a slight contradiction in the group’s stance on men’s roles. As stated earlier, the group were of the view that although men could assist at home they were not doing so. On the other hand, they indicate a change in roles of men in comparison to the ancient times.

Likewise, a female non-student in an interview added, *“Most men now do kitchen work. I don’t believe the kitchen is meant for women. It can never be. It’s for both. Maybe in the olden days our forefathers thought we were not important to the society so all you do is stay at home and bear children. But these days, you wouldn’t see it unless you go to the village”*.

Another participant also agreed with the above argument. In the male student focus group discussion, a participant said, *“Gone are the days where the women or the ladies are supposed to be at home and the men go to work and bring the money home at the end of the day. But now you’ll find families where both the man and the woman are all working so it changes. At the end of the day, the woman brings something and the man brings something so I think it’s changing”*.

Participants indicated differences between rural and urban areas. Some were of the view that traditional gender roles were being maintained in the rural areas. A male student said, *“I kind of disagree with what they are saying it seems like they are talking of ideal situation. What we see around here. But in this day and age, if you tell us that woman want to work more and the women carrying babies and men with guns, I have a problem with that. Cos if you go to the interior in this day and age, in the North, Ashanti, it’s not changing, what you see is probably because of your environment”*.

Data from the field also revealed that an individual’s performance of gender roles depended on their marital status. Some participants stated that single men or men living alone had no choice than to perform household chores. However participants added that the presence of a woman in his home would bring a change in the performance of roles.

For instance, in the male non student discussion, a participant stated, *“Maybe. In some households when a man is single and living alone he will have to sweep and clean the house. But if he lives with a woman, he will certainly expect the woman to perform home duties. But if the woman is busy with work, he may do it. But it’s still woman’s work”*.

Similarly, another male student added, *“I live alone. I do everything myself. I don’t call anyone to do anything. I can’t say it has changed. But what I can say is if you live with a woman and she is overburdened with work, you can chip in to assist her. Same for the man”*.

Home duties were seen as women’s work and even though men could equally perform them. Men’s involvement in the household was also seen as a form of assistance to the women.

Education and Modernisation as drivers of change

Young people were of the view that gender roles were changing as a result of a number of factors. Participants stated that in the past, boys were sent to school whilst girls stayed at home to perform domestic chores. Participants were of the view that education and modernisation of the Ghanaian society was contributing to the change in the traditional view of roles of men and women.

For example, a male student in a focus group added, *“Well, generally, in our part of the world, it is perceived that the household chores, cooking, cleaning, sweeping in the homes are the duties of the lady but then again that is gradually changing because of education and a whole lot of factors”*.

However, although females have opportunities in education, they still take on the extra burden of performing household chores. A female student in a discussion added, *“Okay..., that there has been a change in gender roles, initially, like females were mostly in the kitchen without school and then the males just go to school and do all what they are supposed to do. But now it's like the females still do the kitchen roles, the cooking, the washing and all that and they also get the chance to go to school.*

Education and the fight for gender equality in Ghanaian homes contributed to the division of labour in some households. This assertion was made by a male student in a discussion. He said, *“I think generally it has to do with the issue of education , at the end of the day, you have people going to schools and they are well enlightened and they know what their rights basically are , they feel it is okay to have responsibilities so in the modern Ghanaian home, you find sort of roasters . There is the roaster where the man is doing this at this particular day and the woman is doing this on this particular day. But also there is this fight by the gender activist group where they feel there is equality of rights; the woman should not be seen as the one who does all the cooking. Their work at home is to be basically cooking. They*

equally can do what the man is doing. I think education, the campaign from gender activist groups are some of the things that is changing roles”.

Another group member agreed with this participants view. He said, *“And then because of the gender equality issue that is being raised, the males are also required to help in the washing, the cleaning, the cooking and all that go give a balance family so that at least the females get the chance to also go to school with their brothers like everyone else”.*

On the contrary, some participants felt that education did not contribute to change in gender roles. They indicated that some men insisted on their wives performance of their traditional role regardless of the level of education their wives had attained. For instance, one male student in a discussion said, *“I know families where the man and woman are educated but the men believe that the best a woman can give to her children is her time, so they rather prefer the women stay at home to take care of the kids even with the degrees. So they at home with the belief that the best a woman can give to her children is her time”.*

Crossing Boundaries

Contrary to the above statements, some participants were of the view that men were involved in housework even though they may face stigmatization from society. A female non-student in a discussion said, *“Some of the men are also able to help the wives. Some men help their wives do laundry and some also bath the children. At times, people laugh at them, other times, they don’t. Sometimes when the men sit in their porch and wash, nobody will see them but if they do it outside, then everybody will see”.*

Despite existing gender norms and possibilities of sanctions, some men through the reproduction of the performance of female tasks alter these existing gender norms. These men employ strategies such as sitting in a porch away from public view criticisms and to escape the social norms that govern man’s involvement in household chores.

Capabilities of Men and Women beyond the Private Sphere

On the ability of sexes to perform tasks, participants varied in their responses. Some participants viewed the ability to perform several tasks both in the home and outside as the preserve of women. Women despite taking on additional roles, performed exceptionally well.

For instance, a female student in an interview stated, *“A man can never multitask, but a woman can. A woman can multitask and does it well. For instance, when you go to the home*

settings, a woman can be washing, cooking, and taking care of the child, not a child a baby all at the same time. Whilst a man cannot do the three of them at a go, he would be so confused that he will not do it well. The food would get burnt, the clothes would not be well washed or the child would be left unattended to. I see it at home. And apart from that to when you come to the academia section too I can see a woman, who is a lecturer at the same time has to rush back home and go and take care of the home, take care of the children. But a man would not; he doesn't see himself carrying out that role".

Some also believed that women were better at performing household chores than men. A female non-student in an interview added, *"When it comes to education, household chores, responsibility, most women are better off. The women are the ones who are capable of doing things than men"*.

Others argued that both sexes were equally capable of carrying out any tasks. For example, a male student in a discussion indicated, *"There is nothing that a man is supposed to do or there is nothing only a man is supposed to do. I think it can be universal. Ladies can do things that men can do and then men can sometimes do what ladies can do"*. In the same vein, another female student participant in a discussion explained that, *"Because of modernization in Ghana, job opportunities are equal. And now we even say that what men can do, women can do and do it better"*. Another male student also added in an interview stated, *"I would say yes, because nowadays the women perform more than the men. They kind of live up to the male role, doing what the man is supposed to do"*.

In addition, existing cultural norms of the Ghanaian society which viewed men as heads of households would translate into the leadership of the nation, thereby making it impossible for a woman to lead the nation. . On leadership of the country, a participant in a male student discussion said, *"Yes, there are so many things that men can do and women cannot do. Although I've heard about women being able to do anything and do it better. But the fact is there are some things a man can do that a woman cannot do, for example, a man can take his shirt off in public, whilst a woman cannot. I also think that a woman cannot be a leader of Ghana"*. *"It's cultural, because even at the domestic level, you wouldn't allow your wife to be the head of the home"*.

Contrary to the above, participants believed that physical strength is not a pre-requisite for leadership. A male student participant in the same discussion disagreed with the above view. He said, *"Many years ago, probably Jesus Christ time, what used to be power was muscles,*

and you'll agree with me that now you don't need your strength to rule so if a woman is higher up her (head) more than you, she should be able to rule".

Others were also of the view that the society constrains and restrains the performance of certain roles by particular sexes. A male student in a discussion student added, *"A woman can equally do that but the question is in this context, what is society receptive of? There are some professions that if you have a woman go into that profession you'll be like oh, she's doing that? Yea, she's a mechanic. She's a taxi driver, she's a mason. So you know the woman can do that. There are women who can do that but society frowns on it. Women can do everything that men can do, but would they do it? They won't because society has defined their roles".*

Gender roles Unchanged

Contrary to the various reasons outlined by various participants backing the argument of change in gender roles in society the Ghanaian society, some had differing opinions. A male non student in a discussion stated that there were no changes in gender roles whatsoever. He said, *"I don't see any changes. Women still do their traditional duties and men also do theirs."*

Both male and female students indicated significant level of changes in roles with respect to individual homes and families. Both male and student females in addition to female non-students indicated that education had contributed in the shifting of traditional roles of women and men. Male students stated that they performed duties at home even though they live with their parents. On the other hand, the male non-students did not indicate significant changes in roles. They stated that conventional norms still existed and saw a man doing house chores as a form of assistance to the females.

Discussion

From the interviews and discussions; it was revealed that both male and female students and non-students expressed strong traditional ideas of men/boys belonging to the public arena and women/girls belonging to the private arena. Public private dichotomy largely accounts for the distinction between men/boys and women/girls. Connell and Pearse (2014) argues that, the sexual division of labour renders the public sphere as the realm of paid labour and production for markets, and the private sphere, the realm of unpaid labour. This is consistent with the arguments raised by many participants as the arena of economic activity is attributed to males whilst that of care-giver, for females.

There is also an indication of a reproduction of existing norms by participants. Socialisation teaches individuals to reproduce and re-inforce what they see in society as the norm. According to Salm and Falola, “From a young age, most Ghanaians acquire a social understanding of gendered activities in domestic work. They are taught that domestic chores are women’s work. This holds true regardless of level of education or work schedule” (Salm & Falola 2002, p. 141). In another study conducted, it was indicated that, “culture prescribed authoritative roles for males whereas females were responsible for caring roles within the household. These stereotypes place greater emphasis and value on the role of men and boys in public life and in the work place, as opposed to women’s role in unpaid family labor, care giving and community work” (Marinova, 2003 in Gyeke & Owusu, 2013, p. 485). Participants seem to some extent reproducing existing traditional gender norms as exhibited in the excerpts above. Socialization and culture, being the major factors contributing to their ideas about roles and responsibilities of men and women in the household, temperament and behaviour and inherent qualities.

