THEMES IN SELF-PRESENTATION ON A GAY MALE DATING SITE: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE PROFILES OF A SAMPLE OF ONLINE DATERS FROM THE EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Thesis submitted by

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, **Themes in self-presentation on a gay male dating site: A content analysis of the profiles of a sample of online daters from the Eastern Cape Province** is my original work and that any other work that was included in this thesis has been properly referenced and acknowledged, and that this thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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ABSTRACT

My thesis research explores themes in self-presentation in the dating profiles of gay men from the Eastern Cape Province on an online dating site for men only. Although there is a growing body of research on this topic, this research is generally located in Europe and North America. In South Africa, research on same-sex intimacies has a chequered history. In the apartheid past, gay men and lesbian women were largely ignored by psychologists and social scientists. And, when they did receive their attention, it was largely discriminatory. In the post-apartheid context, there is far more interest in queer sexualities. However, as this research focuses on HIV transmission and on discrimination and violent homophobia, it too has played a role in painting a gloomy picture of what it means to be queer in South Africa.

This study both address a 'gap in literature' on gay male dating online by focusing on the South African context, and it addresses the crisis of representation by giving consideration to the ways in which gay men see and present themselves to others. This study takes the form of a content analysis of 200 dating profiles. Key themes in self-presentation emerging in the analysis are: Ethnicity; Age; Education; Geographic Location; Living Arrangements; Sexuality; Relationship Status; Lifestyle; Appearance; Political Outlook; Personality; Faith. I discuss important observations relating to these themes and the insights they provide on key issues shaping public debate on same-sex sexualities in the South African context.

Keywords: Gay men; online dating; self-presentation; heteronormativity, homonormativity

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since its mainstream introduction in the early 1990s, the internet has had a significant impact on the formation of romantic relationships. Online dating, one means of social interaction provided through internet mediated platforms, has brought about novel and exciting avenues to dating (Gibbs, Ellison, Heino, 2006). Gibbs et al, (2006), argue that online dating affords its users a variety of ways to present themselves to potential romantic partners. And, as internet availability and access has increased, so too has the acceptability of online dating. Furthermore, current literature suggests that the diversity of potential romantic partners is especially appealing to members of minority groups such as gay men and other men who are interested in meeting men for sex.

Gnilka and Dew (2009, cited in McKie et al., 2015) argue that one of the reasons that young gay men make up a substantial portion of online daters is both because of the extent to which this social group has access to and has adopted new technologies and because this technology provides a platform for meeting potential romantic partners to a group whose sexuality is often stigmatised in broader society. I think that this aspect is particularly relevant in the South African context where same-sex intimacies are said to be un-African, and where queer youth are often exposed to discrimination and other forms of hostility (Nel & Judge, 2008).

In South Africa the state prohibition of same-sex sexuality was introduced during colonial rule and carried over into apartheid policy and practice. Up until the 1990s psychologists in South Africa failed to publicly challenge the criminalization of same-sex sexuality, and they even testified as expert witnesses in court cases in which they asserted that same-sex intimacy was a sickness and that gay men and lesbian women could be cured (Potgieter, 1997). This sort of testimony continued long after 'homosexuality' was removed as a mental disorder in

the American Psychiatric Association (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) in 1973 (Potgieter, 1997).

A history of state-sanctioned discrimination and harassment of gay men and lesbian women provided a strong case for gay and lesbian rights to be given special constitutional protection (Cameron, 1993). In 1996 South Africa adopted a new Constitution and Bill of Rights that gives explicit protection from unfair discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Unfortunately, while the law has changed, many people's attitudes have not. Ten years after the adoption of the new constitution the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) conducted the South African Social Attitudes Survey which found that over 80% of the South African population believes that same-sex sexuality is wrong (Pillay, Roberts, Rule, 2006), and religious and traditional leaders have been very vocal in their opposition to the Civil Union Act which affords committed gay and lesbian relationships the same recognition as heterosexual marriage (e.g. Nkosi, 2005).

Epidemiological research linking HIV transmission to gay sex has further stigmatised and marginalized gay men in a country where the epidemic is overwhelmingly heterosexual (Reddy & Sandfort, 2008) and, in recent years, the affirmation of gay and lesbian rights has been undermined by the growing visibility of violent homophobia (Mkhize, Bennett, Reddy & Moletsane, 2010). Thus, from the colonial and apartheid past to the present day, gay men and lesbian women have been variously represented in public debate in South Africa as pathological, immoral, un-African, vectors of disease, and eradicable. Importantly, while these representations of same-sex sexuality have been constructed by a range of experts – doctors, psychologists, lawyers, religious and traditional leaders – they provide no indication of how gay men and lesbians see themselves.

The aim of this study is to explore themes in the self-presentation of gay men on an online dating site. In doing so, I have chosen to focus on gay men in the Eastern Cape Province; a rural province that is seldom included in debate on queer visibilities in South Africa. My

study takes the form of a content analysis examining 200 dating profiles of gay men from the Eastern Cape on an online dating site for men only. In examining self-presentation I wish to foreground and acknowledge how gay men see themselves. I believe that this is important work in a context where we have, historically, not had a say in how we are represented.

1.1 THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis report comprises five chapters. The purpose of this chapter (Chapter 1) is to provide a brief introduction to the topic of my research and to argue for its relevance – social, psychological, and political – and to provide a broad overview of the topics under discussion in the remaining chapters. Chapter 2 begins with a clarification of conceptual definitions and then locates this study in debates on the politics of normativity and its implications for queer visibilities, including in the context of online dating. Chapter 3 provides an account of the research design and methodology. This includes information about sampling, methods of data collection and analysis, and a discussion of the various ethical considerations that were taken into account in conducting this research. Chapter 4 consists of a presentation of the findings as well as a discussion of the significance of each of the findings. In Chapter 5 I present a summary of the findings and draw on the concepts of heteronormativity and homonormativity to draw final conclusions. I also give consideration to the limitations of the study and present recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is divided into five sections. In the first section I discuss three concepts that frame this study. In section two, I provide a brief introduction to key themes shaping recent gay and lesbian history in South Africa. These first two sections are intended to locate my study in its social and political context. In the remaining three sections, discussion shifts to locate my study in the literature on internet use and online dating. Section three is a discussion of trends in internet access and internet use in the South African context and the significance of these patterns in relation to global trends. In Section four I discuss the literature on online dating and observations in the literature about patterns in internet dating specific to gay men. These observations are extended in section five where I give consideration to key themes reported in the existing literature on patterns in self-presentation on gay male dating sites.

2.1 CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

In this section of the chapter I provide a brief discussion of a few key concepts that I draw on quite heavily in my study. This discussion is intended to provide a brief theoretical introduction to each concept along with some elaboration of its usefulness for thinking through sexuality politics in the South African context.

2.1.1 Self-presentation

In this study, I draw on a notion of self-presentation as conceptualised by Goffman (1959) to refer to the intentional effort to project a desired impression of ones self. Importantly, self-presentation is the outcome of complex negotiations with others who play a role in validating our self-presentations in social encounters in our various social contexts. As others play an

important role in validating how we are viewed (both by others and by ourselves) managing others perceptions is a significant aspect of self-presentation. Impression management is said to involve both corporeal display (embodied representation and behavioural cues) (Brewer, 1998) and practices of communication (Wiley, 1994). In each instance, impression management for the purposes of self-presentation requires considerable skill in the development of technique and the mobilization of expressive resources. Drawing on Goffman, Toma and Ellison (2008) describe self-presentation as a creative process in which the assumptions we make about our target audience informs our decisions about which information about ourselves to disclose to others and which information about ourselves to conceal. Self-presentation as an effort spent to shape others impressions of oneself, these impressions are shaped via cues given by the actor or given-off by their behaviour.

2.1.2 Heteronormativity

Feminists critique heteronormativity as an institutionalized system that enables and maintains gender inequality (e.g. MacKinnon, 1989; Rich, 1980). Heteronormativity can be understood as the privileging of heterosexuality through its normalization – though the mundane production of heterosexuality as expressing normal and natural desires and intimacies (Jackson, 2006; Kitzinger, 2005). In recent decades, queer scholars have made a significant contribution to debate on heteronormativity by turning the gaze on the privileged 'legitimacy' of heterosexuality (e.g. Butler, 1990; Seidman, 1995). In Kitzinger's (2005, p. 477) words, queer scholars transformed "the problem of homosexuality" into the "problem of heterosexism" by shifting focus away from queer individuals (e.g. assessments of mental health and parenting capacities) and focusing instead on "the multiple oppressions to which they are subjected – ranging from state-sanctioned execution, torture, and enforced psychiatric treatment...to institutional discrimination and hate crimes". And, in doing so, highlighted the need to "label certain kinds of behaviour (e.g. discrimination, prejudice, and violence...) as social problems" (Kitzinger, 2005, p.477).

Queer scholars have also contributed significantly to debate on the sex/gender/sexuality logic underpinning heteronormativity (i.e. the idea that there are two sexes which are biologically determined and which govern gender expression as either masculine or feminine and sexuality as an attraction to the *opposite* sex). Among them, Butler (1991) has famously argued that:

> [G]ender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an *effect* and consequence of the imitation itself. In other words, the naturalistic effects of heterosexualized genders are produced through imitative strategies….In this sense, the 'reality' of heterosexual identities is performatively constituted through an imitation that sets itself up as the origin and the ground of all imitations…the parodic or imitative effect of gay identities works neither to copy nor emulate heterosexuality, but rather, to expose heterosexuality as an incessant and *panicked* imitation of its own naturalized idealization (21-23).

In arguing that heterosexuality is as much a social construction as homosexuality, feminist and queer scholars have positioned it as equally deserving of critical analysis. And, in particular, of the role that it plays in subordinating women and sexual minorities.

In a study on masculinities that was conducted in the Eastern and Western Cape Provinces with young men aged 15 to 20 years of age, it was observed that performances of masculinity are often centred on disguising desires and vulnerabilities that contradict hegemonic expectations about being a man (Shefer, Kruger & Schepers, 2015). In the study it was observed that participants understood that being sexually active with many female partners was central to being recognised as properly masculine. Participants also described how expectations about being (hetero)sexually active meant that young men who were not (hetero)sexually active were silenced and were vulnerable to teasing and name calling – such as being called gay, which participants indicated was particularly offensive. It is within contexts such as these that the whole notion of 'passing' gains currency.

Croitoru (2015) explains that passing as heterosexual is contingent on a normative gender expression and that it is done for the purposes of obtaining heterosexual privilege. I argue that passing is a form of impression management. Furthermore, in the light of the fact that same-sex sexualities remain stigmatized in many South African communities, impression management in the form of 'passing' as heterosexual (i.e. not being visibly gay or lesbian) can be viewed as a risk management strategy (Marx, 2014). Thus, heteronormativity exerts a regulating force on queer sexualities just as much as it does on heterosexuality (Sykes, 2011). Indeed, normative conceptions of gender have a significant impact on how gay men and lesbian women negotiate their sense of self in relationships with others. Stereotypical perceptions about gay men being 'effeminate' can be a challenge to the visibility of 'straight-looking' and 'straight-acting' gay men (Eguchi, 2009). At the same time, 'effeminate', outspoken, sociable, and fashionably dressed gay men are often assumed to signify a failure to negotiate traditional and hegemonic conceptions of masculinity (Eguchi, 2011; Flowers & Buston, 2001).

2.1.3 Homonormativity

According to Duggan (2004, p.50), homonormativity is a politics "that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency, and a privatised, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption". It is a concept that has gained currency in the context of a changing sexual citizenship in those parts of the world where homophobic slurs are no longer socially sanctioned, where gay men and lesbian women have begun to enjoy the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts under the law – to marry, to co-own property, to adopt children, where there is an increase in affirming media representations of gay men and lesbian women, and where discriminatory legislation (e.g. barring gay men and lesbian women from certain types of employment) is being repealed. While recognizing that these changes have had a positive impact on many peoples' lives, queer scholars have become increasingly concerned that the assimilation of "good gay and

lesbian citizens" (Casey, McLaughlin & Richardson, 2004, p. 388) has further marginalized those who will not (or cannot) cleave to the "normalizing impulse" (Herring, 2007, p.341).