Young people also indicated differences in expected gendered behaviour for men and women. Women were expected to exhibit softer characteristics such as care, submissiveness, and weakness whilst men were supposed to be aggressive, active, and violent amongst others. Young people were also of the view that the ability to bring forth children was important signifiers of manhood and womanhood in Ghana. However, for men, the ability to impregnate a woman who in turn then brought forth males was also important.

Young people both male and female students and non-students also expressed both implicit and explicit heteronormative thinking. As argued earlier by Inghram (1994), heteronormativity is “the view that institutionalized heterosexuality constitutes the standard for legitimate and prescriptive sociosexual arrangements” (p. 204). As stated also by Weiss (2001), “the heterosexual norm is the idea that people are, by virtue of heredity and biology, exclusively and aggressively heterosexual: males are masculine men, and are attracted only to feminine women” (Weiss, 2001, p. 123). Thus, young people presumed that a normal household comprised of men and women, who share roles and responsibilities, are married and reproduce children. This specification of men’s and women’s place in society forms the basis of heteronormative thinking produces and reproduces compulsory heterosexuality.

Discussions and interviews also revealed that gender roles were flexible and changeable. In some instances roles and responsibilities were shared in some households. Young people also indicated that the performance of roles differed from household to household, rural and urban between generations and living situation or marital status of a man. Some participants also indicated that both sexes were also capable of performing tasks equally, whilst others indicated that there were certain tasks that women could not perform, citing the leadership of the nation as an example.

As indicated earlier, Orcutt (1983) argues deviance “is behaviour that violates social norms” and is also “behaviour that [is] defined by the social audience viewing them” (cited in Loue, 1999, p. 2). There were some examples where some participants saw deviation in gender norms. For example a male non-student participant said, “*As an unmarried man, I do nothing at home. The women in the household do everything. They will even get angry with me if I try to. They will say I’m a man so why am I doing women’s work?*” This example indicates a break in social norms. In addition, the women in this case, acted as enforcers of hegemonic gender norms by preventing males from crossing existing gendered boundaries.

There were no significant differences in young people views on gender norms in the Ghanaian society. Both male and females students and non-students agreed that traditional gender roles existed. Both male and female students and female non-students indicated that gender roles were flexible and changing due to social adjustment, education and modernisation. However male non-students expressed a lack of change in traditional gender roles.

CHAPTER SIX: RECOGNISING AND ENCOUNTERING HOMOSEXUALITY

Introduction

As discussed in the introduction and background, there is mass homophobia on the African continent. Discussions also show that the dominant and emerging discourses on homosexuality in Ghana are negative with few subtle discourses on gay rights and activism. Although prevailing arguments from discussions indicate that Africans view homosexuality as a western imposition, a foreign import, alien to African culture, literature review has shown the existence of non-normative sexualities in Africa and in Ghana. These deviations in gender and sexuality are recognised and labelled in the Ghanaian community as *kojo besia*, *obaa barima* and *supi*.

In this Chapter, we shall discuss the arenas where young people encounter homosexuality. We then discuss young people's understanding of the concept of homosexuality and how they are able to identify homosexuals. We then conclude by discussing young people's confusion between cross-dressing and homosexuality.

Spaces for Encountering Homosexuality

There are a number of ways through which young people became aware and encountered homosexuality. Participants cited a number of instances and places where they heard about homosexuality. High schools, parents, in the media, community and workplace constituted some of the places where participants came into contact with homosexuality.

Senior and Junior High Schools

Schools serve as arenas for not only academic education but also sources of information about other aspects of life. Schools play an important part in the socialization process of individuals. Senior high schools in Ghana are mostly boarding with few day-centred ones. Senior high schools in Ghana are also mainly single sexed with a few mixed schools.

Most participants indicated that they heard about homosexuality in either junior secondary school (JSS) or senior secondary school (SSS). For instance, a female in a discussion said, "*Actually I knew of it before I went to SSS. I was in JSS by then. But the first time I saw it with my eyes was when I was in SS. My juniors, they were caught doing it under the drying line.*"

As argued earlier on by Dankwa (2009), "the term *supi* is popularly associated with the affectionate ties pubescent girls forge at boarding-schools; it describes close female

friendships that are emotionally and materially significant. The senior supi protects and supports her junior, while the junior may fetch water, wash, and run errands for her senior. The exchange of gifts is emphasized as the key feature of being someone's supi" (p. 195). Dankwa further argued that the meaning of supi had changed overtime from mutual care in the past to erotic relationships.

Some participants indicated that the practice of homosexuality "*supi*" was common in single sex schools. For instance, a female participant said, "*It was in primary I think and they had a term for it like 'supi' and I was now growing up so I use to ask my friends, 'what is that?' and they will be like 'oo a man sleeping with a man or a woman sleeping with a woman. When you go to the high schools that is what they do. Charlie when you go to the boys' school or a girls' school.*"

Through socialization with school authorities, young people also learn social norms which include what is normal gendered and sexual behaviour and what is not. For example, a participant in a female student discussion said, "*A teacher walked into class and then he asked, so do you also do what is going on? And then we were like what? And then he said homosexuality and he told us about it. Everybody had a view, his or her view about it in SS*".

The above statements highlight the role of schools in shaping young people's ideas about homosexuality.

Media

The media serves as a powerful tool in disseminating information about homosexuality. As discussed earlier, the Ghanaian media often presents a stereotyped image of homosexuals and more than often presents homosexuality in a negative, inhumane manner which often sparks negative public debates on the issues thereby contributing to the marginalization of the group (Quist-Adade et al., 2014). Data from the field revealed that the media was one of the ways many participants heard about homosexuality. For instance, in a female student discussion, a participant said, "*I think I read it from the internet, way back in JHS.*"

Another male student added, "*I don't remember the exact..., but I think I saw a picture, a magazine and I don't know whether it was given to me or something, diagrams and I was like Ah, what is this? A man and a man and so many things. So when I got home, I discussed with a friend. But I don't remember when exactly I heard it*".

The above quotes are indicative of that fact that the media serves as sources of knowledge on homosexuality.

Parents and Community

Although sex education amongst Ghanaian parents and children is low, some young people were educated on homosexuality by their parents. In the female student discussion, a participant said, *“Before SHS. When I was going to school, my mommy said in Ga **“aka ke no school no ya ka ya fe lobi lobi ko ye jee ba shia”** She is like you have seen so many guys in your house. It is not school that you will go and go and sleep with girls. So she was like, ‘don’t do that thing’. That was the first time I heard about lesbianism and all that”*. The participant’s mother explained that her daughter grew up in a household with both sexes thereby implying that sexual attraction must be towards the opposite, i.e. compulsory heterosexuality.

Some young people heard also about homosexuality in their neighbourhoods and workplaces. In a female non-student discussion, a participant said, *“I grew up around Chorkor and I sometimes saw men who behaved like women and we used to call them **“Kwadjo Besia”** but I never knew beyond the name, there was something immoral attached to what they do. It was after Secondary School when someone approached me to tell me she was interested in me. I was shocked because I had never heard of such a thing. That was my first time of hearing of such a thing”*.

Another female non-student in the discussion added, *“When I first heard it, we were in Kumasi, Fante Newtown. That was when I realized that the Fante Newtown girls were. I was old enough; I was about 16 years when I heard there were some girls in Fante Newtown who were sleeping with each other. I was surprised but then I later heard about similar incidents on the radio”*.

Some young people heard about homosexuality from co-workers. She explained that her colleague told her of her siblings experience with homosexuality. A female non-student in a discussion said, *“I heard about it 10 years ago. I was working in Adabraka by then. There was a bank there, that was where I used to work in a bank and a certain lady customer came to complain of how somebody had done that to her sibling”*. A female student participant in a discussion said, *“Whiles I was working at Melcom too, my fellow colleagues were doing it. One was a man and one was a woman. They go for break, they go to a hotel and they spend*

the one hour there doing all those things. Sometimes the man buys something for me to go and give to the lady”.

Although sex education is largely absent in Ghanaian homes and society in general, the topic of homosexuality arises as an issue for discussion in certain spaces as shown in discussions above. The practice of homosexuality is not as invisible and alien to Ghanaian culture as seen in the data presented. Local terms such as *supi* and *kodjo besia* show the existence and acknowledgment of homosexual practices in the Ghanaian community. Janssen (2002) indicates that boarding-schools represent a space beyond the control of the family, and a setting for homo-erotic “playground sexualities” (cited in Dankwa, 2009). As indicated earlier, Adade, Bates et al. (2014), argue that the media presents negative stereotypes about homosexuality. Homosexuality in the media is portrayed mostly in a negative way which presents a challenge for participants in this study to view homosexuality in a positive light.

Religious Beliefs and Social Norms

As seen in the background and introduction chapter, religious leaders voice strong opinions about homosexuality in public discussions. Both Christian and Muslim leaders interviewed for this study (see methodology chapter) expressed similar statements as other religious leaders in Ghana. Both leaders quoted passages of the Holy Bible and Quran to support their claims^{5 6}. The Christian leader argued that homosexuality should be seen in the context of marriage. He went further to cite the creation story from the Bible as an example. He indicated that God created man and woman and not two males. The Muslim leader stated that both the Quran and the Hadith make provisions which teach that homosexuality is a sin. He stated that both books describe many different forms of punishments to be meted out to homosexuals such as stoning. He however stated that the Quran is unclear about lesbianism. He also indicated that Ghana being a secular state would not permit such punishments to be meted out to homosexuals.