The website Everyday Feminism provides a simple definition of homonormativity as:

> ...a word that addresses the problems of privilege we see in the queer community today as they intersect with White privilege, capitalism, sexism, transmisogyny, and cissexism, all of which end up leaving many people out of the movement toward greater sexual freedom and equality ('Homonormativity 101, 2015)

Although, by academic standards, this is a rather simple definition it is effective in bringing into focus the fact that homonormativity is not a narrow critique of contemporary sexual citizenship, but takes into account how sexuality and gender intersect with other dimensions of social difference and where normative conceptions continue to undermine meaningful change. Among trans scholars, the concept of homonormativity has been drawn on to critique the disparaging of expressions of trans masculinities and femininities within gender-normative gay and lesbian contexts (Stryker, 2008). However, it has also been used more widely to critique the war on terror (Puar, 2005), neoliberalism (Duggan, 2004), race politics (Yep & Elia, 2014; King 2009), and in advocacy on animal rights (Weaver, 2015) and climate change (Hall, 2014).

Croitoru (2015) argues that homonormativity shares neoliberal ideals regarding privatization, absolving the State of responsibility for healthcare and social assistance, in promotion of the notion of self-sufficiency, personal agency and responsibility and for being complicit in heterosexist institutions such as marriage and militarised solutions to social and political problems. This, Croitoru (2015) argues, has held queer politics back from addressing structural power dynamics inherent in the reproduction of racism, sexism, classism and homophobia.

Interestingly, within the South African context, a similar trend appears to have emerged. Visser (2013), for example, argues that there has been a shift in gay and lesbian politics in

South Africa over the past two decades from a politically radical movement to a politics that appears to have been absorbed into "neoliberal urbanity". In making this argument, Visser (2013) highlights the shift in queer politics into a movement for equal rights that are based largely on equal access to previously heterosexual institutions such as marriage; adoption of children; and financial security through pensions and medical insurance rather than addressing ongoing poverty and social conditions that continue to make many gay men and lesbian women vulnerable to violence and discrimination.

While I have a lot of sympathy for Visser's (2103) position, which I believe is a fair assessment of the shift in gay and lesbian politics in South Africa, I also believe that there is merit in the argument that gay marriage is less about heteronormative assimilation as it is a strategy for sexual minorities to function in a heteronormative world (e.g. Moorefield et al., 2011). This is because, much like 'passing', it provides access to certain rights and privileges that would otherwise be denied. However, the problem, as Richardson (2005) points out, is that homonormativity is about extending rights and privileges to a few at the expense of the many.

2.2 QUEER IN SOUTH AFRICA: A VERY BRIEF HISTORY

South Africa is unique among African countries for its explicit constitutional protection against unfair discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation (Morrell, 2002; Lane, Shade, McIntyre, & Morin, 2008). Section 9 (3)(4), the Equality section of the Bill of Rights under the constitution of South Africa, speaks to the protection of all citizens against discrimination based on their sexual orientation. However, providing an account of the history of how these constitutional protections came about – and the histories of gay and lesbian lives in South Africa – is difficult in so far as it requires taking into account how histories of colonialism and apartheid shaped sexual subjectivities differently depending on one's gender and race group membership. In other words, there is no single narrative of queer history in South

Africa just as there is no singular queer 'community'. It is even problematic to talk of a queer history given that the term 'queer', like 'gay', 'lesbian' and 'trans', is not an indigenous term and does not reflect modalities of same-sex intimacies and desires in African history (Wieringa & Sívori, 2013). However, in recent decades this terminology has been widely adopted and is now commonly used in self-identifications. This does mean, however, that the history of 'queer' South Africa is a very recent one.

In the 1980s, gay and lesbian South Africans formed activist organisations to push back against unfair discrimination and to fight for constitutionally protected rights (Massoud, 2003). Among these organisations, the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NGCLE), (which later became the Gay and Lesbian Equality Project and Gays and Lesbians of Witwatersrand (GLOW)), founded by Simon Nkoli; began lobbying among legal and academic circles in a bid to ensure that equal rights for gays and lesbians would be secured when the new South African constitution was adopted in 1996 (Massoud, 2003). The success of Nkoli and the other activists in securing gay and lesbian rights in the new South African constitution mark an important moment in our history and there are many published accounts of it (e.g. Cameron, 1993; Cameron & Gevisser, 1993; de Vos, 2000). However, this history is not without critique.

Oswin (2007) argues that homonormative (i.e. demobilized, non-confrontational) lobbying in queer politics in South Africa was a feature of the efforts of organizations such as the NCGLE. In the 1990s, a primary objective of the NCGLE was to ensure that gay and lesbian rights would be protected under the Bill of Rights in the new South African Constitution. To do this, the NCGLE aligned the fight for non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation with the fight for non-discrimination on the basis of race. In doing so, the NGCLE sought to position gay men and lesbian women as no different to their heterosexual counterparts. Arguably, doing this opened the door to a reassessment of the structural exclusions experienced by gay men and lesbian women from state sanctioned institutions, such as marriage, property ownership, employment and ultimately recognition as fully legitimate

citizens. However, the shifts within gay activism from radical politics to a neoliberal politics characterised by assimilation, sameness and domesticity have resulted in many other important struggles falling by the wayside. Croce (2015) criticises the neoliberal assertion that equal rights to marriage and other heterosexual privileges necessarily lead to the eradication of discriminations against gay men and lesbian women.

In the 21st century, the focus has shifted to examining sexual behaviours, with a strong emphasis on risky sexual behaviours among gay men and the transmission of HIV in particular (Reddy & Sandfort, 2008). While it cannot be assumed that the researchers who do this research intend to further marginalise gay men by associating gay sex with HIV, it is an unintended consequence. Furthermore, while the problematization of gay sex contributes to the marginalisation of gay men in general, it further marginalizes Black gay men in particular. This is because in, South Africa Black men are regularly problematized in the epidemiological literature on HIV transmission (Shefer et al., 2015).

Graziano (2004) argues that, in South Africa, the scarcity of research into the lives of gays and lesbians of colour relative to the focus on white gays and lesbians has had a significant impact in contributing to the notion that 'homosexuality' is a white, Western phenomenon and, consequently, un-African. To counter this, there has been a concerted effort to document histories of same-sex intimacies in Africa (Amory, 1997; Epprecht, 1998; 2008). Despite this sparse yet significant literature documenting the existence of 'homosexuality' in Africa, within many contemporary African communities, in Black townships and in many rural areas in South Africa it is still viewed as un-African. Nowhere else are the consequences of this attitude more evident than in the growing reports of violence and discrimination experienced by queer and Black South Africans. This includes reports on what is colloquially termed the 'corrective' rape of Black lesbian women and the murder of gender non-conforming people (Nel & Judge, 2008).

2.3 INTERNET ACCESS AND USE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Worldwide, access to and use of the internet has risen sharply over the past two decades. And, in parallel, there has been a sharp rise in research on internet use. In South Africa, internet use has increased very dramatically in recent years. For example, in 2011, there were 8.5 million internet users, a 25% increase over the 2010 figure of 6.8-million (Goldstuck, 2012). Research indicates that this rapid increase has been fuelled by the explosion of smartphones (Dalvit, Kromberg & Miya, 2014; Goldstuck, 2012) – more than 80% of phones in South Africa are smartphones (Jones 2010, cited in Dalvit et al. 2014). This is because internet access infrastructure is underdeveloped and rental charges for fixed lines are over-priced (Dalvit, 2014).

Infrastructure and cost are, however, also factors constraining mobile internet use. In South Africa, network coverage concentrates on metropolitan areas, leaving many rural mobile users with intermittent and slow network access, and the costs of mobile data in South Africa remain among the highest worldwide (Gillwald, Moyo & Stork, 2013). Consequently, while there has been a rapid increase in internet access in South Africa, patterns of internet use reflect ongoing economic, social, and geographic disparities. In South Africa, mobile internet use is largely skewed towards young, affluent, educated, urban South Africans and is not representative of the general population having mobile internet access. All of these variables also mean that internet use (referring here to the portion of time spent online) in South Africa is racially skewed (Brown & Licker, 2003). This is because many Black South Africans continue to be economically disadvantaged, receive poor quality education, and are more likely to reside in rural areas.

Interestingly, in terms of the topic of my research, the primary reason that young South Africans use the internet is for social networking (Phyfer, Burton, & Leoshut, 2016). This is a trend that has been identified more broadly. According to Poushter (2016), internet users in emerging economies are more frequent users of online social networks compared with the

United States and Europe. This is related to the younger age of the population in developing countries and the fact that millennials (those aged 18 to 34) are much more likely to be internet and smartphone users compared with those ages 35 and older (Poushter, 2016) – and this age difference exists in both advanced economies and among emerging economies.

2.4 GAY ONLINE DATING

The pursuit of love, the forming of romantic relationships and the challenges associated with finding a potential partner has long since been a topic of research interest. In recent decades, the introduction of the internet and online social networks has had a significant impact on the formation of romantic relationships. In the 21st century, the use of online dating platforms has evolved from a marginal to a mainstream social practice. In the United States, where the online dating industry generates approximately $2 billion in revenue each year, 15% of the adult population report having used an online dating service (Cesar, 2016). This is because, for today's internet users, opportunities to meet others and form relationships are just a few clicks away.

According to Finkel, Eastwick, Benjamin, Karney, Reis and Sprecher (2012) online dating sites serve three purposes. Firstly, they provide access. Online dating sites offer visibility and exposure through the millions of profiles on these sites, from which users can search for potential partners (Finkel et al., 2012). Secondly, they facilitate communication. This includes messaging systems such as the in-boxing format found on most email systems, instant text chat which has a more immediate response time, as well as webcams for direct face-to-face chat (Finkel et al., 2012). Online dating sites also provide a matching service. Online dating sites use mathematical algorithms to find compatibility between individuals based on the information provided in their dating profiles (Finkel et al., 2012).

Research conducted in the United States indicates that gay men were among the early adopters of using the internet to meet intimate partners (Liau & Marks, 2006). And recent

literature suggests that among gay and bisexual men the popularity of online social networks as a means to meet intimate partners is increasing (Grov, Breslow, Newcomb, Rosenberger & Bauermeister, 2014). Furthermore, this phenomenon is not specific to the United States; it is a pattern that has emerged worldwide (e.g. Hull et al., 2016; Ko et al., 2012; Motschenbacher, Stegu & Milani, 2013).

There are several reasons for the popularity of the internet for gay and bisexual men wanting to meet other men. First, it is much quicker and more convenient to locate partners' online (Couch & Liamputtong, 2008). Second, in the case of online dating platforms, it is also possible to determine criteria for searching for partners, such as age, geographic location, and social interests (Couch & Liamputtong, 2008). Third, online dating sites provide a degree of privacy that is not possible in real life encounters. This makes it possible to pursue desires without the immediate risk of being identified. As indicated in the previous section, negative attitudes about same-sex sexualities can not only lead to rejection, but also discrimination and violence. Thus, in contexts where gay men are vulnerable to negative responses from others, online dating platforms are an opportunity to become part of a dating community that reflects their own experiences as desiring subjects, and where they can meet others and find romantic partners without the negative reactions of others (Hillier, Mitchell & Yabarra, 2012). Arguably, this is particularly relevant in the South African context where many people still hold negative attitudes about same-sex sexualities.

2.5 MANAGING SELF-PRESENTATION IN ONLINE DATING PROFILES

Online dating platforms provide users with a variety of mechanisms to present themselves to potential suitors – from simple checkboxes in which decisions regarding which aspects of one's life to disclose and how much to disclose – through to multimedia content such as photographs and videos. In this way, online dating platforms provide users with a degree of control over impression management that exceeds real life interaction.

In the context of an online dating environment, where the goal is to find a mate, physical attractiveness is a critical self-presentation goal (Toma & Hancock, 2010). While increased control over self-presentation does increase the likelihood of deception and misrepresentation, and while many users of online dating sites believe that people misrepresent their physical appearance in their dating profiles (Gibbs, Ellison, & Heino, 2006; Whitty, 2008), the fact that users of online dating sites are typically looking to meet people means that discrepancies are likely to be revealed later on in face-to-face encounters (Ellison, Heino & Gibbs, 2006). Deception and misrepresentation may also alienate potential partners and undermine one's self-concept (Ellison, Hancock & Toma, 2012). In summary, Ellison et al. (2012) argue that "online daters must manage the tension between comprehensively honest and selectively positive self-presentation in a context in which deception is technically effortless but potentially damaging to relational goals and self-views".

As gay men have been known to be more concerned with body shape and size than heterosexual men (Duggan & McCreary 2004; Kimmel & Mahalik, 2005), it is not surprising that gay men's personal advertisements are more focused on physical appearance than on internal, personality attributes (Bartholome, Tewksbury & Bruzzone, 2000; Brown, Maycock, & Burns, 2005; Downing & Schrimshaw, 2014). While male bodies in general are regularly idealized as "at once firm, fit, flexible and fat-free" (Atkinson, 2006, p.258), for gay men showing one's body is often a means of fitting in and of appearing 'authentically' gay (Hutson, 2010). In recently published research on gay dating profiles, Miller (2015, p.637) reports that gay men "tend to privilege masculinity, to visually present themselves semi-clothed, and to mention fitness or bodies in the text of their profile".

In online gay dating profiles, idealized conceptions of masculinity are not only expressed through visual means (e.g. profile pictures), they are also expressed in self descriptions – e.g. by describing one-self as being able to pass as heterosexual and being 'straight looking' (Sanchez, Greenberg, Liu & Vilain, 2009) and in the information provided about sports (e.g.

extreme sports) and leisure activities (e.g. going to the gym). Interestingly, gay men do not only describe themselves in this way but are also likely to seek partners with masculine characteristics (Bailey, Kim, Hills & Linsenmeier, 1997). In Gudelunas' (2005) study of PlanetOut.com personal advertisements, idealized conceptions of masculinity were expressed in the free-form text areas of profiles indicating the preference for a 'straight-acting' partner. It has been argued that the privileging of idealized and traditional masculinities on gay male dating sites has turned them into spaces in which "femmephobic" language has become commonplace (Miller, 2015).

Gay male dating profiles also commonly provide information about a user's sexual preferences. It has been observed that some gay men understand their sexuality in terms of their sexual position as a 'top', 'bottom', or as 'versatile' (Moskowitz & Roloff, 2017), and that these terms are used to self-identify and to indicate sex role preferences to interested others (Dangerfield, Smith, Williams, Unger & Bluthenthal, 2017). It is argued that these positions are linked to differentials in power that are linked to race (Riggs, 2013; Teunis, 2007) as much as they are to gender (Eguchi, 2009). For example, there is a tendency to assume that Asian men are 'bottoms' and, because this is a traditionally feminine position, is used to position gay Asian men in a subordinate position relative to gay white men (Riggs, 2013).

Gay men are more likely than their heterosexual counterparts to disclose their own racial background and to indicate their racial preference for partners in an online dating context (Phua & Kaufman, 2003). Callander, Holt and Newman (2012) examined user profiles on Manhunt.net, in order to examine how racialised language plays out online in gay male dating profiles. They found that Nineteen percent of the profiles analysed included some form of race-focused text or racialised language and this was used to market one-self to others, and for both negative discrimination (e.g. no Asians) and positive discrimination (e.g. mixed guys are sexy) (Callander et al. 2012). Callender et al. (2012) observed that white men were the most likely to use racialised language to describe others, and Indian men the most likely to

refer to their own race group membership, suggesting that gay men have created a racial hierarchy on dating websites. As the research undertaken by Callander et al. (2012) examined an Australian gay male dating site where the majority of dating profiles are posted by white men, these observations may not be relevant to the South African context where the large majority of men are Black men. However, it may be relevant given our history of race-based discrimination and the skewed race demographics of internet users in South Africa.

Through exploring research into online self-presentation, it became apparent that there is a gap in research on the online self-presentations of gay men in South Africa. In my opinion, it is indicative of the scarcity, if not a complete lack, of affirmative literature on same-sex sexualities in South Africa. While my research aims to address this gap in literature, I also aim to acknowledge gay men's choices regarding self-presentation in a context where they have historically not had a say in how they are represented.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION

The broad question framing my study is 'Which themes emerge in self-presentation in the online dating profiles of gay men from the Eastern Cape Province?'

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

I conducted a content analysis of 200 dating profiles of gay men from the Eastern Cape Province on an online dating site for men only. Content analysis is a research methodology involving the systematic coding and the categorization of data to explore large amounts of textual and visual data in order to identify themes and enumerate their frequency (Grbich, 2007). Content analysis is defined by Krippendorff (1989), as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data and which does not rely solely on the subjectivity of the researcher. For the purposes of this research, I employed the ten steps for conducting a content analysis as outlined White and Marsh (2006, p. 30), these included (1) establishing a research question or questions, (2) identifying appropriate data (text or other communicative material), (3) determining a sampling method and sampling unit, (4) drawing a sample, (5) establishing the units of analysis, (6) establishing a coding scheme appropriate to the research question and units of analysis (7) coding the data, (8) checking for the reliability of the coding (9) analysing the coded data applying appropriate statistical methods (10) writing up the results.

3.2.1 Data corpus and sampling method

Having decided on my research question, the next step was to identify an appropriate gay dating site from which I could obtain my data corpus – this is the second step in doing a

content analysis, as described by White and Marsh (2006). While some researchers have commented on the difficulty of sampling gay and lesbian populations in social research (Fish, 1999; Meyer & Wilson, 2009), researching online made it a lot easier to obtain information about a population that is otherwise hard to define and thus locate. Various factors have been said to have contributed to this challenge of definition and location, including stigma, homophobic violence, and the lack of enumeration of this sector of the general population (Herek, Norton, Allen & Sims, 2010; Martin & Dean, 1990) – which is true of the census information collected in South Africa.

In debate on the challenges of sampling populations that are hard to define and locate, it is argued that web based sampling is a good strategy for gaining access to a large number of potential participants from which to select a sample – including those who are located away from urban centres (Brickman Bhutta, 2012). Of course, one limitation to online sampling is that it is limited to people with internet access. Fortunately, however, this is not a limitation in the context of my study as I was specifically targeting an online sample. I spent some time investigating various online dating sites that are popular among South African men. As I was interested in analysing dating profiles posted by gay men living in the Eastern Cape Province, the prevalence of gay men from the Eastern Cape Province posting profiles on the various dating sites was an important criterion in the selection of a dating site. Interestingly, the site that I finally decided on is not an exclusively South African dating site. It is, however, a dating site exclusively for men looking to meet other men and in which a significant number of men living in the Eastern Cape Province had posted dating profiles[1].

As a content analysis is specifically suited to analyse large amounts of data, I decided to collect a sample size of 200 online dating profiles, thereby ensuring that I would have enough data to enumerate salient patterns and themes emerging from the analysis.

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[1] The name of the dating site is withheld for ethical reasons. This issue is discussed in more detail in the ethics section in this chapter.

The 200 dating profiles making up my data corpus were selected using the dating site's global positioning system (GPS) application. This application was a useful aspect of the dating site because it made it possible for me to filter the dating profiles according to location, making it easier to identify and select the dating profiles of men located in the Eastern Cape Province.

3.2.2 Method of data collection

Data was collected on 24 and 25 July 2015 using the NCapture application in a CAQDAS program called QSR Nvivo 10. The NCapture application was used to extract a digital replica of each of the 200 dating profiles that I had sampled via the GPS application on the dating site and upload them into an Nvivo project for analysis. NCapture extracts entire webpages including text, images and profile layout at the click of a button.

3.2.3 Method of data analysis

Please refer to Appendix A (on page 76). In this appendix, I have reproduced the information fields that users complete when they create an online dating profile on the dating site from which I obtained my data corpus. It is important to note that my observations of the dating profiles were limited to the information that was contained in them. According to the information fields illustrated in Appendix A, it is interesting to observe how little opportunity users have to provide open-ended information about themselves, as there are only five (n=5) questions that provide opportunities for open-ended responses. Furthermore, in the initial observation of my sample of dating profiles, I saw that very few men had completed the open-ended fields and, when they did, the information that they provided was very brief and simply restated information that they had already provided by completing the check-box questions and questions with drop-down fields. Consequently, while I had initially anticipated conducting a thematic analysis of the information contained in the open response

fields, the very limited information that these fields yielded meant that it was not feasible to do that. My content analysis of the dating profiles is thus entirely enumerative.

The first step in the analytic process was to develop a coding frame based on the information fields in the dating profiles. Once this was done, the actual coding process involved the computer aided extraction of singular sections of the 200 profiles and collating this information in code categories (e.g. age, location within in the Eastern Cape Province, and so on). When this was done I identified data within code categories that could be grouped for the purposes of ease of representation.

3.3 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Guba and Lincoln (1989, cited in White & Marsh, 2006), distinguish four criteria to assess for trustworthiness in a qualitative content analysis study, namely: *Credibility,* described as being similar to internal validity, involves (I) the identification of key aspects of the research question, and then (ii) illustrating how each of these aspects are reflected in the collected data. In the context of my study, this pertains to the development of a coding frame and the systematic coding and categorizing of data to reflect themes in self-presentation. *Transferability* or external validity is said to be the applicability of research findings from one context to another. *Transferability* pertains to the usefulness of the observations emerging in the analysis of data in my study to other, similar contexts. *Dependability,* speaks to the replicability or stability of the analytic observations. In this study this was addressed through systematic coding aided by CAQDAS software. *Confirmability* is said to be assessed by looking at the data to determine whether the data supports the conclusions. This matter is addressed in my discussion of the results.

3.4 REFLEXIVITY

Ahern (1999) argues that it is impossible for researchers to be completely objective in terms of how they collect data and how they report their findings. Through my own journey as a novice researcher with this project I also encountered this challenge, and the difficulty of managing my own past lived experiences, values, and 'insider' status. For Ahern (1999), this is an issue for critical reflexivity. Ahern (1999) provides two examples of definitions of reflexivity, both of which I find useful in the context of doing this research. The first definition is provided by Myeroff and Ruby (1992, cited in Ahern, 1999) in which reflexivity is described as "the capacity of a system to turn back upon itself, to make itself its own object by referring to itself". The second definition is provided by Frank (1997, cited in Ahern, 1999) in which it is stated that "reflexivity involves the realization that researchers are part of the social world they study".

My point of departure is from that of an insider, as a member of the very population I was studying. However, far from being an impediment, having an insider's perspective helped me to think through the significance of some of the analytic observations in a way that was sensitive to lived experiences of social group under study. However, I also needed to not be too comfortable as a result of my insider status. It was for this reason that I adopted ten skills for reflexive bracketing as suggested by Ahern (1999). These are: (1) *identifying areas of research interest* – as the primary researcher, I have always held a personal interest in issues around the studying of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) community. And, as a member of the community, it became important for me to (2) *acknowledge my own values and lived experiences* that could play a role in terms of my engagement in the research process with this project. I also had to (3) *address the possible areas of role conflict*; such as speaking for or about the members whose online dating profiles I was analysing from a position of assuming to know them could be harmful and I could neglect the process of new discovery and an openness to learn from another perspective. I also had to (4) *negotiate with gatekeeping* – such as ethics review and approval processes in a

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manner that was ethically responsible. I needed to (5) identifying *feelings that could impact my neutrality*. I experienced this as an ongoing process from the perspective of both insider and observer/researcher who is interested in others experiences that may or may not differ from mine. I needed to (6) *check for and be open to new discoveries* and new or surprising conclusions. I needed to remain open to (7) a constant reframing and *reviewing the research process*, and (8) constantly reflect on the process *of writing up this thesis*, I needed to (9) ensure *substantive engagement with literature*, (10) *consulting with co-readers* such as my supervisor.

3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

My research proposal and ethical standards protocol were reviewed and approved by the Research Proposal and Ethics Review Committee (RPERC) in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University (protocol tracking number PSY2015/13).

The domain of internet based research has brought about a new era of challenges to traditional research ethics, and there have been calls to debate the applicability of guidelines intended for face-to-face interactions in the conduct of internet research (Buchanan & Ess, 2008). In preparing my ethics protocol for review, I drew on the guidelines for internet-mediated research drafted by the British Psychological Society (BPS) (2013).