Young people’s views on homosexuality are shaped by religion and societal norms. Participants indicated that the Religion and the Ghanaian society frowned upon the act.

⁵ Leviticus 18:21-22, Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:27, Romans 1:26

⁶ Qu’ran(4:16), Qu’ran(7:80-84), Abu Dawud (4462), Abu Dawud (448), Bukhari(72:774)

Participants sought to foster a Ghanaian identity conflated with religious belief to shun the practice of homosexuality.

For instance a male student in an interview said, *“I’m a Christian, and the bible is my manual. so if the bible is my manual and the bible frowns on homosexuality then I am supposed to conform to that, also it is ethically not right in the society I live in. because, am in Ghana, and am hearing that it was brought to parliament and it wasn’t accept. And as a Ghanaian I also can’t, conform to the act of homosexuality.*

Also, a female student in a discussion said, *“These acts violate the Laws of the bible. It brings about a lot of curses. If you are not a Christian, it is still bad. And also we as Ghanaians do not accept such acts.*

Other participants used the creation story from the Christian Bible as a basis for their opinions on homosexuality. For example, in a female student discussion, a participant stated, added, *“If it was the best of things, God would have created two Adams”*. Other members of the discussion agreed with her. Another participant in the female non-student focus group said, *“When God created Adam and Eve, he removed a rib from the man and used that to create a woman. There is passage in the Bible which says a woman has some parts with the man. I have forgotten the exact quotation. So, it is not right for a woman to sleep with her fellow woman. It is not right. And as a man, if you do that with your fellow man, it is also not right. It brings about problems and curses”*.

Young people are also of the view that marriage and sexual intercourse is the preserve of heterosexuals. Traditional family structure in the Ghanaian society comprises of two sexes. As discussed in chapter five, participants view marriage as comprising of a man and a woman and also highlight the importance of reproduction as symbols of manhood and womanhood. For example, a female non-student said, *“Today, when you look at the Ghanaian society, you will hear news of men sleeping with men. It is called being gay and when women also sleep with their fellow women it is called lesbianism. It is not a good practice. It shouldn't be encouraged. A woman is supposed to marry a man and man is also supposed to marry a woman. It is a bad practice”*.

From the discussions, we see that religious and social norms guide and inform young people’s views on homosexuality. As indicated earlier on in the introduction and background chapter, both Christian and Muslim leaders play a pivotal role in speaking ensuring that hegemonic

gender norms regarding sexuality are preserved. Hence the spaces for encountering homosexuality in addition to the influence of political and religious actors shape views on homosexuality.

Identifying Homosexuals and Describing Homosexuality

Defining Homosexuality

To understand young people's understanding of the concept of homosexuality, participants were asked to define the term. Responses indicated that young people understood homosexuality to be sexual practices between persons of the same sex. For example, a male student in a discussion said, *"There's only one thing that comes to mind, a man and man sleeping together, a woman and a woman sleeping together"*.

Other participants were of the view that it was a sexual practice between mentally unstable same sex partners. For instance, a male student in an interview said, *"For me I see it as a mad woman and another mad woman sleeping together"*. Another male student in an interview said, *"I hate that word, anytime I hear like this person is a gay or is a lesbian. I just don't get why they have to be like that so just sometimes... I don't know, I don't know. I think it is very bad, it is very bad"*. In addition, another female non-student in an interview added, *"It's disgusting. I can't stand myself seeing a man sleeping with a man or a woman sleeping with a woman. It's disgusting"*.

Young people also associated the term homosexuality with negative attributes and words. Young people used terms and phrases such as *"Faggots"*, *"Disgusting"*, and *"An abomination"* to describe both behaviour and sexual practice of homosexuals. The preceding statements show how young people describe homosexuality and homosexuals in a negative way.

Behaviour as a Marker of Sexual Orientation

From the above section, we see that young people encounter homosexuality in different spaces. Young people also used negative words and terminologies to describe homosexuals. In this section we shall discuss how young people identify and describe homosexuals. The identification of homosexuals by young people happened in a number of ways. Many participants focused on behaviour as markers of an individual's sexual orientation.

For example, in a student female focus group discussion, a participant stated, *"Most gays are handsome, very handsome"*. Another stated *"And the way they walk, some guys, Oh God!!"*

Please!!” Similarly in another an interview with a male student, he said, “*the men walk like ladies. There are some that you would see a lady dressed like a man. Some say they are not homosexuals, though but I don’t know we just assumed that as long as you are dressed this way, then you are*”.

Although behaviour was a marker of an individual’s orientation, some participants were unsure. Some participants had their suspicions confirmed by their friends, counterparts and by the homosexuals themselves. For instance, a married female student in an interview said, “*My husband told me about it*”. *I know because of the way he acts and the way he acts and dresses and because my husband told me. If not I wouldn’t have believed it*”.

Likewise, another female student in a discussion said, “*at first... she is a very nice girl but she behaves like how guys behave and other things. A certain friend asked her and she tried to explain to her how she managed to be into that kind of situation and she told us, she was the one who told us.*”

Some young people had different views to the above. Some participants indicated that the manner in which an individual behaved did not automatically suggest that he/she was a homosexual.

Some participants explained that boys who grow up with many female siblings adopt feminine behaviours. For instance, in the female student focus group discussion, a participant indicated that, “*But sometimes they behave like this but they are not gay. There are some guys who grew up with a lot of girls and then they ended up that way but they are not gays and there are some guys who walk manly, they do everything but then they are gay*”.

Physical/Bodily Appearance

Some participants also suggested that physical appearance or attributes determined an individual’s sexual orientation. A male participant of a student focus group discussion highlighted using the analogy to a student’s ID card. He stated, “*If someone comes to me and asks me who I am and I say I am a university of Ghana student. I’ll tell them I have an ID card, I do this course, I do this course .At first I’m a university of Ghana student so what qualifies me, I have an id card . Why? Because I do this course, I registered so there are things that qualify you. So you say you are a girl, what makes you a girl, there should be something that qualifies you*”. Likewise, a female student in the focus group stated, “*They don’t have breast, they are hard*”.

Contrary to the above statements, some participants argued that physical characteristics or attributes did not make an individual a homosexual. Some argued that engaging in certain physical activities like sports changed the bodies of women. For example, a female student in a discussion said, *“Not every girl who is hard ...You know there are some people who are born and then from childhood, they will do sports and doing sports like if you are girl gives you a more muscular body”*.

Some arguments about the sexual orientation of a popular male actor occurred in the female student focus group. A participant stated, *“Let’s look at a guy like Tornado in Afia Schwarzenegger⁷, as for that one, to me I will say he is 100% gay”*. Another stated, *“But you can’t be sure”*. The participant added, *“His piercings and his whole face and is something”*. Another added, *“I thought same but then I didn’t have any proof”*.

As seen from the preceding statements, deviation in the normal physical appearance of females and males led to a questioning of their sexual orientation.

Sexual Practices of Homosexuals

In many of these interviews and discussions, many references were made to gay sex and its effects on bodily health.

The unnaturalness of homosexuality was related to the acts of anal penetration and the perceived painful nature of sex and suffering of homosexuals. The wearing of diapers by homosexuals was prominent in many discussions. A female in the nonstudent focus group discussion indicated that, *“Some confessed on radio to be wearing diapers before they are able to step in public places”*. Another stated, *“Some of the men are even unaware when they ease themselves. One of the boys was called on radio to speak about how the problem was affecting him. He narrated how he had to burn incense anytime he is in his room because the room was always stinking. He has also developed bad body odour as a result of that. He advised people to stay away from such practices”*.

In addition, a female student in a focus group said, *“In our school we had guys who were gay too and they were caught. They said the guy was wearing pampers because blood was oozing from his...he had to wear pampers so they were sacked from the school”*. The preceding statements indicate young people’s negative views on homosexual sex.

⁷ Afia Schwarzenegger is a popular sitcom shown on Ghanaian television which features an actor called Tornado who has several piercings all over his face and tattoo markings on his body.

Cross Dressing vs. Homosexuality

Cross-dressing is defined as the act of wearing clothing commonly associated with another gender within a particular society. Cross-dressing is not alien to African culture as there are many examples of both male to female and female to male cross-dressing. Mask dancing, although this is mostly done by men, women dressed as men play a part in African artistry during different kinds of ceremonies.

There was some confusion about crossdressing and homosexuality amongst the youth. At the University of Ghana, commonwealth hall, a males-only hall organises hall week celebrations each year. One of the main attractions and activities is a cross dressing parade by male students of the hall.

When a participants indicated that male homosexuals dressed like females, questions were raised about the parade. Some participants disagreed with the notion that crossdressing connoted homosexuality. Participants indicated that putting on female clothing did not make an individual a homosexual. For instance, a male student said, *“I’m confused when you say he was dressed like a lady. Commonwealth boys dress like ladies; but it does not mean that they are homosexual”*

In another scenario of cross-dressing in public, a female non student discussion narrated what she witnessed at a funeral. She said, *“Just recently in Adabraka, one person died there. A man, one of the homosexuals died there. In the night, we heard there was wake keeping there so we decided to go there. When we arrived, there were only men. Some were wearing wigs. One of the men said the deceased was his wife. They performed rites to signify that the man had lost the wife. There were a lot of them. They were wearing skinny clothes and head chains around their waist just like the way women dressed.”*

In Ghana, funerals serve as opportunities to show wealth, respect to the dead and family status (Geest, 2000). Funeral rites are performed for the dead as a means of preparing them for the after-life. In addition, specific rites are performed for the spouses of the deceased who are normally of the opposite sex to separate the bond between the two individuals. However, in this case, there is an indication that the gay community performed their rights for the dead in full glare of the public. There is also an indication of a subtle acceptance of gay behaviour in public in that situation as the men fully expressed themselves by wearing wigs, skinny clothes

and head chains. The manner of dressing and behaviour of individuals strongly surfaces as a key indicator of one's sexual orientation as expressed by many participants in this research. The above discussions indicate that young people largely exhibit homosexuality in a negative light.

Rights

In interviews conducted with the acting Executive Director of the Human Rights Advocacy Council (HRAC), he reiterated that homosexuality is frowned upon by the Ghanaian community. He explained that the HRAC operated using the Chapter 5 of the 1992 constitution Chapter 5 which contains the fundamental Human Rights of Ghanaian citizens of which homosexuals were included. He however added that as a result of the tension associated with the topic the organisation had received criticisms from the Ghanaian public. He added that individuals branded the organisation and its members as LGBT and pro LGBT and as such had encountered several challenges in protecting the rights the minority group.

In interviews with the Gender Representative of the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), he added that *"we are not supporting them in what they are doing. However, under chapter 5 of the Ghana constitution, every Ghanaian has some freedoms and rights so CHRAJ as a National Human rights body protects and promotes the rights of everybody"*. He added that, *"In Ghana's constitution, there are no rights for practicing same sex but if people for example, treat them as if they are not human beings, that is wrong. CHRAJ thinks that they have the right to life and right to education, right to those things, they are human beings. That's CHRAJ's official position but we are not urging them or supporting them to go on same sex practice but they are Ghanaians as anybody else"*. The representative's use of the phrase, *"we are not supporting them in what they are doing"* seems to suggest that the organisation wants to please the masses in Ghana and yet prevent backlash from international community by providing a desk for the minority group. It seems confusing that an organisation which is to protect the rights of all persons would not support the practice in which individuals are engaged in.

A few young people argued that individuals have freedom to experiment and to choose whom they want to be sexually involved with. For instance, in male student discussions, a participant said, *"Well, sometimes I have a double minded view about them, sometimes I go like well they are just individuals trying to explore or exploit their sexual activities or capabilities"*. *Yes and sometimes it's like. Yes. And... and from what I have learnt it's not a mental disorder, its*

one's own willingness to do something and people categorise it as sometime spiritual but it's not. It's an individual's way of thinking. You want to for a woman, fine, someone wants to go for another man".

To add, a female in a student discussion said, *"I think it is not bad because we all have our own rights. It's my right to date Elizabeth, why can't I do it? It is my personal right; I can do whatever I choose to do".*

Other participants' indicated that the rights of individuals could not supersede the overall views of the Ghanaian society which is against homosexuality. For example, a male student participant in a discussion said, *"But taking into the consideration the right of people I have heard more interviews and I have listen to radio, and people talk about, like, homosexuals come to talk about people not taking into consideration their rights and then how they feel. But there is sayings that when you go to Rome, do what the Romans do. So, so far as you are here and then it's not accepted, am not sure you can put up the practice".*

The introduction and background and Literature review chapter shows how that gay rights activism and mobilisation is on the rise on the continent. The organisations also face challenges similar to the organisations in Ghana. The struggle to protect human rights of homosexuals within homophobic societies and accusations of these organisations as serving a western agenda serves as a problem. The risk of being labelled homosexual because an individual believes in their rights often prevents close association with homosexuals as we shall see in the section on acceptance or rejection of homosexuals in Chapter seven.

Discussion

From the discussions, young people encounter homosexual through school, media, parents and community. As indicated in the theoretical chapter, deviance affirms cultural values and norms and therefore when individuals in a society see individual punished for a deviant act, it reinforces what the community views as acceptable and unacceptable (Brent, Brent et al., 2013). Deviance also defines moral boundaries, people learn right from wrong by defining people as deviant. When individuals view how the whole community responds to a deviant act, it enables them to distinguish between right and wrong (Brent, Brent et al., 2013). Through socialization, media reports, parents and community, young people also learn social norms which include what is normal gendered and sexual behaviour and what is not. Spaces

for encountering and knowing homosexuality largely influence how young people perceive the act. And from the discussions, it is revealed that young people encounter homosexuality in a negative ways which leads to negative reactions to the act. As discussed in the literature review, studies show that religion influences attitudes towards homosexuality (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009; Arndt and De Bruin, 2006; Schulte & Battle, 2004 ; Tan, 2012 in Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al., 2014). Religious and social norms also teach and influence participant's views on homosexuality. Religious and local laws in Ghana are against homosexuality; hence participants make references to the social context as reasons why homosexuality should not be accepted. The argument about the unnaturalness of homosexual practices was based on normal heterosexual sex which involved the male and female sexual organs. Participants who discussed male homosexual sex argued that gay sex was unhealthy and led to negative health complications. Participants however did not discuss lesbian sex.

From the discussions, participants viewed homosexuality as crossing gender boundaries. From the literature review, studies show that sex and gender role characteristics influence perceptions about homosexuality (Wong, McCreary et al., 1999). Participants both male and female students and non-students used the gender binary system to interpret homosexual relationships. Participants both male and female students and non-students viewed homosexual relationships as comprising of male and female regardless of the fact that homosexual relationships occurred between members of the same sex.

Gender deviance is regarded as normal as far as it occurs within certain spaces such as the hall week celebration; on the other hand in other spaces such as the funeral and outside parade, it is viewed as abnormal.

Many participants, both students and non-students likened behaviours of homosexuals to the way they behaviour and physical appearances. Participants linked behaviour and physical appearance to ascribed behaviours and physical appearances of men and women. Some participants were of the view that male homosexuals dressed like heterosexual females whilst female homosexuals dressed like heterosexual males. Feminine attributes were attached to male homosexuals whilst masculine traits were attached to female lesbians. This is in line with studies that show that heterosexuals view homosexuals as possessing cross sex characteristics (Kite, Fingerhut & Peplau, 2006)

Although, disagreements also occurred surrounding homosexual attire and cross dressing, the preceding discussions reveal that there is a tendency of participants to relate behaviors of

homosexuals to existing gender binary which strictly divides individuals into either the male or female category. Hence when a male performs and assumed a female role, he is seen as homosexual and when a female performs and assumes a male role, she is also seen as lesbian.

Although in this chapter, participants linked homosexuality to behaviour and physical appearance, discussions in this section indicated that cross-dressing during this hall week celebration had become an accepted norm on the University of Ghana campus. Individuals therefore who dressed like females during that event could not be categorised as homosexuals since it is seen as a norm. Outside this parade however, a cross dresser would be categorised as a homosexual because it was deviant. What is deviant therefore depends on the time and space in which it occurs and also depends on who views the act. This is in line with Greenberg's (1990) argument that, "deviance lies in the eye of the beholder" and the space in which it is performed.

In this chapter, there were no significant differences in young people's attitudes between males and females and between students and non-students. Similar to studies discussed in the literature review (Oti-Boadi, Agbakpe et al., 2014), (Haruna, 2015), (Ncanana and Ige, 2014) and (Lim, 2002), also indicate that young people largely expressed negative attitudes towards homosexuality. In the next section we shall discuss young people's perceptions of the causes of homosexuality.

CHAPTER SEVEN: WHY HOMOSEXUALITY?

Previous chapters illustrate what constitutes normative gender and how that influences youth's perceptions of homosexuality. The introduction and background and literature review chapters also discuss public perceptions and views of homosexuality as abnormal and alien to African and Ghanaian culture.

In 1973, the American Psychological Association removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses. Other countries also followed suit in classifying homosexuality as a form of sexual orientation. In 2011, following increasing attacks on LGBT persons in many countries, the United Nations Human Rights Council expressed concern and subsequently adopted a resolution on human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity to protect rights of such individuals. However as indication in the introduction and background, several states still have laws against homosexual acts.

As the phenomenon on what causes homosexuality is still contentious and highly debateable in social and biological science research, this chapter seek to find out young people's young people's ideas about what causes homosexuality. This chapter also focuses youth views on on homosexual practices as a strategy, and young people's acceptance or rejection of homosexuals.

Explaining Homosexuality

During the interviews and focus group with participants, discussions about how individuals become involved in the practice of homosexuality were held. A variety of explanations were given including nature/birth, money, peer pressure, sexual pleasure and spiritual reasons.

Environment/Genetics/Socialization

Some young people were of the view that the environment influences ones behaviour. For example, a male student in an interview said, "*the environment you are born in. The environment consists of your surroundings, peers and everything that surrounds you so it's basically the environment*".

Some young people indicated genetics/biology as the reason why individuals were homosexuals. Participants indicated that the genes affect the bodies of homosexuals therefore a woman with male genes would have masculine features. In the discussions, a male student participant stated, "*I want you guys to clarify this for me. I got to know the male can have female genes in their system more than...*" Another student in the discussion added, "*And its vice versa, I also heard the female can also have the male genes*".

Participants seem to suggest that the biological makeup of individuals cause them to become either homosexual or heterosexual. In addition, one participant explained the psychological aspect as decisive in determining one's sexual orientation.

In a male student focus group discussion, some participants thought that some individuals are born homosexuals (possessed certain traits that made them homosexual). One participant also stated, “...if you study psychology you will know that there are sexual orientations and sexual orientations is who you think you are , who you think you are attracted to.... From the science angle like psychology, there are researches that prove ... they are pointing to the fact that homosexuality, the traits for people to become homosexuals to some extent and I'm saying this advisable is inherent” Another participant also added, “Like XXY instead of XY. So they have these female features, the tendency and other things so they tend to be attracted to females”.