3.5.1 Internet-mediated human subjects research

A number of considerations had to be taken into account with regards to the ethics of doing this research. First, as 'the data' consists of electronic dating profiles, the study does not involve the direct participation (i.e. contact and engagement) of human subjects. However, with that said, it has to be acknowledged that the dating profiles contained information about real people. Therefore, ethics considerations for human subjects' research had to be taken into account. This is in line with the BPS (2013) guidelines in which it is stated that internet-

mediated research should be subject to the same ethics considerations as traditional human subjects' research.

3.5.2 Information in the public domain: Implications for informed consent

According to the BPS (2013) guidelines, it is important to ascertain whether the data to be obtained is in the private or in the public domain. This has implications with regards to the requirement to obtain informed consent. Specifically, that "unless consent has been sought, observation of public behaviour needs to take place only in public situations where those observed would expect to be observed by strangers…essentially vetoing observation in public spaces where people may believe that they are not likely to be observed" (BPS, 2013, p.6). In the context of internet-mediated research, it is not always easy to provide a clear distinction between private and public domains, or to ascertain what internet users perceive as being in the private or public domain. The BPS (2013, p.7) describes the public domain as being "readily accessible by anyone". One example of this would be the comments posted in response to an online news article where no subscription is required either to read the article or the comments posted in response to it. By this standard, comments posted in a password protected online discussion group cannot be considered as being in the public domain.

One of the reasons informing my choice of dating site is that the site that I chose places dating profiles directly in the public domain. Thus, although users must join the site in order to be able to create their own dating profile, viewing dating profiles does not require membership and can be viewed by anyone who navigates to the site (dating profiles appear on the site's homepage). Membership is also not required to 'open' (i.e. click on) a dating profile and to access further information posted on the dating profile (i.e. as per the information provided in Appendix A). Membership is also not required to filter profiles according to geographic location.

In order to test these public settings, my research supervisor (and, I learned later, a member of the ethics committee) also navigated to the site and saw that they could search through the

dating profiles and view the additional information on a dating profile (as per Appendix A) – all without creating a membership account. I then proceeded to register myself on the dating site in order to ascertain whether there are differences in the amount of information that can be accessed on a dating profile by a registered member as opposed to those accessing the dating profiles without membership. In doing so, I learned that the dating profile information is exactly the same when it is viewed by registered members of the dating site. However, I also learned that there were additional features that allowed registered members: (a) to ask a member with a dating profile for additional information that does not appear on their dating profile (see "ask me" fields in Appendix A), and (b) send private messages – which can include multimedia attachments – to other registered members.

I decided that I would limit the 'data' to be collected to the information contained in the dating profiles as they appear in the public domain (i.e. as accessible to the general public). This means that any and all additional information that is not included in a dating profile (i.e. the "ask me" information) and information that users disclose in private messages with other members of the site are not included in this data. In setting these parameters, I believe that it is reasonable to argue that the data that I have drawn on in my study is information in the public domain. I also argue that the members of the dating site have no reasonable expectation regarding the privacy of their dating profiles. In the first instance, the men posting dating profiles on this dating site would have made the same observation about the accessibility of the dating profiles by the general public when they first navigated to the site. Secondly, in the process of registering myself on the site I learned that new members are instructed to read the dating sites' Terms and Conditions of Use as well as the Privacy Policy. The Privacy Policy indicates that although the dating profiles are posted in the public domain for the purposes of connecting men who are interested in meeting other men, that because the dating profiles are in the public domain there is no guarantee regarding who accesses the information and how it is used. In the site's Terms and Conditions of Use, new members are advised that, "[w]hen you upload content to [name of site removed] it can be accessed and viewed by the *general public*" (emphasis added). Members are advised that by accessing and

using the site "you *consent* to our collection, storage, use and *disclosure* of your personal information" (emphasis added).

3.5.2.1 Concern about deception

In the ethics review process, one reviewer raised a concern about deception. Specifically, that although the men who posted dating profiles were aware that the information that they provided in their dating profiles would be placed in the public domain, that they had proceed to provide this information with an expectation of meeting other men rather than becoming research subjects. In other words, they had put their information in the public domain with a particular audience and purpose in mind. While this is true, and while the dating site confirms that this is the primary use of the information provided in members dating profiles, the dating site also informs members that use of their information is not limited to this one purpose. Members are informed that their information can in fact be used for a variety of other purposes such as targeted advertising and for law enforcement purposes. The dating site's Privacy Policy reminds members that placing their information in the public domain means that it can be "copied or stored by other users" and that the site "cannot control this". Consequently, it can be argued that users have no reasonable expectation that the use of their information is strictly limited to connecting them to men looking to meet other men romantically. Nevertheless, after considerable deliberation I undertook to post a disclosure note on the profile that I had created in order to alert other users of the website that I was conducting research on dating profiles and that I would be using the public dating profiles on the site as data.

3.5.3 Sensitivity of data, vulnerability, and identity management

Concerns about informed consent and the protection of research participants are assessed in relation to the likely risks associated with the proposed research. Furthermore, special consideration must be given to vulnerable participants.

2.5.3.1 Vulnerability

Vulnerable participants are generally understood to be people who are at greater risk of harm and/or less able to protect themselves (Larkin, 2009)... The term is generally used to refer to individuals with diminished decisional capacity, people who are seriously ill, incarcerated and institutionalised populations, and children. The term is sometimes also extended to refer to those in subordinate relationships and those who are dependent on care or social assistance.

I do not believe that gay men in the online dating scene can be rightfully identified as a vulnerable group. While I acknowledge that some gay men have experienced discrimination and homophobic violence, it would be inappropriate to generalise such experiences and allow them to be used to define what is in fact an extremely heterogeneous social group.

What is a reasonable concern regarding vulnerability in the context of my research is the possibility that individuals under the age of 18 might access the dating site. In relation to this issue, the dating site's Conditions and Terms of Use policy states that:

> You can only become a member of [name of site removed] if you're aged 18 or over or the age of majority in the country in which you reside if that happens to be greater than 18. That means [name of sire removed] does not knowingly collect any information about children, minors or anyone under the age of majority. Nor do we knowingly market to children, minors or anyone under the age of 18. If you are less than 18 years old, we request that you do not submit information to us. If we become aware that a child, minor or anyone under the age of 18 has registered with us and provided us with personal information, we will take steps to terminate that person's registration and delete their profile information from [name of site removed]. If we do delete a profile because you violated our no children rules, we may retain your email and IP address to ensure that you do not try to get around our rules by creating a new profile.

The BPS (2013, p.9) guidelines acknowledge that "verifying certain relevant characteristics of the person (e.g. to determine that they meet any necessary age requirements)...can be more difficult to achieve in an IMR [internet-mediated research] context than in situations where

there is direct face-to-face contact with participants". On the issue of concern regarding age in internet-mediated research the BPS (2013, p.17) provides the following guidance:

> It seems reasonable to propose – so as to not be overly restrictive – that in relation to issues of verifying identity (e.g. restricting participation), a researcher should carefully weigh up any potential harmful effects should a person below the required age (for example) endeavour to and succeed in taking part. Again, the key principle of making ethics checks and procedures ***proportional to the assessed risks*** and potential for harm emerges. In high risk situations, researchers should consider whether their research is actually suited to IMR. For example, where research deals with ***sensitive or adult themes*** and the age of the participant cannot easily be verified online or under-16s prevented from participating, researchers should consider whether their research is better suited to a face-to-face presentation. In low risk situations it may often be sufficient to take a range of steps which can help ***minimise the likelihood of successful participation*** by excluded individuals, such as taking participants who enter age details within a certain range to an exit page from which they are unable to re-enter (even if they attempt to return and re-enter with different age information) (emphasis added).

The BPS (2013) guidelines highlight the importance of implementing measures that are "proportional to the assessed risks", which give special consideration to research that "deals with sensitive or adult themes" and "minimizes the likelihood of …participation" of minors. In relation to the point about minimizing the likelihood of successful participation, the dating site's Conditions and Terms of Use on individuals under the age of 18 years, including the procedures in place for identifying and deleting dating profiles in instances where there is reason to believe that a member is under the age of 18 years, indicates that the information accessed for the purposes of my research is managed, by the dating site, in accordance with this guideline. I also believe that it is reasonable to expect that a publically accessible online dating site would take every precaution to ensure that they operate within the confines of the law.

In relation to the point about research dealing with sensitive or adult themes, my research clearly fits this description. However, the BPS guidance in relation to this is not that such research cannot proceed, but that a researcher should consider whether it would be more appropriate to collect this information "face-to-face" rather than online. Arguably, this suggestion assumes that the information to be collected is not already posted in a publically accessible online platform. In other words, it assumes that the researcher would be interviewing a participant for the purposes of generating data rather than accessing data that have already been made available. As this suggestion is not appropriate to the information I intend to access, concern about age (and vulnerability more generally) must be considered in relation to the sensitivity of the data being collected and the likely risks associated with its use in this study.

2.5.3.2 Data sensitivity

The range of information that can appear on a dating profile is indicated in Appendix A (see page 76). New members must choose which of this information appears in their public dating profile. Information that members prefer to keep out of the public domain are marked "ask me". Members can also provide additional information about themselves and who they are looking to meet in the open response fields (also indicated in Appendix A). On the issue of providing personal information, the dating site's Conditions and Terms of Use policy advises members to "[p]lease use your common sense when picking the content that you choose to post". Further guidance states:

> We recommend and encourage you (and all our members) to think carefully about the information they disclose about themselves, and suggest you follow our Guidelines and Safety Tips. We also do not recommend that you put email addresses, URLs, instant messaging details, phone numbers, full names or addresses, credit card details, national identity numbers, drivers' licence details and other sensitive information in your profile which is open to abuse and misuse.

Please be careful about posting sensitive details about yourself on your profile such as your religious denomination and health details. While you may voluntarily provide this information to us when you create your profile, including your sexual preferences and ethnic background, there is no requirement to do so. Please remember that photographs or any video clips that you post on [name of site removed] may reveal these kinds of sensitive personal data. Where you do upload and choose to tell us sensitive information about yourself, you are explicitly consenting to our processing your information and making this public to other users.

The range of information that can be posted on a dating profile and the dating site's guidance on posting this information in the public domain indicates that some of the information that can be used to individually identify members, including where they are located. Furthermore, being able to upload multimedia content and share additional personal information of a sensitive nature requires careful management of the associated risks.

2.5.3.3 Managing individually identifying information

I have taken the following precautions to ensure that none of the information in my study can be used to individually identify members whose dating profiles I accessed for the purposes of this research: (i) The name of the online dating site is not mentioned in this thesis report and will not be mentioned in any other publication of my research findings. (ii) I have changed or removed all potentially identifying information. Most members posting dating profiles chose to identify themselves by a 'user-name' that was quite clearly not their real name (e.g. 'Big Daddy88') – indicating that members were already managing information that was potentially individually identifying. However, if a name appeared on a profile that looked like it was possibly the member's real name I replaced it with a pseudonym. Phone numbers, addresses, and any other identifying information appearing in the dating profiles that I accessed for the purposes of this research were erased from my data corpus. (iii) None of the visual data, such as dating profile pictures, is presented in this research report and will not

appear in any other publication of my research findings. (iv) My data is stored on a password protected computer.

As an Intern Clinical Psychologist, I understand that I am bound by the ethics of my profession as stipulated by the Health Professions Counsel of South Africa (HPCSA), and as such I have incorporated these ethics into each phase of this research project; upholding beneficence, non-maleficence, respect for autonomy and privacy, the right to informed consent and confidentiality.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The aim of the study was to explore the themes in self-presentation in the online dating profiles of gay men located in the Eastern Cape Province. The data that was collected comprised of 200 dating profiles sampled from an online gay male dating site. In this chapter I present themes in self-presentation that emerged from my analysis of the data profiles and discuss the significance of these themes to debate on same-sex sexuality in South Africa.