Some participants however disagreed with the notion of being born as a homosexual. A female participant in a non-student focus group discussion said, “They were never born with such traits. Nobody was born that way”.

Socialization

In several countries in sub-Saharan Africa, direct parental involvement in the sexual socialization of children in the past has been described as minimal. (Bastien, Kajula, & Muhwezi, 2011). Whilst parents often do not educate their children on sex, schools also do a poor job of sexual education. As indicated in Chapter five, schools serve as arenas for learning expected gendered behaviours they also serve as arenas for correcting deviant behaviour. Therefore children learn and are introduced to sex from other sources such as peers. Socialisation of children into expected gendered behaviour and sexual practices mostly falls on parents. In chapter five, we also saw that some young people learnt about homosexuality from their parents who warned them against indulging in the deviant practice.

Some young people were of the view that improper socialization by parents led to homosexuality in individuals. Participants explained that good parenting and proper upbringing of children influenced an individual's sexual orientation. Participants were of the view that parents were responsible for ensuring that their wards became heterosexual.

For example, a male student in a male student focus group discussion disagreed with the notion of genetics, he stated that, *“When a child is born a child has no skill, no morals , nothing ... If the child wants something , the child will demand it, if the child wants the mothers attention, it will demand it , it cry until the mother attends to it . Now if this child is not properly trained and the child is left to go in that direction, the child will become a thief, a liar, a cheat because he gets everything he demands for. Everything he wants, he must get. Every human being has proclaimed, you have your tendencies, if I grow up. Probably if I was growing up I liked stealing, like picking up things. If no one stopped me from doing that and I grow up, I can’t defend myself by saying that it is inherent. So if someone is growing up with a different sexual orientation from what is accepted in society, the person should be put on the right path. Don’t tell me the person has an inherent something so the child should be allowed to grow that way because its psychological inherent”*.

Others were of the view that it was rather strict parenting and lack of sexual education by parents to children contributed to homosexuality. For instance, a male student in an interview added that the socialization processes also play a part in individuals becoming homosexuals. He stated, *“ ... you tell your daughter, hey, I don’t want to see any boy in my house. I don’t want you to get pregnant. Fine, you are supposed to tell them all that but you put a warning on them. And we all have hormones, and a lady lesbian would approach her and say, “hey, I like you” and start talking about that to her and she would just join them. But from the beginning, if you were able to let them know that this is this and that is that, I don’t think they would go into that act”*.

Other participants were also of the view that parents are responsible for training their children to become morally upright and therefore should resort to forms of discipline such as spanking as a form of correction. The preceding statements indicate young people’s ideas about how individuals become homosexuals.

Mental Disorder

In an interview with the Chief Psychiatrist, he stated that the official medical position on homosexuality is that it is not a mental disorder. In addition, he indicated the individuals had the ability to choose their sexual orientation. In the interview, the Chief Psychiatrist also added that his personal position was that the official medical position was wrong. He said,

“The reason why I say that is the official position is wrong is that, that official position is not based on evidence. It is just based on political activism”.

He however also added, *“Again, that same official position is that only a few of them are very uncomfortable with their status and they will wish to change. Those are considered to be abnormal, psychologically abnormal homosexuals”.*

Many young people shared in the view that homosexuality is a mental illness. Some participants indicated that homosexuality was incurable. For instance, a male participant in a student focus group stated, *“The definition of someone with mental case ... a mental case is a disorder. For mental case, you need drugs to reverse it, that situation and you need to be isolated from the general public so you can undergo certain kinds of therapy but with homosexuals, you don't give them drugs to stop homosexuality”.*

To add, a male student in the discussion also added, *“Yes, but you've even admitted that a mental case you can .Yes, that's therapy. That's psychological therapy. But here is the case that you are not sick , we can't give you medicine to take or I can't tell you that you'll be fine when you are having a headache, it's a process but for homosexuals , it's not like, you administer drugs to them its by their own will”.* The preceding statements reveal that participants view homosexuality as a mental disorder that cannot be changed.

Homosexual Practices as Strategy

From the above section some young people view homosexual practices as unnatural and abnormal. Young people highlighted environment, biology/genetics and socialization as reasons why individuals were homosexuals. In this section, young people viewed homosexuality as a strategy being adopted by individuals as solutions to poverty, unemployment and economic hardships.

Money and Peer Pressure

Young people were of the view that homosexuals were wealthy. In the discussions and interviews, some participants held the assumption that gay people are rich and hence use monetary influence to lure people into the act.

For instance, a participant in a male non-student focus group discussion stated, *“They use a lot of enticement. They sponsor guys”.* To add, another male non-student participant in the group

also said, *“Do you know there are high profile people who are gay. Some are managing directors ready to sponsor people”*.

Others were of the view that peer pressure led to in changes in an individual’s orientation. For example, a female participant indicated, *“sometimes poverty and friends too. I have a friend that I like and he sings so he is this girly type. So there was a time that his friend said ‘oh Humphrey you behave like that, you know there are so many men who come to you and other things, if you engage yourself in it at least it can help you get money for your education and other things. Now you are home so why don’t you just join them’. If you move by their word or what friends say that is what you are going to engage yourself into. There are so many things, sometimes if your friend tells you that, you would ignore it at first but if you sit down and you think about it and you are not lucky or if you are not strong and you don’t have God on your side, you may fall into these kinds of things. So I think friends normally influence their fellow friends on how to engage in these kinds of stuff. Some people also think if they go into it at least they would get money, so people to think they feel good if they do that*

Some young heterosexuals indicated that they would also indulge in homosexuality as a way of making money. Another female in a nonstudent focus group also said, *“Some are through friends. Some are also because of money. Some follow their friends blindly because of the huge sums of money involved. If a friend comes to tell you that if you indulge in this practice, you can make as much as 10 million. Even if I am in that position, I would go in for it because of the money. Hahaha. After all the rounds I made today, I made only GHC 7 and if someone offers to have anal sex with me so that I can buy pampers and go for a 2 million injection, and keep the rest 8 million. Anyone who is greedy and wants quick money will fall for this trap. Maybe I do not want that kind of quick money, so I won't indulge in it if four people bring up such an issue, and we see the amount of money you have made, two people out of that four can follow you and demand for money. Most people fall for it because of the money”*.

Another male non student in a discussion added, *“What he’s saying is true. You will see a woman tell another woman, “I like you, come and visit me”. When you start visiting, she will give you gifts, take you out and then gradually tell you, “You’re beautiful, I like you, I will not let anything worry you”. If you are not mature and you think of the fact that you have gotten someone who wants to take care of you and take you to school. I will agree so that she takes care of me. That’s how people enter”*.

Participants agreed that poverty levels and economic hardship often led individuals to engage in homosexuality. Perceptions about wealthy gay men are evident in public discussions about homosexuality in Ghana. The representative at CHRAJ, also stated, *“I think if they have, you know they have their association and you’ll be surprised the kind of people that are involved in this act. There are lawyers, bankers; there are a lot of very important people.”* The preceding statements show young people’s views about how individuals are lured into homosexuality by wealthy homosexuals.

Spiritual Possession and Ritual Activity

Young people were also of the view that homosexual practice had spiritual implications/purposes. Participants also felt that there were spiritual forces that influenced individuals to become homosexuals. A married female participant stated, *“But one thing I know is that if someone is into that act, then he is in Satan’s grip... I remember him in prayers”*. Another male participant also added, *“It’s not good. It’s an evil spirit”*. Participants linked homosexuality to evil spirits which had possessed individuals. In a male non student focus group, a participant stated. *“I feel that some are spiritual. Others have no knowledge of it. They were introduced into it by gays. These gay people give a lot. They give gifts and so if you are not careful, they will draw you into it. Because of some that I know. But the people who actually brought that thing, I don’t know. But mainly through gifts”*. The participant explained that gay men use enticements to attract partners.

Others also stated that people indulge in homosexuality as a ritual activity to be performed as requirement for wealth creation. For example, a male student in a focus group argued that, *“Me, what I know is that its spiritual. Some of them use it for rituals. That’s how come they are very rich”*. In addition, a male non-student participant said, *“Sometimes when I think of it, I think that their brains are not working or they use it for spiritual purposes. Because I don’t understand and if God says you shouldn’t do it, why are you doing it? I don’t understand. That’s why they use it for rituals. Because they themselves know that it is not good. If it was good how would they have been born.”*

In a study carried out amongst male homosexuals in Kano and Lagos(Nigeria), male prostitutes “still believe that there are magical and witchcraft effects associated with male homosexual intercourse. They also believe that if the dominant partner is a businessman, such associations confer spiritual benefits to his business...also it is felt that homosexuality

conveys some unique advantages on its practitioners; for instance, they feel that homosexuals tend to be rich and successful men”(S.O. Murray & Press, 2002).

A counter argument raised by a male student on spiritual reasons in a focus group highlighted that, *“what people are refusing to talk about is how the person became gay. And that’s where people say spirituality. They are being possessed. But people also feel that is their sexual orientation”*.

Sexual Pleasure

Some young people were of the view that individuals engaged in homosexuality to attain and achieve sexual pleasure. Some indicated that some females did achieve orgasm with their male partners and also did not enjoy heterosexual sexual intercourse. For instance, in a female student discussion, a participant indicated *“...I heard some guys can just come on for like one minute, two minutes and then they are dead. But with the lesbians ... they can do it for like 10 minutes, 20 minutes and she’s not tired and that gives her some feeling”*.

Some participants were of the view that masturbation could lead to homosexuality. Participants added that sexual intercourse is a learning process for partners to know how to pleasure each other; however previous engagement in masturbation can affect sexual pleasure of individuals. For example, a female student in a discussion said, *“I thought some it's mostly masturbation that leads to homosexuality which is to say that for a guy, you keep rubbing rubbing and rubbing till a time when you have sexual intercourse with a woman, she wouldn't please you as much as you please yourself but because you are a guy and other guys know how to please themselves through masturbation, they know how to get you on to say. So if there is a guy involved in masturbation, if he should sleep with a woman, he doesn't feel it but if another guy should come to him, through their act, the same act of masturbation and their sex life, they get to please each other because they are both guys. The same for the female”*..

On the other hand, some participants opposed the view that masturbation led to homosexuality. A female student participant said, *“I know of a female who has masturbated herself all her life and she is not into it. She sticks to her boyfriend. When he is not around, she will just masturbate herself.*

Another participant added that females know how to pleasure themselves as opposed to men pleasuring them. She stated, *“But for females, the females know how to please themselves and*

so she goes to her female, she can get all the pleasure she wants and she will not get it from a guy, then they start having their acts". She argued that females know how to pleasure each other which they don't get from the opposite sex. Another added, *"For money and also because they are not attracted to men. Women "feel" more than men"*. The participant explained that aside, monetary influences, lesbians are not attracted to men and also women tend to pleasure themselves better because they understand and respond to each other well during intercourse.

A participant suggested that girls with a sexual addiction tended to become lesbians since in an all-girls boarding school, there were no guys to satisfy their urges. She stated, *"Because I also found out that girls who are sex addicts too, some of them become lesbians because when they go to school since there is no guy there"*. The participant explained that sexual addiction of girls causes them to become lesbians as there is no opposite sex in all female boarding schools. The preceding statements indicate young people's views that individuals engage in homosexual practice for sexual pleasure.

Acceptance or Rejection

From the preceding section, participants view homosexuality as a learned behaviour; others also indicate that it is biological/genetic. Discussions and Interviews with participants in also indicate that homosexual practice sometimes viewed as a strategy to escape economic hardships. Public discussions in Ghana also portray homosexuality as unnatural and against God's law.

Participants were asked if homosexuals could change their sexual behaviour. Some participants were of the view that it was possible to change. Some participants tried to advice their homosexual friends to change their behaviour.

For example, a female student participant stated, *"I remember we tried to talk to her and she told us how everything went about and other things. So we tried several times but we couldn't and it got to a point that she wanted to influence a friend of ours so we had not ... for them they have this strong thing that if you feel for it you can't change. So we could not change her though"*.

Participants were asked if they would accept or reject friends or relatives who were homosexual. Some participants indicated that they would accept homosexuals as they were.

For instance, a female non-student participant stated, *“Our friendship cannot break, I’ll keep advising you through the Bible and health. I will ask him to stop. I know it is very hard but as time goes on everyday advising will change him”*.

A male student participant also stated that, *“If I should come across someone who is a homosexual I don’t think I should shun the person away. Maybe I can try and understand the person more. And if the person needs help, I would assist the person in getting all the results he needs, if not then that is all, you leave the person to be”*.

Some young people rejected homosexuals. Some indicated that they would not want to be associated with the person. For instance, male student stated, *“... I will always pretend but deep within me, I wouldn’t like you. I would always talk to you like I am okay with you. But getting close to you, it wouldn’t be that much. Because I find it to be a disgrace, they always say it is their right and stuff but it’s a disgrace I mean and it wasn’t in the bible so why must you do it, as far as I am concerned ...”*

Some participants believed that close association with a homosexual would lead to them being branded as homosexuals as well. A male non-student stated also said, *“I will advise him but I will not be hanging around him because people will think I am also one”*. The above statements show young people’s acceptance or rejection of homosexual behaviour.

Discussion

This chapter revealed different opinions about why people are homosexuals. Reasons given ranged from environmental/genetics, socialization, mental disorder and socialization. Data from the field revealed that young people viewed homosexuality as a learned behaviour. Others also argued that homosexuality was a natural occurrence resulting from biology/genetics which could indicate some level of understanding for behaviour of homosexuals. Young people also were of the view that homosexuality was a mental illness which could not be cured. Others also indicated that homosexuality is unnatural. Young people were also of the view that homosexual practices are strategy to overcome economic hardship. Young people were however more understanding and lenient towards individuals who engaged in this practice for money and for those who sought to achieve sexual pleasure through the activity.

Participant's arguments are in line with public discussions about homosexuality in Ghana as indicated in the introduction, background and literature chapters of this thesis. This indicates how dominant religious, political and social actors dictate individual behaviour with regards to sexual orientation, thereby creating the heteronorm which leads to compulsory heterosexuality. Thus, young people largely view homosexual behaviour as deviant and unwanted in the Ghanaian society. As discussed earlier, what is viewed as deviance in a society relies on the social norms in the society and the viewer's role in recognising an act of deviance. We see from the discussions that strong social forces i.e. the religious, political and social lead to this widely shared view. Societal expectations reinforce the strict production and reproduction of the strict heteronorm.

From the discussion, whilst some young people accepted and tolerated homosexuals, others rejected the act and explained that they would distance themselves from homosexuals to avoid being labelled as such. It is seen from the introduction and background chapter and Chapter six that there is some form of gay activism and mobilization from a few human rights bodies which seek to protect the rights of homosexuals. However, amidst the negatively charged environment, individuals and members of these organisations are viewed as pro-homo and as pursuing a Western agenda which has negative repercussions for them. There is also a seeming disconnect between the law as discussed in the introductory chapter and the protection of human rights.

Although most students largely agreed on the reasons why individuals are homosexuals, young male students in this chapter exhibited a level of understanding for homosexual behaviour by citing variations in sexual orientation. This may be because most male students in the focus group discussions were psychology students, thus they had been exposed to literature on this issue during their studies. However, non-students and female students however did not make mention of variations in sexual orientation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This thesis sought to explore young people's perceptions of homosexual relationships and identify the factors that shape young people's ideas of same-sex relationships. In addition, the thesis sought to find out what characterizes youth's perception of normative male and female identities in Ghana and how they inform expected behaviours and gender roles. Furthermore, the thesis, sought to explore and discuss the possible change in perceptions of young people on same-sex relationships and identify what is informing this new discourse. Finally, the thesis sought to explore gendered and educational differences in perceptions towards same-sex relationships amongst youth.

Data showed that young people recognise the presence of existing traditional gender norms as well as changes in gender roles in Ghanaian society. Young people indicated that men's work was largely related to the public domain and women's work was related to the private domain. In spite of existing traditional gender roles and responsibilities in some urban households and rural areas, young people indicated that men were increasingly becoming involved in women's work. Young people also indicated that the crossing of gendered boundaries was prohibited by women who acted as enforcers of hegemonic gendered norms. The thesis revealed a distinction in men's roles and women's roles were largely related to the performance of tasks, behaviours and reproduction.

Young people also strongly linked expected gendered and sexual behaviour to existing gender categories of male and female. Therefore when a deviation in expected gendered behaviour occurred, one's sexual orientation was question. Young people's perceptions of feminine and masculine characteristics led to a conflation of homosexuality with crossdressing. Thus, the assumption that male homosexuals dressed and behaved like females and female homosexuals behaved like men resulted in heteronormative thinking. Young people used the gender binary of male and female in heterosexual relationships to interpret and understand homosexual relationships. Homosexual relationships therefore had to comprise of a male partner and a female partner. Sex was viewed as an activity to encompass two different sexual organs i.e. the penis and vagina, therefore sexual intercourse could not occur if one partner did not assume the role of a woman and the other the role of a man.

Young people were encouraged to follow existing gender norms which lead to compulsory heterosexuality. Through socialisation processes and agents of socialization such as media,

religious bodies, parents and community who depicted homosexuality in a negative light, the possibilities for viewing homosexuality as normal behaviour were limited.

Data from the field thus revealed largely negative attitudes to homosexuality from both students and non-students males and females. Some female students however expressed an understanding and tolerance of homosexuals whilst many young people, particularly male students and male and female non-students expressed disgust at the act. There was however some levels of understanding for individuals who practiced homosexuality as a strategy to overcome poverty and economic hardships.

Education was a minor factor in changing perceptions about homosexuality as some participants; mostly male students expressed an understanding of varied sexual orientations. Some female students also expressed sexuality and desire as main reasons for engaging in homosexuality. Some male and female student's participants also felt that homosexuality is inherent and also added that human beings possess free will to do as they please. Many of the participants however saw homosexuality as a deviant behaviour whilst a few saw it as normal. Others felt that bad parenting and socialization caused homosexuality in individuals. Female students also expressed sexuality and desire as main reasons for engaging in homosexuality.