4.1 ETHNICITY

In the process of creating an online dating profile, members of the online dating site are asked to provide information about their "ethnic origins". As the dating profiles that I accessed were posted on an international dating site (i.e. not limited to men living in South Africa), the options that the site provided in terms of ethnic signifiers are not necessarily all familiar to a South African audience. It also appears, from the options from which members are asked to select their "ethnic origins", that race and ethnicity is conflated. The "ethnic origins" options were stated as follows: ask me; African/Afro Caribbean/Black; Mediterranean/Latino; Middle Eastern/North African; Native/Aboriginal; White; Mixed/Multi. Table 1 (below) provides a summary of the "ethnic origins" as indicated in the 200 dating profiles posted by gay men living in the Eastern Cape Province and making up my data corpus.

Table 1: "Ethic Origins"

Ethnicity	Count (n)	Percent (%)
African	74	37
Mixed	37	18,5
White	68	34
Other	8	4
Unspecified	13	6,5
	200	100

According to the information presented in Table 1, of the 200 sampled profiles n=74 (37%) indicated that they identify as *African/Black*, n=37 (18.5%) indicate that they identify as having a *Mixed/Multi* ethnicity – which within the South African context is generally identified as 'coloured', although in North America this identifier is considered to be offensive. This means that more than half of the sample identified as persons of colour. Those who indicated that they identify as *White* were n=68 (34%). In Table 1, 'unspecified' refers to those dating profiles in which members did not disclose their "ethnic origins" (i.e. those selecting the "ask me" option). I also grouped those identifying in the remaining "ethnic origins" categories in a single group labelled 'other'.

According to data contained in the 2011 South African Census (RSA, 2011), the proportionality of the "ethnic origins" as indicated in Table 1 is not very reflective of the ethnic/race demographics of the Eastern Cape Province. According to the 2011 census data (which is the most recent census data available), those identifying as Black/African constitute 86.3% of the population of the Eastern Cape Province (but only make-up 37% of my online dating sample), while those identifying as Coloured constitute 8.3% of the provincial population (but make-up 18% of my online dating sample), while those identifying as White constitute only 4.7% of the provincial population (but make up 34% of my online dating sample).

Various factors may have contributed to this result. Taking into account the legacy of apartheid which was a population control system predicated on racial classification which some are now resisting means that race identities such as 'Mixed' and 'Coloured' are increasingly problematized. Another observation that could account for the over representation of dating profiles posted by White members is the economic legacy of apartheid and the ongoing asymmetry of wealth (and poverty). As indicated in the literature review chapter, although South Africans have fairly widespread access to smartphones, high data costs means that internet use is high among high income earners and low for low income

earners. Furthermore, as much of the Eastern Cape Province is made of up former 'homeland' areas, it is disproportionally affected by race differentials in wealth and poverty.

Another factor to consider is difference across race groups in gay men's confidence to post gay male dating profiles in the public domain. While members of all race groups in South Africa hold conservative attitudes with regards to same-sex sexuality, White South Africans have consistently been found to hold less conservative attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women than the general population women (Sutherland, Roberts, Gabriel, Struwig, & Gordon, 2016). Consequently, it seems fair to argue that White gay men may feel more confident to be openly/publically gay. Reflecting on this, Visser (2013) argues that it can be understood as another dimension of white privilege – a term referring to a social group that remains 'unmarked' but which has the power to mark others. Visser (2013) has also argued that where Black gay men and lesbian women do manage to gain acceptance within their communities, that this invariably requires that they assimilate into socio-cultural norms and expectations.

4.2 AGE

Table 2 (over the page) represents the age distribution of the sample, with results indicated by the *Age* of the participants ranging from 18 to 70 years old, as well as a *Count* indicating the response rate, the *Percentage* of respondents per age as well as the *Cumulative percentage.*

On the online dating profiles, men do not provide their age. They only enter their date of birth and this is used to calculate their current age. As all members must be 18 years of age or older, 18 years is the youngest age that is reported. Technically, there is no upper limit. In Table 2 (over the page) I have opted to provide the data for each age from 18 years to 30 years. As very few dating profiles were posted by men older than 30 years of age, I opted to group the data for those aged 31 to 40 years, 41 to 50 years, 51 to 60 years, and 61 to70 years.

Table 2: Age

Age	Count	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18	9	4,5	4,5
19	18	9	13,5
20	26	13	26,5
21	16	8	34,5
22	14	7	41,5
23	13	6,5	48
24	21	10,5	58,5
25	9	4,5	63
26	4	2	65
27	12	6	71
28	5	2,5	73,5
29	9	4,5	78
30	9	4,5	82,5
31-40	19	9,5	92
41-50	9	4,5	96,5
51-60	5	2,5	99
61-70	2	1	100
	200	100	100

Results indicate that more than 80% (cumulative percentage) of the sample is between the ages of 18 and 30 years. Van Eeden-Moorefield, Martell, Williams & Preston (2011) argue that individuals who are younger are more likely to be 'out' publically than older gays and lesbians. Furthermore, as Langa, Conradie and Roberts (cited in Pillay et al., 2006, p134) observe, younger people are more likely to be tech-savvy, have access to internet-capable devices and are potentially still seeking partners in easy non-threatening environments such as online dating sites. Furthermore, older gay men are more likely to already be in long-term stable partnerships, and this could explain their low presence on online dating sites (McWilliams & Barrett, 2014). I also think that older people are more likely than young adults to have money to buy data, but perhaps this is moderated by a lack of 'tech-savvy'?

Research conducted via a survey of attitudes towards gay men, lesbian women and gender non-conformity in South Africa, indicated that men within the 20 to 24 year age group are

among the most tolerant towards gay men, lesbians and gender non-conforming people, whereas younger adults (those aged 16 to 19 years) as well as those who are middle-aged (45 to 54 years) are the most intolerant of gays, lesbians and gender non-conforming people. Having stated that, it becomes important to note that the younger cohort (16 to 19 years old) are possibly still living at home and highly influenced by parental values and beliefs about people and the world. Furthermore, the middle-aged cohort (45 to 54 years) are said to enjoy a lot of power, especially with regards to shaping public policy, even though this group also represents traditional/hegemonic conceptions of masculinity that is shored up by the privileging of heterosexuality (Sutherland, Roberts, Gabriel, Struwig, & Gordon, 2016).

4.3 LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Table 3 represents the results based on the information provided with regards to level of education. Please note that only 195 dating profiles (of the 200 dating profiles making up my data corpus) contained readable and usable data with regards to level of education. This is as a result of an electronic advertisement banner on the website that interfered with the technology that I used to extract digital copies of the dating profiles from the online dating site.

Table 3: Level of Education

Education	Count	Percent
School	46	23,6
College	28	14,4
University	101	51,8
Unspecified	20	10,3
*	195	100

From the data that was collected and analysed, n=46 (23.6%) of the gay men whose dating profiles made up my data corpus had some form of *schooling*, n=28 (14.4%) had a *college* education, n=101 (51.8%) attended *university* and n=20 (10.3%) were *unspecified.* According

to the cumulative percentage of these results nearly two thirds of the sample has a tertiary education (college or university). This is significantly different to both the national and provincial averages. According to the 2011 census data, only 8.7% of those living in the Eastern Cape Province have reached tertiary education, and the national average is 12%. However, as indicated in the literature review, other South African research has also found that those regularly accessing the internet are generally more highly educated. It is unfortunate that the South African census does not collect information regarding LGBT populations. In the United States, census data (Black, Gates, Sanders, & Taylor, 2002) indicates a significant difference in the education levels of gay men (45% having a college degree) compared with the general population (in which 20% hold a college degree).

4.4 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Table 4 represents the geographic distribution of the sample by location within the Eastern Cape Province.

Table 4: Geographic Location

Location	Count	Percent
Adelaide	1	0,5
Alice	7	3,5
Bisho	1	0,5
Butterworth	1	0,5
East London	43	21,5
Grahamstown	23	11,5
Jefferys Bay	2	1
Port Alfred	4	2
Port Elizabeth	96	48
Queenstown	5	2,5
Somerset East	2	1
Stutterheim	1	0,5
Uitenhage	12	6
*Other	2	1
	200	200

Interestingly, these results indicate that more than 80% of the sample is located in three cities: Port Elizabeth (n=96, 48%), East London (n=43, 21.5%), and Grahamstown (n=23, 11.5%). These three cities are the largest urban areas in the province, offering the best income and employment opportunities, access to vast resources such as housing and other urban amenities while at the same time housing the province's well established tertiary education institutions (Aldrich, 2004; Black et al., 2002).

Studies show that gay men congregate in urban cities for high quality amenities and opportunities to meet and socialise with other gay men. Black et al. (2002) made the argument that these high amenity cities come at a higher residential cost, but also that the gay population that locates in these areas are usually more educated, skilled professionals, likely not to have children, and have access to more disposable income. Another key element as elaborated by Black et al. (2002) is that gay populations congregate in areas with friendly social attitudes towards the gay community, areas usually populated by immigrants and open-minded people who are more tolerant.

Of the 200 sampled profiles, n= 2 (1%) are indicated as 'other' in Table 4. These two profiles were included in my sample because they indicated that they were from the Eastern Cape Province. However, at the time of data collection they had moved away from the Eastern Cape Province (i.e. were now located outside of the province) – although the site GPS still placed them within the province and thus included them in my sample location criterion.

Having discussed gay men in the city, I now consider the significance of my data in terms of gay men in the countryside – as this pertains to the remaining 20% of my sample. Bell and Binnie (2004) noted that rural areas are seen as spaces that signify traditional moral standards where hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity are often conflated with notions of the 'simple life'. Literature indicates that within most rural areas, gay men represent an invisible community because gay men experience anxiety about being discovered or "outed" and the consequences of that in terms of being discriminated against economically, socially and at times even through physical violence associated with homophobic beliefs. This environment

creates restrictive living conditions that limit, if not prohibit, gay men from socialising and being open about who they are.

Another phenomenon closely linked to the restrictions of rural gay life is the isolation that gay men experience as well as the pressure in communities steeped in traditional values to conform to (hetero)normative conventions. For some, this results in being forced by family to marry women and raise children in nuclear households in a bid to conceal same-sex attractions or behaviours and avoid bringing shame to the family. It is argued that in such environments there is little chance of negotiating a gay or lesbian identity.

Bell and Valentine (1995) argue that the cumulative effects of isolation and unsupportive social environments explain why gay men and lesbian women choose to migrate to larger cities which offer better prospects for living as an openly gay or lesbian person. Urbanisation, it has been observed, is the precondition to the emergence of gay sub-cultures in large cities.

The city is viewed by many in the gay community as a safe space for identity development and expression. Aldrich (2004) argues that the anonymity offered by large crowds within the city creates a sense of freedom and safety for gays in the city. The city has also become a romanticised space of urban cosmopolitanism, linked to the promotion of gay villages, the myth of the pink economy and gay spending power – all of which have become strong attraction points for gays looking towards the city (Bell & Binnie, 2004). The creation of this urban cosmopolitanism is argued to have contributed in making gay culture sexy in the commercial sense, with gay friendliness becoming a form of cultural capital deployed by various cities around the world in order to attract tourists (such as in Cape Town in South Africa). However, the commercialisation of 'gay' neighbourhoods is also understood to have coincided with a neoliberal project in which the gentrification of neighbourhoods has resulted in economically disadvantaged residents being pushed out of the city by rising property values – arguably also a feature of the Cape Town property market.

4.5 LIVING ARRANGEMENT

Table 5 represents patterns in the living arrangements of the sample in this study. According to the results, n=60 (30%) indicated that they live *Alone,* n=89 (45%) live with *Family*, n=21 (11%) live with *Friends,* n=6 (3%) live with a *Partner*, and n=23 (12%) did not provide information about their living arrangement (*unspecified* refers to those who selected the "ask me" option).

Table 5: Living With

Living with	Count	Percent
Alone	60	30
Family	89	45
Friends	21	11
Partner	6	3
Unspecified	23	12
*	199	100

* One (n=1) case has missing data

As indicated in the results, more than one half (n=110, 56%) of the sample reside with family and friends. This is unsurprising in the light of the fact that, as previously reported, more than 80% of the sample are aged 18 to 30 years of age and are mostly students or early career professionals who are likely to still be dependent on family for financial and other support. However, having also considered the importance of accepting and supportive environments, this does highlight the important role that family and friends play in how gay men feel about themselves and their place within their family and community.

Once again, due to advertisement banners on the dating site interfering with the technology used to extract data, n=1 dating profile could not be analysed, thus rendering this theme as n=199 profiles instead of 200.

4.6 SEXUALITY

Table 6 (below) represents patterns in reporting on sexuality (i.e. sexual orientation) on the dating profiles making up my data corpus. According to the results, two thirds of the sample identified as *Gay* (n=129, 64.5%) while the remaining third indicated that they were *Bisexual* (n=71, 35.5%). As illustrated in the User Information in Appendix A (page 76), 'gay' and 'bisexual' were the only two options that users could choose between to describe their sexuality. This makes sense in so far as the dating site that I accessed was exclusively for men wanting to meet other men. However, these sexuality signifiers are also rather conservative given the proliferation of gender and sexuality identifiers that have gained currency in recent years (e.g. pansexual, polysexual, questioning, asexual, queer, trans etc.) and which – unlike the identifiers 'gay' and 'bisexual' – move away from the implication that there are only two sexes and two genders and that sex and gender determine sexual orientation, or sexual preference. Furthermore, in much of the epidemiological literature reporting on sexual health on the continent reference is frequently made to 'Men who have Sex with Men' (MSM) to indicate that many men who have sex with men do not identify as gay or bisexual – including men identifying as heterosexual and cisnormative.

Table 6: Sexuality

Sexuality	Count	Percent
Gay	129	64,5
Bisexual	71	35,5
	200	100

The results of a recent South African survey indicate that over half a million adult men and women across all racial groups living in both urban and rural areas identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or gender non-conforming. Having noted that survey it becomes important to also mention that South Africa was among the first countries in the world to have LGBT rights enshrined in a Bill of Rights, which meant protections against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. However, despite this, it has been observed that these rights have not

translated, on the ground, to a reduction in stigmatisation, discrimination, and homophobic violence against gay men, lesbian women and gender non-conforming individuals – particularly in urban townships and rural areas (Visser, 2013; Rudwick & Ntuli, 2008). The mostly rural Eastern Cape Province is quite often described as a cultural and traditionalist stronghold in South Africa, where opinions about homosexuality being 'Un-African' and a foreign import still hold, and where many identifying as LGB experience considerable challenges to living as openly gay, lesbian or bisexual (Reddy & Sandfort, 2008; Visser, 2013; Coleman-Fountain, 2014; Lane, Raymond, Dladla, Rasethe, Struthers, Farland, & McIntyre., 2011).

It is interesting to note that nearly one third of the sample (n=71, 35.5%) in this study indicated on a gay male dating site that they identify as bisexual. Däumer (1992) argues that bisexuality is often positioned ambiguously and this is as a result of assumptions about heterosexuality and homosexuality being binary and mutually exclusive – i.e. as a result of the normative framework through which sexuality (both hetero and homo) is understood. It is interesting that there should be debate on the 'legitimacy' of bisexuality among gay and lesbian scholars – debate which has, quite understandably, been critiqued as illustrative of the problematic politics of homonormativity (Weiss, 2004).

4.7 RELATIONSHIP STATUS

In Table 7 (over the page) I have collated information regarding reporting on relationship status and wanting or having children. In the User Information in Appendix A (page 76) these items appear separately. However, for the purposes of the representation of the results in this report it makes sense to present these items together to reflect both the users' current domestic situation and their expectations regarding future domestic situations.

Table 7: Relationship Status

Relationship status	Count	Percent
Single	171	85,5
Dating	4	2
Married	1	0,5
Other/Open	4	2
Unspecified	20	10
	200	100

Has Children	Count	Percent
No	182	91
Yes	8	4
Unspecified	10	5
	200	100

Wants children	Count	Percent
Yes	52	26
Not Sure	74	37
No	36	18
Unspecified	38	19
	200	100

Of the 200 dating profiles making up my data corpus, n=171 (85.5%) of the dating profiles indicated that the member was *Single*, while only n=4 (2%) indicated that they were currently *Dating* someone, and only one profile (n=1, 0.5%) indicated that the member was *Married*, (n=4, 2%). While the User Information in Appendix A (page 76) provides room for reporting on a variety of non-monogamous relationships (i.e. dating a few people; open relationship; married and play together; part of a group) I have grouped them together in Table 7 under the label *Other/Open* because only n=4 (2%) of the members chose among these options. It is interesting that n=20 (10%) of the members chose not to indicate their current relationship status in their public dating profile – in Table 7 these are labelled as *Unspecified*, but according to the User Information in Appendix A (page 76) they would have selected the "ask me" option.

As the dating profiles making up my data corpus consisted of the profiles of mostly young men (80% are aged between 18 and 30 years) it is not surprising that many report being

single. Furthermore, although it seems obvious that mostly single men would join a dating site, I did expect more young men to report to be dating – even if it was just casual, i.e. 'dating a few people'. Perhaps this is because, for gay men, dating can be a challenging task considering the limited opportunities and locales within which to socialise with same-sex partners without fear of discrimination or the risk of homophobic violence. In South Africa, many instances of homophobic violence that are reported in the news occur after gay men and lesbian are seen socializing in public spaces such as clubs and shebeens.

In relation to reporting on 'having children', it is also unsurprising – given their young age – that more than 90% (n=182, 91%) of the sample indicate that they do not have children. However, given the young age of the members whose dating profiles were sampled, it is interesting that n=10 (4%) reported having a child and a further n=10 (5%) chose not to indicate whether or not they have a child (identified in Table 7 under 'unspecified).

What is particularly noteworthy is the number of gay men reporting that they definitely do want to have children sometime in the future (i.e. those answering *yes*), n=52 (26%) or might want to have children sometime in the future (i.e. those answering *not sure*) n=74 (37%). Collectively, they account for nearly two thirds (63%) of all of the dating profiles making up my data corpus. By comparison, only n=36 (18%) indicated outright that they did not want to have children (i.e. those answering *no*), while n=38 (19%) did not provide this information on their dating profile (i.e. by selecting the "ask me" option – indicated in Table 7 as *unspecified*). The fact that many young gay men are considering parenthood is perhaps indicative of the legal recognitions of gay and lesbian families in South Africa. Research conducted in the US has found that same-sex couples with legally recognised unions are twice as likely to raise children as same-sex couples without legally recognised unions (van Eeden-Moorefield et al, 2011). Unfortunately, in the South African context, such comparisons are difficult to make owing to the fact that the South African census does not collect data on gay and lesbian families.

Patterson (2000) argues that many gay and lesbian parents have had children in the context of previous heterosexual relationships. Although within the South African context gay men enjoy constitutional rights that allow them to legally adopt children, many gay men have become fathers from previous heterosexual encounters and this is unsurprising in relation to my previous observations regarding conservative traditional values characteristic of rural communities in the Eastern Cape Province and pressures regarding assimilation.

Heteronormative assimilation and the failure to collect data regarding gay and lesbian families in South Africa render invisible the lived experiences of gay and lesbian parents and their children. However, just because they are invisible does not mean that they do not exist. I also do not think that heteronormative assimilation should be critiqued without acknowledging the tremendous power of (hetero)normative institutions have in legitimising notions of 'family' and the protections such recognition confers.

4.8 LIFESTYLE

In the User Information in Appendix A (on page 76), the 'lifestyle' information is much more comprehensive than the information presented in Table 8 (over the page). However, rather than presenting all of the lifestyle information as per Appendix A in one, single section in this report, I have chosen to separate off the various items for ease of reference and to better structure the analysis and discussion. In Table 8 (over the page) I present a summary of member's lifestyle habits as they pertain to 'dangerous consumptions', i.e. smoking, drinking and drugs. This is just one part of the larger lifestyle section as it appears in Appendix A.

As indicated in the data presented in Table 8 (over the page), only n=25 (12.5%) members indicated that they were regular *smokers*, while many more (n=40, 20%) reported smoking only *socially*. Half of the members indicate on their public dating profiles that they have *never* smoked (n=99, 45.5%), while a small minority report that they are currently *quitting* (n=7, 3.5%), and n=29 (14.5%) did not disclose their smoking habit on their public dating

profile (indicated as *unspecified* in Table 8 and as "ask me" in the User Information). Compared with statistics reported in a recent study on tobacco use among adult South Africans (Reddy, Zuma, Shisana, Jonas, & Sewpaul, 2015), smoking is less prevalent among the young men whose dating profiles make up my data corpus than in the general population. In South Africa, 17, 6% of adults are smokers, and there are many more men who smoke (29, 2%) than women who smoke (7, 3%) (Reddy et. al., 2015). My results are notable because, elsewhere in the world, smoking among gay men is much higher than in the general population (Gruskin, Greenwood, Matevia, Pollack, & Bye, 2007), which is often put down to experiences of LGBT victimization (Newcomb, Heinz, Birkett, & Mustanski, 2014).

Table 8: Lifestyle

Smoking	Count	Percent
Smokes	25	12,5
Socially	40	20
Never	99	49,5
Quitting	7	3,5
Unspecified	29	14,5
	200	100

Drinking	Count	Percent
Never	21	10,5
Socially	162	81
Excessive	2	1
Recovering	1	0,5
Unspecified	14	7
	200	100

Drugs		
Never	154	77
Socially	10	5
Recover	1	0,5
Unspecified	35	17,5
	200	100

With regard to members drinking habits, the information in Table 8 (above) indicates that only n=21 (10.5%) of the sample indicate that they *Never* drink, while more than 80% of

members (n=162, 81%) indicate that they drink *Socially.* Very few (n=2, 1%) members indicate that their drinking is *Excessive,* or identify as *Recovering* (n=1, 0, 5%). A further n=14 (7%) did not disclose their drinking habit on their public dating profile (indicated as *Unspecified* in Table 8 and as "ask me" in the User Information in Appendix A).

It has long since been acknowledged that South Africans have among the highest alcohol consumption rates in the world (WHO, 2011). Despite this, in research on social attitudes regarding alcohol consumption, nearly two thirds (62%) of participants indicated that they did not drink, and less than a third (30%) admitted to drinking occasionally (Pillay et al., 2006) – indicating a disjuncture between attitudes and actual behaviour.

Results from this present study indicate a high rate of social drinking (n=162, 81%), which supports claims about South Africa having a drinking culture. Related to this, the findings of research undertaken by Lane, Raymond, Dlala, Rasethe, Struthers, Mcfarland and MacIntyre (2011) indicates that alcohol use is among the most commonly used substances among men who have sex with other men (MSM), with 87.9% of their sample reporting that they consume alcohol at least using once a month, and 54.5% reporting consuming more than 10 alcoholic beverages on a typical drinking day.

On the topic of 'drugs', the results of my study indicate that the majority of men whose dating profiles constitute my data corpus (n=154, 77%) indicate that they have *Never* used drugs, a small number of men (n=10, 5%) report using drugs *Socially*, while only one member (0, 5% of the sample) indicated on his public dating profile that he was a *Recovering* drug user. A number of members chose not to disclose their drug use habit (n=35, 17.5%) (Indicated in Table 8 as *Unspecified* and in the User Information in Appendix A as "ask me").

Lane et al. (2011) argue that the use of drugs is less common among men who have sex with men (MSM) in South Africa in comparison to their alcohol consumption (only 25% of the sample reported drug use). Unfortunately, there is very little research that reports on

substance use among gay men specifically (rather than men who have sex with men) and the sample sizes are too small and limited in terms of demographics to make any inferences about gay men more generally. Furthermore, as has been observed in research undertaken in North America, some of the challenges of researching substance among minority populations include issues with definition (e.g. MSM vs Gay men), inclusion and exclusion criteria, and determinations regarding substance use and substance abuse. Despite these challenges, it is argued that (in North America) there is a higher prevalence of substance abuse and substance dependency among gay men compared to their heterosexual counterparts (Hughes & Eliason, 2002), that substance use is more frequent in gay men who are younger than 35 years of age, and that substance use decreases in middle-age but spikes again in older aged men (Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009).