REFERENCES

- Aggleton, P., & Parker, R. (2010). *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality, Health and Rights*: Taylor & Francis.
- Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*: Zed Books.
- Ampofo, A. A., & Boateng, J. (2011). Multiple Meanings of Manhood among boys in Ghana. In S. Tamale (Ed.), *African Sexualities: A Reader* (pp. 420 - 436): Pambazuka Press.
- Ampofo, A. A., Okyerefo, M. P., & Pervarah, M. (2009). Phallic Competence. *Culture, Society and Masculinities*, 1(1), 59-78.
- Antonio, E. P. (1997). Homosexuality and African Culture. In P. Germond & S. d. Gruchy (Eds.), *Aliens in the Household of God: Homosexuality and Christian Faith in South Africa* (pp. 295-315). Cape Town.
- Arndt, M., & De Bruin, G. (2006). Attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: Relations with gender, race and religion among university students. *PINS*, 33, 16-30.
- Asante, G., & Roberts, M. N. (2014). Reliving Oppression: Becoming Black, Becoming Gay. In S. C. Howard (Ed.), *Critical Articulations of Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*: Lexington Books.
- Atanga, L. L., Ellece, S. E., Litosseliti, L., & Sunderland, J. (2013). *Gender and Language in Sub-Saharan Africa: Tradition, Struggle and Change*: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Awondo, P. (2010). The politicisation of sexuality and rise of homosexual movements in post-colonial Cameroon. *Review of African Political Economy*, 37(125), 315-328. doi: 10.1080/03056244.2010.510624
- Awondo, P., Geschiere, P., & Reid, G. (2012). Homophobic Africa? Toward A More Nuanced View. *African Studies Review*, 55 (3), 145.
- Bastien, S., Kajula, L. J., & Muhwezi, W. W. (2011). A review of studies of parent-child communication about sexuality and HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. *Reproductive Health*, 8, 25-25. doi: 10.1186/1742-4755-8-25
- BBC. (2006). Ghanaian gay conference banned.
- BBC. (2011). Ghana refuses to grant gays' rights despite aid threat. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15558769>
- Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders; studies in the sociology of deviance*. London: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Brent, E., Brent, E. E., & Lewis, J. S. (2013). *Learn Sociology*: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

- Bruce-Jones, E., & Paoli Itaborahy, L. (2011). State-sponsored Homophobia: A world survey of laws criminalising same-sex sexual acts between consenting adults
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing Gender*.
- CBCNews. (2006). South Africa passes same-sex marriage bill. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/south-africa-passes-same-sex-marriage-bill-1.616073>
- CITIFM. (2015). St. Paul's SHS shut down over 'gay' instigated riots
- Cole, C. M., Manuh, T., & Miescher, S. (2007). *Africa After Gender?* : Indiana University Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Pearse, R. (2014). *Gender: In World Perspective*: Wiley.
- Currier, A. (2012). *Out in Africa: LGBT Organizing in Namibia and South Africa*: University of Minnesota Press.
- DailyMail. (2011). Foreign aid for countries with anti-gay rights records to be slashed, pledges Cameron. *DailyMail*. Retrieved from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2047254/David-Cameron-Foreign-aid-cut-anti-gay-countries.html>
- Dankwa, S. O. (2009). "It's a Silent Trade": Female Same-Sex Intimacies in Post-Colonial Ghana. *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 17(3), 192-205. doi: 10.1080/08038740903117208
- Defenders, T. F. (2012). South Africa: Killing of LGBTI rights defender Thapelo Makhutle Retrieved from <http://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/18638>
- Durkheim, E. (1938). *Rules of Sociological Method 1950 Rpt.*
- Epprecht, M. (2004). *Hungochani, Second Edition: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*: MQUP.
- Epprecht, M. (2008). *Heterosexual Africa?: The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS*: Ohio University Press.
- Essien, K., & Aderinto, A. S. (2009). "Cutting the Heaf of the Roaring Monster: Homosexuality and Repression in Africa. *African Study Monographs*, 30(3).
- Fiaveh, D. Y., Izugbara, C. O., Okyerefo, M. P. K., Reysoo, F., & Fayorsey, C. K. (2014). Constructions of masculinity and femininity and sexual risk negotiation practices among women in urban Ghana. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 17(5), 650-662. doi: 10.1080/13691058.2014.989264
- Flick, U. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*: SAGE Publications.
- Franzese, R. J. (2009). *The Sociology of Deviance: Differences, Tradition, and Stigma*: Charles C Thomas Publisher, Limited.

- Gauntlett, D. (2008). *Media, Gender and Identity: An Introduction*: Taylor & Francis.
- Geest, S. v. d. (2000). Funerals for the Living: Conversations with Elderly People in Kwahu, Ghana. *African Studies Review*, 43(3), 103-129. doi: 10.2307/525071
- Geoffrion, K. (2012). Ghanaian youth and festive transvestism. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 15(sup1), 48-61. doi: 10.1080/13691058.2012.742928
- Geoffrion, K. (2013). Ghanaian youth and festive transvestism. *Culture, Health and Sexuality: An International Journal for Research, Intervention and Care*, 15:, pp. 48-61.
- Germond, P., & De Gruchy, S. (1997). *Aliens in the Household of God: Homosexuality and Christian Faith in South Africa*: D. Philip.
- Ghana president: Anti-gay anger blocks even talk of change. (2013). from 76crimes.com/2013/10/04/ghana-president-anti-gay-anger-blocks-even-talk-of-change/
- GhanaMma. (2013). Gay And Lesbian Hook-Ups High On Internet In Ghana.
- GhanaNewsAgency. (2011). Presbyterian Church to set up therapy centres for homosexuals. Retrieved from <http://www.ghananewsagency.org/social/presbyterian-church-to-setup-therapy-centres-for-homosexual--32104>
- GhanaWeb. (2005). Adabraka Sahara - Emerging Slum.
- GhanaWeb. (2006). Govt bans International Homo Conference. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=109849>
- GhanaWeb. (2009). Gay And Lesbian Club On Legon Campus. from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=160037>
- GhanaWeb. (2011a). British PM under attack in Ghana. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=222782>
- GhanaWeb. (2011b). E.P. Church abhors homosexuality. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/religion/artikel.php?ID=216640>
- GhanaWeb. (2011c). There is no justification for homosexuality - Methodist Bishop. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=210660>
- GhanaWeb. (2015a). Alleged gay Kinto was framed up - Police. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=346222>
- GhanaWeb. (2015b). We'll never endorse homosexuality – Presby Church Ghana. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=351106>
- Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*: SAGE Publications.

- GLBTQ. (2015). Compulsory Heterosexuality. In C. J. Summers & T.-L. Peabworth (Eds.), *An Encyclopedia of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer culture*.
- GNA. (2006). Chief Imam supports homo conference ban. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=110159>
- Greenberg, D. F. (1990). *The Construction of Homosexuality*: University of Chicago Press.
- GSS. (2013a). 2010 Population and Housing Census Report: Children, Adolescents & Young People.
- GSS. (2013b). 2010 Population and Housing Census, Regional Analytical Report. Accra.
- Harry, J. (1983). Parasuicide, Gender, and Gender Deviance. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 24(4), 350-361. doi: 10.2307/2136401
- Haruna, U. (2015). Stirring the Hornet's Nest: a Study of Student's Awareness, Perception and Tolerance of Homosexuality in a Ghanaian University. *Journal of Sociological Research*, 6(1).
- Herek, G. M. (1988). Heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men: Correlates and gender differences. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 25(4), 451-477. doi: 10.1080/00224498809551476
- Herek, G. M. (2000). Homosexuality. In A. E. Kazdin (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of psychology* (pp. 149-153). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association & Oxford University Press.
- Herek, G. M. (2000). Homosexuality. In A. K. E. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (Vol. Vol. 4, pp. pp. 149-153). New York NY: Oxford University Press.
- Herek, G. M., & Capitano, J. P. (1995). Black heterosexuals' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men in the United States. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 32(2), 95-105. doi: 10.1080/00224499509551780
- Herek, G. M., & Glunt, E. K. (1993). Interpersonal contact and heterosexuals' attitudes toward gay men: Results from a national survey. *Journal of sex research*, 30(3), 239-244.
- Horn, S. S. (2006). Heterosexual adolescents' and young adults' beliefs and attitudes about homosexuality and gay and lesbian peers. *Cognitive Development*, 21(4), 420 - 440.
- Horwitz, A. V. (1990). *The Logic of Social Control*: Springer.
- Howard, S. C., Asante, G., Bucciferro, C., Camara, S. K., Crownover, B., Drummond, D. K., . . . Griffin, R. A. (2014). *Critical Articulations of Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*: Lexington Books.

- HuffingtonPost. (2014). Cardinal Peter Turkson Of Ghana Denounces Uganda's Anti-Gay Law. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/03/04/cardinal-turkson-uganda-gay-law_n_4897391.html
- Ingraham, C. (1994). The heterosexual imaginary: Feminist sociology and theories of gender. *Sociological theory*, 12, 203-203.
- Jakobsen, H. (2012). Focus groups and methodological rigour outside the minority world: making the method work to its strengths in Tanzania. *Qualitative Research*, 12(2), 111-130. doi: 10.1177/1468794111416145
- Jung, P. B., & Smith, R. F. (1993). *Heterosexism: An Ethical Challenge*: State University of New York Press.
- Kendall, K. (1998). "When a Woman Loves a Woman" in Lesotho: Love, Sex, and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia. In S. O. Murray & W. Roscoe (Eds.), *Boy-Wives and Female-Husbands: Studies in African-American Homosexualities*: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Klinken, A. v. (2014). Homosexuality, Politics and Pentecostal Nationalism in Zambia. *Studies in World Christianity*, 20(3), 259-281. doi: 10.3366/swc.2014.0095
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* Retrieved from http://books.google.no/books?id=BPm4izC3prUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false
- . Laws on Homosexuality in African Nations. (2014): Law Library of Congress.
- Lee, R. M., & Renzetti, C. M. (1990). The Problems of Researching Sensitive Topics: An Overview and Introduction. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 33(5), 510-528. doi: 10.1177/0002764290033005002
- Lehman, M., & Thornwall, M. (2013). College Students Attitudes towards Homosexuality. *Journal of Student Research*, pp. 118-138.
- Lim, V. K. G. (2002). Gender Differences and Attitudes Towards Homosexuality. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 43(1), 85-97.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2010). *Qualitative communication research methods*: Sage.
- Loue, S. (1999). *Gender, Ethnicity, and Health Research*: Springer US.
- Loue, S. (2007). *Gender, Ethnicity, and Health Research*: Springer US.
- Miescher, S. (2005). *Making Men in Ghana*: Indiana University Press.
- Mokomane, Z. (2013). *Work-Family Interface in Sub-Saharan Africa: Challenges and Responses*: Springer.

- Morgan, R., & Wieringa, S. (2005). *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men, and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-sex Practices in Africa*: Jacana Media.
- Mtemeri, J. (2015). Attitude and perceptions of university students in Zimbabwe towards homosexuality. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 20(2), 115-119.
- Murray, S. O., & Press, U. o. C. (2002). *Homosexualities*: University of Chicago Press.
- Murray, S. O., & Roscoe, W. (1998). *Boy-wives and Female Husbands Studies of African Homosexualities*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- MyJoyOnline. (2013). President Mahama declares stance: Homosexuality is criminal. Retrieved from <http://edition.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/201302/100815.php>
- Nagoshi, J. L., Nagoshi, C. T., & Brzuzy, S. (2013). *Gender and Sexual Identity: Transcending Feminist and Queer Theory*: Springer.
- Ncanana, Z., & Ige, K. D. (2014). Aversion toward Homosexuals among Tertiary Education Students in South Africa. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences; Vol 5, No 10 (2014): Special Issue - June 2014*.
- Nyeck, S. N., & Epprecht, M. (2013). *Sexual Diversity in Africa: Politics, Theory, and Citizenship*: MQUP.
- Ofori, E. (2014). Perception of Students on the Practices of homosexuality amongst students in the Cape Coast
Metropolis. *International Journal*, 4(2), 2307-2227X.
- Oti-Boadi, M., Agbakpe, G. F., & Dziwornu, E. (2014). MRP.
- PewResearchCentre. (2013). Growing Support for Gay Marriage: Changed Minds and Changing Demographics (pp. 2-20): The Pew Reseach Centre for the People & The Press.
- Phillips, D. O. (2000). Constituting the Global Gay: Issues of Individual Subjectivity and Sexuality in Southern Africa. In D. Herman & C. Stychin (Eds.), *Sexuality in the Legal Arena*
Bloomsbury Academic.
- Phillips, O. (1997). Zimbabwean Law and the Production of a White Man's Disease. *Social & Legal Studies*, 6(4), 471-491. doi: 10.1177/096466399700600402
- Quist-Adade, C., Bates, F., & Wathanafa, N. (2014). Homosexuality in the Ghanaian Media: A Preliminary Survey. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture (Lingua - IJLLC)*, 1(2).
- Rice, X. (2011). Ugandan gay rights activist David Kato found murdered. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jan/27/ugandan-gay-rights-activist-murdered>

- Rich, A. (1980). Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence. *Signs*, 5(4), 631-660. doi: 10.2307/3173834
- Salm, S. J., & Falola, T. (2002). *Culture and Customs of Ghana*: Greenwood Press.
- Sanchez, D. T., Crocker, J., & Boike, K. R. (2005). Doing gender in the bedroom: Investing in gender norms and the sexual experience. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(10), 1445-1455.
- Schilt, K., & Westbrook, L. (2009). Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity “Gender Normals,” Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality. *Gender & Society*, 23(4), 440-464.
- Schulte, L. J., & Battle, J. (2004). The relative importance of ethnicity and religion in predicting attitudes towards gays and lesbians. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 47(2), 127-142.
- Sidibe, A. M. (2011). War on Homosexuals in Ghana. *GhanaWeb*. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=215196>
- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*: SAGE Publications.
- Spencer, J. W. (2014). *Contexts of Deviance: Statuses, Institutions, and Interactions*: Oxford University Press.
- Sullivan, N. (2003). *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*: New York University Press.
- Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: Negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6(3), 374-385.
- Søgaard, M. (2013). *Consequences Of Imposing The Homo/Hetero Binary And The Prospect For Decriminalisation Of MSM In Contemporary Ghana*. (Master Degree Master Thesis), The University Of Copenhagen. Retrieved from <http://www.modernghana.com/news/512619/1/consequences-of-imposing-the-homohetero-binary-and.html>
- Tan, P. (2012). *Attitudes towards homosexuality among Peninsula Malaysia University Students*. (Unpublished Thesis), Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. Retrieved from www.academia.edu/1521805.
- UNHCR. (2010). Tackling discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. from http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Discrimination/LGBT_discrimination_A4.pdf
- Warner, M. (1991). Introduction: Fear of a Queer Planet. *Social Text*(29), 3-17. doi: 10.2307/466295
- Watson, K. (2005). Queer Theory.
- Weiss, J. T. (2001). The Gender Caste System: Identity, Privacy, and Heteronormativity. *Law & Sexuality*, 10, 123.

Wong, F. Y., McCreary, D. R., Carpenter, K. M., Engle, A., & Korchynsky, R. (1999). Gender-Related Factors Influencing Perceptions of Homosexuality. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 37(3), 19-31. doi: 10.1300/J082v37n03_02

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*: Guilford Publications.

Zhang, Y., & Wildemuth, B. M. (2009). *Unstructured Interviews*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Zimmerman, B. (2000). *Lesbian Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia*: Garland Pub.

APPENDIX

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

My name is Naa Motsoo Allotey, and I am a student at University of Bergen in Norway. I am inviting you to participate in a research study titled “The Perceptions of the Youth towards same-sex practices in Ghana”. Please note that information collected for the study is solely for academic purposes. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. A description of the study is provided below.

I am interested in learning more about “The Perceptions of the Youth towards same-sex practices”. You will be asked questions related to the topic of same-sex practices in Ghana. This will approximately take between 40-50 minutes. There is a risk that whilst participating in this study you may unintentionally share personal/confidential information about yourself.

You are however assured that your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and any information identifying the informant will not be disclosed to anyone under any circumstances. These risks will be minimised by the use of pseudonyms to protect your identity

If you no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

Should you not understand the certain aspect of the consent form, feel free to ask for clarification.

CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date: _____

Statement by the Interviewer

I have read out the above information to the potential participant. I have given a copy of this form to the participant.

Name of interviewer:

Signature of Interviewer:

INTERVIEW GUIDE

EXPERT INTERVIEW

Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice Representative

1. Describe the current situation /discussion about homosexuality in Ghana
2. What are your views about homosexuality?
3. Describe the institutions experience relating to homosexuality.
4. Have cases been brought up to CHRAJ?
5. What did the institution do? How was the case handled?
6. The recommendation of the Constitutional Review Commission was that, issues should be taken to the Supreme Court for redress, have you heard of such cases?
7. What is the institutions stance on this issue?
8. What about the current discourse about sexual rights and minority groups advocating for legalisation?
9. What steps have been taken as far as sexual rights are concerned?
10. Should homosexuals be accepted in society?
11. What about the current discourse about sexual rights and minority groups advocating for legalisation?

Religious Leaders

Muslim Leader/Christian Leader

1. Can you describe the general situation/discussions around the topic in Ghana?
2. What is the discussion in the Muslim/Christian community?
3. What are your views on homosexuality in Ghana?
4. What does the Quran/Bible say about same-sex relationships?
5. Has there been any instance where a member has been accused of same-sex relationships?
6. What would be your response to such an accusation?
7. Should homosexuals be accepted in society?
8. What do you think should be the way forward as far as same-sex relationships are concerned in Ghana?
9. What role do you think religious leaders like you should play to address the issues?

Chief Psychiatrist

1. Can you describe the general situation/discussions around the topic?
2. What are your views on homosexuality in Ghana?
3. With regard to the past statement made by the Chief Psychiatrist stating that homosexuality is a disease, is that the general acceptance by the medical association of Ghana?
4. What is the institutions stance on homosexuality?
5. What are the causes?
6. Is there a cure?
7. Have there been some patients admitted?
8. What treatment is available?
9. What about the current discourse about sexual rights and minority groups advocating for legalisation?
10. What do you think should be the way forward as far as same-sex relationships are concerned in Ghana?

STUDENT & NON-STUDENT FOCUS GROUP THEMES

Demographic Characteristics

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Course/Occupation
4. Course Level/Level of schooling
5. Marital status

Norms

1. What is a man? What does it mean to be a man?
2. How is a man expected to behave? How does a normal man behave?
3. Are there some things women cannot do and vice versa?

4. Who is a woman? What does it mean to be a woman?
5. How is a woman expected to behave? How does a normal woman behave?
6. What is homosexuality?
7. How does a homosexual behave?
8. What do you think is the Bible's/Koran/Tradition's stance on homosexuality?
9. How much do your religious/spiritual beliefs influence your ideas about homosexuality?
10. What do you think about human rights in this matter?
11. Should homosexuals be accepted in society?
12. How did you first hear about homosexuality? How did you feel?
13. Do you think people are born as homosexuals or choose to be homosexuals?

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Demographic Characteristics

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Course/Occupation
4. Course Level/ Level of schooling
5. Marital status

Norms

1. What is a man? What does it mean to be a man?
2. How is a man expected to behave? How does a normal man behave?
3. What do you think of men who behave like women and vice versa?
4. Who is a woman? What does it mean to be a woman?
5. How is a woman expected to behave? How does a normal woman behave?
6. What are your thoughts on homosexuality?
7. How does a homosexual behave?
8. What are your thoughts on homosexuality?
9. Has the topic been raised in family discussions? What was your parents/siblings view?
10. How about your peers? Have their opinions influenced your thinking?
11. What do you think is the Bible's/Koran/Tradition's stance on homosexuality?

12. How much do your religious beliefs influence your ideas about homosexuality?
13. What do you think about human rights in this matter?
14. Should homosexuals be accepted in society?
15. How did you first hear about homosexuality? How did you feel?
16. Do you think people are born as homosexuals or choose to be homosexuals?