4.9 APPEARANCE

According to the User Information (Appendix A on page 76), members could report on their appearance in a variety of ways. These included: Body Shape (e.g. slim, athletic, and large); Height ("ask me" or precise measurement); Hair (e.g. blonde, brown, black, and shaved); Eye Colour (e.g. brown, blue, and green). However, in the context of my study, this information was not particularly interesting. This is because the 80% of the dating profiles making up my data corpus belonged to young men who, unremarkably for this age group, reported having a 'slim' or 'athletic' body shape. Furthermore, as half of the dating profiles belonged to young Black/African or Mixed/Multi (Coloured) men, most reported having 'black' hair and 'brown' eyes.

What I do think is interesting to report on with regards to the information provided on appearance in the dating profiles are member's disclosures regarding tattoos and piercings. Although these practices of body modification have gained a degree of acceptability in recent years, they do frequently still signify, or are still associated with, gang membership, prison

populations, ethnic minority groups and other sub-cultures and can therefore be considered as non-normative. One other aspect regarding appearance that is interesting to report on is that a significant number of members used the open text field in the 'Introduce Yourself' section of their dating profiles to indicate that they were either 'straight looking' or 'straight acting' – options that were not otherwise available in the drop own boxes in the other 'appearance' categories. Information about appearance is summarised in Table 9 (below).

Table 9: Appearance

Tattoos	Count	Percent
None	157	78,5
1 or 2	32	16
Many	1	0,5
Unspecified	10	5
	200	100

Piercings	Count	Percent
None	128	64
1 or 2	47	23,5
Unspecified	25	12,5
	200	100

Straight looking/Straight acting		
	31	15,5

With regard to Tattoos, the large majority (n=157, 78.5%) of members indicated that they had *No* tattoos, some reported having *1 or 2* tattoos (n=32, 16%), while only one member (0.5%) indicated that he had *many* tattoos. A small number of participants did not disclose whether or not they had a tattoo (n=10, 5%) (Indicated as *unspecified* in Table 9 and as "ask me" in the User Information in Appendix A).

With regard to Piercings, two thirds (n=128, 64%) of members indicated that they had *No* piercings, nearly a quarter reported having *1 or 2* piercings (n=47, 23.5%), and the remainder (n=25, 10%) chose not to disclose whether they had any piercings (indicated as *unspecified* in Table 9 and "ask me" in the User Information in Appendix A). Results on the sub-category

Straight Looking/Acting, (n=31, 15.5%) indicated that they were straight acting or looking. Gay men are generally more dissatisfied with their bodies and body image is said to be closely linked with levels of self-esteem (Kaminski, Chapman, Haynes & Own, 2005; Tiggemann, Martins & Kirkbride, 2007). It is argued that gay men are particularly vulnerable to body image dissatisfaction as a result of a gay culture that places great emphasis on physical appearance as an indicator of attractiveness (Tiggemann et al., 2007). However, while physical attractiveness is important in the crafting of an 'authentically' gay identity (Hutson, 2010), so are piercings and tattoos (Klesse, 2007).

It is remarkable that, without a check-box prompt, a significant number (n=31, 15, 5%) of gay men chose to disclose that they were either 'straight looking' or 'straight acting' on their public dating profile. This is significant in a context in which gay male visibility has, historically, been represented in the public domain (particularly via representations in the media, but also in the texts of the early sexologists) as stereotypically feminine, or effeminate, and flamboyant (Clarkson, 2005). In a critical examination of the meanings and functions of gay visibility, Clarkson (2008) argues that the flamboyant, extroverted, and effeminate stereotype of gay men is often viewed among gay men themselves as transgressive and a challenge to their masculine identity. It is argued that it is precisely this notion of gender transgression that has spurred on the 'straight looking' 'straight acting' gay male identity and a shift toward more traditionally masculine gay male identities that are, some would argue, an assimilation to normative gender expression (Sanchez, Greenberg, Liu & Vilain, 2009). Sanchez and Vilian (2012) noted the tensions that are said to exist between straight looking-acting gay men and effeminate gay men contribute to the discomfort and anti-gay rhetoric so prevalent within heterosexist society.

4.10 POLITICAL OUTLOOK

'Political interests' is a sub-section of the 'lifestyle' section according to the User Information in Appendix A (on page 76). It provides members with an opportunity to indicate the direction of their political outlook. Members must choose between six options that are presented in a drop-down box, they are: ask me; liberal; conservative; non-conformist; middle of the road; other. Among the dating profiles included in my study, all members indicated that they were either conservative or open-minded. These results are presented in Table 10 (below).

Table 10: Political Outlook

Outlook	Count	Frequency
Open-minded	162	81
Conservative	38	19
	200	100

Of the 200 dating profiles, the overwhelming majority (n=162, 81%) considered themselves to be *open-minded*, while less than twenty percent (n= 38, 19%) identified as *conservative*. Unfortunately, there are no descriptions or explanations to qualify what being open-minded or conservative specifically refers to. If members used these options to identify tendencies in voting patterns then it would make more sense to identify as 'liberal' rather than 'open-minded'. Open-minded, it seems to me, can be interpreted more broadly than the signifiers 'liberal' or 'conservative'. Consequently, it is quite likely that members chose the signifier 'open-minded' to indicate their outlook on a broader set of 'political' issues that may well include social issues regarding race, gender, and sexuality impacting their personal lives. Looking at this data, it strikes me how odd it is that South African surveys on social attitudes regarding same-sex sexualities have told us nothing about how gay men and lesbian women see themselves, or their place in the world. Arguably, this omission is illustrative of the status of our sexual citizenship (that we only need to know what others think about us).

4.11 PERSONALITY TRAITS

In the section titled 'Your Personality' (in the User Information in Appendix A on page 76), there is a sub-section titled 'Personality Characteristics' in which members are presented with a list of personality attributes and are invited to select the attributes that best describe their personality. Looking at the various personality attributes that were listed, I realized that they could be grouped fairly easily into those personality attributes traditionally thought of as being feminine (e.g. artistic, compulsive, flamboyant, flirtatious, high maintenance) and those traditionally viewed as masculine (e.g. intellectual, practical, serious, low maintenance). This made me interested to know, in the light of the fact that gay men have often been stereotypically portrayed as being very much like women, whether the personality attributes that the gay men in my study drew on would be consistent with this stereotype.

In Table 10 (below) I have grouped the traditionally feminine personality attributes and labelled them Group 1, while traditionally male personality attributes are grouped together and labelled Group 2.

Table 11: Personality

Group 1	Count	Percent
Artistic	76	38
Flamboyant	10	5
High Maintenance	15	7,5
Compulsive	22	11
Spontaneous	68	34
Talkative	75	37,5

Group 2	Count	Percent
Intellectual	107	53,5
Shy	90	45
Practical	62	31
Low Maintenance	51	25,5
Serious	49	24,5
Self-Confident	92	46
Quiet	73	36,5

According to the information in Table 11, with regard to the traditionally feminine traits in Group 1, a little more than a third of the gay men whose dating profiles made up my data corpus described themselves as *Artistic* (n=76, 38%), *Spontaneous* (n=68, 34%), and *Talkative* (n=75, 37.5%). While a relatively small number of men described themselves as *Flamboyant* (n=10, 5%), as *High Maintenance* (n=15, 7.5%), or *Compulsive* (n=22, 11%).

With regard to the traditionally male personality traits in Group 2, more than half of the gay men whose dating profiles made up my data corpus described themselves as *Intellectual* (n=107, 53.5%), while a little less than half the sample described themselves as *Self-Confident* (n=92, 46%) and *Shy* (n=90, 45%). Roughly one third of the sample described themselves as *Practical* (n=62, 31%) and *Quiet* (n=73, 36.5%) and a quitter of the sample described themselves as *Low Maintenance* (n=51, 25.5%) and *Serious* (n=49, 24.5%).

These numbers suggest that the gay men in my sample ascribe to traditionally masculine personality characteristics rather than traditionally feminine personality characteristics. Thus, while gay men are stereotypically portrayed as sharing many of the personality attributes typically ascribed to women, that this is very much at odds with how the gay men in my research see themselves.

While I am glad that this data debunks a stereotype, I am also concerned that ascribing to traditional notions of masculinity may mark a parallel shift toward anti-feminine and anti-effeminate attitudes as identified elsewhere in the world among 'straight looking' and 'straight acting' gay men (Sanchez & Vilian, 2012; Eguchi, 2009). Straight-acting and straight-looking gay men are said to exhibit heightened policing of their own and other gay men's gender expression, and this is sometimes achieved by expressing anti-effeminate attitudes, which Sanchez and Vilian (2012) argue is in fact related to negative feelings about their own sexual orientation. At the same time, I realise that many gay men simply want to challenge the narrow stereotype of gay men as flamboyant, loud and fashion savvy and to expand the ways in which we are recognisability gay. However, we should also recognise the dangers implicit in clinging to traditional notions of masculinity.

4.12 FAITH

'Faith' is another sub-section of the 'lifestyle' section as per the User Information in Appendix A (on page 76). This information is presented in Table 12 (below).

Table 12: Faith

Faith	Count	Percent
Agnostic	3	1,5
Atheism	9	4,5
Buddhism	2	1
Christianity	120	60
Islam	1	0,5
Spiritual	20	10
Unspecified	45	22,5
	200	100

According to the information presented in Table 12, almost two thirds of the gay men whose dating profiles make up my data corpus identify as *Christian*, (n=120, 60%) which is unremarkable given that South Africa is a predominantly Christian country. A little more than 20% of the sample (n=45, 22.5%) chose not to disclose their religious affiliation in their public dating profile (identified in Table 12 as *unspecified*), and only a small number (n=9, 4, 5%) disclosing that they are *atheist* in their public dating profile. While these statistics are unremarkable, it is important to bare in mind that in a recent survey of social attitudes towards same-sex sexuality and gender non-conformity in South Africa women (Sutherland, Roberts, Gabriel, Struwig, & Gordon, 2016), South Africa was found to be a religious country with about 84% of the adult population claiming religious affiliation and 45% indicating that they were "highly religious". Unfortunately, one consequence of "highly religious" attitudes is that generally go hand-in-hand with intolerant attitudes towards gay men and lesbian women. Walton (2006) notes that being a member of the LGBT community is generally believed to be incompatible and oppositional to being Christian, with some viewing gay men and lesbian women as deviant, sinful, dangerous, and a threat to family

values and Christian beliefs. Despite this, it is quite clear from the information provided in Table 12 above, that many people are both gay *and* Christian.

Research shows that, despite the opposition to same-sex sexuality in many churches, many gay men are also practicing Christians. One wonders why the LGBT community has such a high affiliation towards the Christian faith despite quite obvious obstacles and conflicts between their sexual orientation and religious convictions. Having read some of the literature on same-sex sexuality and religion, what is striking to me is the emergence of a discourse on "gay theology". Rodriguez and Ouellette (2000) contended that this new theology has emerged precisely in response to the growing need among gay and lesbian Christians to find a gay-positive and Christian-positive for gay and lesbian communities; a message that values members of the LGBT community within the Christian faith and recognises their spiritual needs. It is also interesting that a distinction is being made between gay-positive and gay-friendly churches (Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000), the latter representing churches that welcome gay and lesbian participation but do not directly address LGBT religious and spiritual needs, and the former referring to churches that specifically set out to minister to LGBT communities.

Walton (2006) argues that the growing visibility of LGBT Christians challenges stereotypical ideas about gays and lesbians and their relation to the Christian faith. On the issue of challenging anti-gay Christian sentiment it is argued that the first step is to question the assumed impossibility of being both gay and Christian. It is also argued that people should not be put in a position in which they are forced to reject one identity in favour of the other, or to compartmentalise them. Rather, that gay men and lesbian women should be allowed to completely integrate both of these aspects into how they see themselves (Walton, 2006; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000).

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of my study was to explore themes in self-presentation in the online dating profiles of gay men from the Eastern Cape Province and, in doing so, to address a gap in literature by foregrounding how gay men see themselves as opposed to how they are viewed by others. It is necessary to do this in a context where gay men have, historically, not had a say in how they are represented. In this section I draw together and reflect on the significance of the findings reported in the previous chapter – both in relation to the academic literature and contemporary debate on same-sex sexuality in South Africa.

5.1 AFRICAN

Contrary to the announcements of traditional leaders about same-sex sexuality being un-African, a significant number of gay men are in fact African, as illustrated in the sample of dating profiles making up my data corpus. I admit that, in my study, the race/ethnic demographic is skewed and is not representative of the race/ethnic demographic of the province. However, this does not reflect differences in the prevalence of same-sex sexualities across different race/ethnic groups but differences in internet use that, in South Africa, reflect economic asymmetries. This finding is consistent with other South African research reporting internet use.

5.2 URBAN AND WELL EDUCATED

Also consistent with other South African research on patterns in internet use is the finding, in my study, that gay men on the online dating scene (i.e. who are frequently online) are young, highly educated and urban. Furthermore, the finding in my study that gay men are highly

educated (relative to provincial and national averages) and urban, is also consistent with the findings of research conducted elsewhere in the world reporting higher levels of education among gay men compared with national averages, and the observation that gay men tend to migrate away from rural areas into the cities. It is interesting that in my study which is based on the dating profiles of gay men located in a largely rural province, that 80% of the sample resides in the three big cities within the province.

I do wonder, however, how supportive their home environments are. Almost half (n=89, 45%) of the men in my study indicate that they live with family. This is unsurprising given that they are still young and either in college or university, or are early career professionals. However, the findings of a recent South African study indicates that people who are in their parents age group (i.e. 45 to 55 years of age) are the most intolerant toward gay men and lesbian women (Sutherland, Roberts, Gabriel, Struwig, & Gordon, 2016). This is a concern because research conducted elsewhere in the world indicates that there is much better long term emotional and psychological health outcomes when young gay men have a supportive environment, and especially the support of their parents (Birkett, Newcomb, & Mustanski, 2015).

5.3. RESISTING/REINFORCING HETERO AND HOMO NORMATIVITY

Limited 'sexuality' options in the User Information questions (see Appendix A on page 76) that are used to construct online dating profiles imposes a normative framework that, I suspect, does not provide room for the gay men in my study to adequately represent their own experiences as desiring subjects. In recent decades, gender and sexuality signifiers have proliferated and identifying as 'gay' or 'bisexual' are now only two options among many others. Unfortunately, this proliferation is not taken into account in the 'sexuality' options (gay; bi) available to the online daters. Consequently, one interpretation of the fact that more than one third (n=71, 35,5) of the men whose dating profiles make up my data corpus chose

to indicate that they are 'bisexual' may be on account that bisexuality challenges the normative frame upon which both heterosexuality and homosexuality is determined. In Däumer's (1992, p.91) words, it is "precisely because it transgresses bipolar notions of fixed gendered and sexed identities" that bisexuality can be "usefully explored" in our "effort to devise an ethics of difference and to develop non-oppressive ways of responding to alterity". Certainly, for African men who prefer to draw on indigenous frameworks for understanding same-sex sexualities, 'bisexual' may be a less contentious signifier than 'gay'. Of course, it is equally plausible that, at least for some of the men in my study, identifying as 'bisexual' is not so much about being transgressive as explaining their actual experiences as desiring subjects, and perhaps even the fact that they are fathers (as indicated by 4% of the sample).

On the topic of fatherhood, the results of my research indicates that in addition to four percent of the sample who already have children, 63% indicate that they either definitely want to have children or might want to have children in the future. It is interesting that the men in my study disclosed desires about starting families in their online dating profiles. This is because, in other research on self-presentation in gay male dating profiles, it has been observed that gay and bisexual men generally aim to create the impression that they are pursing casual sexual encounters (Blackwell, Birnholtz, & Abbott, 2014; Miller, 2015).

While the desire to settle down and to start a family is considered to be par for the course for heterosexual men and women, for gay men and lesbian women being able to do this in full recognition of the law is only a very recent opportunity. It also means that, going into the future, public debate on 'the family' cannot continue to ignore gay and lesbian families as it has in South Africa. I am cognisant of the fact that the desire to get married, to have children, and purchase a home are quintessentially heteronormative desires (Duggan, 2004). However, I also believe that we should be careful not to let critiques of heteronormativity undermine gay men and lesbian women's battles for recognition under the law.

An issue that does raise some concern is the finding in my study that a small but significant number of men (n=31, 15, 5%) posting online dating profiles choose to identify as either

'straight acting' or 'straight looking'. In other research it has been found that gay men negotiate 'straight acting' and 'straight looking' by using femmephobic language and the expression of ant-effeminate attitudes (Miller & Behm-Morawitz, 2016). In my study, the nature of my data does not lend itself to making these connections. However, it is interesting to observe that just over 80% of the men in my study indicated that they drink socially. While this trend is in line with national data regarding alcohol consumption in the general population and among men in particular, it is a concern because high alcohol consumption is associated with high levels of injury and interpersonal violence (Schneider, Norman, Parry, Bradshaw, & Plüddemann, 2007). In other research connections are made between hegemonic masculinities (premised on a need for power and control over others), alcohol consumption and interpersonal violence (Peralta, Tuttle, & Steele, 2010), as well as higher incidents of unprotected sex (Lane, Shade, McIntyre, & Morin, 2008). It is possible that patterns in alcohol consumption among the men in my study may reflect an aspect of gay male masculinity that is comparable to their straight male counterparts.

Interestingly, the results of my study indicate that the men in my study have resisted practices of body modification (piercings and tattoos) that have, traditionally, been used to signal their sexual identities (almost 80% indicated that they did not have a tattoo and more than two thirds said that they did not have a piercing). This is notable because tattoos and body piercing – practices for negotiating an 'authentic' gay identity – appear in many of the accounts of the histories of gay male cultures in North America and Europe (Atkins, 2012; Chauncey, 1994; Cole, 2000). Arguably, this can be explained as signifying a growing homonormative sensibility for 'good gay' men to assimilate to normative conceptions regarding citizenship, in which sub-cultural practices such as piercing and tattoos would be decidedly out of place given that tattooing and piercing continue to be associated with deviance (Adams, 2009; Koch, Roberts, Armstrong, & Owen, 2010) and that people with piercings and tattoos are viewed as less suitable job applicants (McElroy, Summers, & Moore, 2014) which is a significant factor for young people entering the job market – like the young men in my study.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The results of my study suggest that the gay man whose online dating profiles constituted my data corpus present themselves very much within a normative framework: young, fit, educated, urban, family orientated, straight looking, straight acting, and God fearing. I argue that while there are good grounds to be critical of gay men's assimilation to normative conceptions of the 'good gay', I also argue (following Brown, 2012) that being able to live as 'normal' is a hard won 'privilege' and we should not underestimate the significant challenges that gay men (and lesbian women and gender non-conforming people) continue to face, and which may explain investments in being seen as normal in a world that is not very tolerant of difference.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

I encountered a number of methodological limitations in undertaking this research. Most immediately, the highly fixed information fields imposed on the dating profiles. The fact that there were very few open text fields significantly impacted the depth and richness of the data that I collected. The fact that most of the information in the dating profiles required a fixed response format meant that my analysis had to focus on patterns emerging from the coding and enumeration of this data. Nevertheless, I do think that I was able to make some significant observations.

Another methodological limitation pertains to the problem that I experienced with the advertisement banners and their interference with the technology that I used to extract digital copies of the dating profiles. This resulted in some of the information in the dating profiles being lost or rendered illegible. Although this was frustrating, it did not have a significant impact on the overall patterns that emerged or on my ability to draw interferences from those patterns.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As this research was undertaken as part of a degree that is obtained by research (33%) as well as coursework (67%), it was a small study with very modest aspirations. Nevertheless, in doing this research I became increasingly frustrated by the fact that there is very little South African data available on gay men and lesbian women against which I could compare the observations and insights emerging from my research. For example, because the South African government does not collect census data on LGBT individuals I do not know whether the patterns that I identify in my study, such as the fact that 80% of the men in my study are living in cities (a pattern that has been identified elsewhere in the world), is representative of the South African LGBT population. I think that it is important for future large scale surveys in South Africa to include questions about LGBT communities.

Another frustration that I experienced in undertaking this research is that much of the South African literature pertaining to gay men and lesbian women has very narrow interests. In the case of gay men, most research focuses on HIV/AIDS, while much of the research on lesbian women and gender non-conforming people focuses on homophobic violence. This is very important research, but these are also very narrow representations of what it means to be queer in South Africa. Furthermore, while large national surveys have looked at South Africans social attitudes towards same-sex sexualities, there seems to be no interest in surveying the attitudes of gay men and lesbian women. What are our attitudes towards service delivery?, discrimination in the workplace?, the life orientation curriculum?, what are our alcohol consumption patterns? Nothing! And the problem with having inadequate data is that it forces us to continue to refer to literature that speaks to the experiences of gay men in other parts of the world rather than in the South African context.

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APPENDIX A: USER INFORMATION

ABOUT YOU

Introduce Yourself	[This is an open ended field]	Uses advised not to share sensitive information e.g. home address

YOUR DETAILS

Used to calculate current age

Date of Birth	Day		Month		Year	

Sex	Male	Automatically indicated as male and cannot be changed (male-only site)

Home Town/City	[This is an open ended field]

Current Location	[This is an open ended field]

Relationship status

Ask me
Single
Dating a few people
Dating someone special
Monogamous relationship
Open relationship
Married
Married and play together
Part of a group

Drop down options

Your Ethnic Origins

Ask me
African/Afro Caribbean/Black
Asian
Mediterranean/Latino
Middle Eastern/North African
Native/Aboriginal
White
Mixed/Multi

Drop down options

Users advised that they are more likely to be contacted if they provide this information

YOUR APPEARANCE

Body Shape

Ask me
Slim
Average
Athletic
Muscular
Body builder
Large
Extra large

Height

Ask me
Select a number in centimetres ranging from 122 cm to 203cm

Drop down options

Eye colour		Hair Colour
Ask me		Ask me
Green		Black
Hazel		Brown
Black		Blonde
Blue	Drop down options	Red
Brown		Grey
Grey		White
		Shaved

Tattoos		Piercings
Ask me		Ask me
One or two	Drop down options	One or two
A few		A few
Lots		Lots

YOUR PERSONALITY

Personality Characteristics

Artistic	☐		Intellectual	☐
Compulsive	☐		Open Minded	☐
Conservative	☐		Low Maintenance	☐
Earthy	☐		Practical	☐
Flamboyant	☐		Quiet	☐
Flirtatious	☐		Sensitive	☐
High Energy	☐	Choose as	Self Confident	☐
High Maintenance	☐	many as	Serious	☐
Outgoing	☐	apply	Sophisticated	☐
Loving	☐		Unconventional	☐
Talkative	☐		Romantic	☐
Spontaneous	☐		Shy	☐
Stubborn	☐		Spiritual	☐

WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR

[This is an open ended field]

Who you are looking for

[This is an open ended field]

Your Sexuality

Gay
Bisexual

Drop down options

Preferred Age Range

Desired Activities

Friendship	☐	Relationship	☐	Chat	☐
Workout Partner	☐	Travel Partner	☐	Casual	☐
Group Casual	☐	Other Activities	☐		

YOUR LIFESTYLE

You Live With:

Ask me
Alone
Friends
Family
Partner

Drop down options – Choose one

Faith

Drop down options – Choose One

Ask me	Agnostic	Atheism
Buddhism	Baha'i	Islam
Shinto	Candombe	Christianity
Jainism	Jehovah's witnesses	Mormon
Paganism	Rastafari	Santeria
Judaism	Taoism	Unitarianism
Sikhism	Zoroastrianism	Other

Have Children

Drop down options – Choose One

Ask me	None	Yes, Living at home	Yes, Away from home

Want Children

Drop down options – Choose One

Ask me	Yes	Not sure	No

Education

Drop down options – Choose One

Ask me	School	College	University

Political interests

Drop down options – Choose One

Ask me	Conservative	Middle of the road
Liberal	Non-conformist	Other

Occupation

Customer service
Legal
Public Service
Retail
Etc….

Drop down options – Choose one

Income Bracket

Drop down options – Choose One

Ask me	Minimum Wage	Professional
Student	Executive	Millionaire

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Eating		*Drop down options – Choose One*				
Ask me		Everything		Vegan	Halal	Kosher

Drink		*Drop down options – Choose One*				
Ask me		Never		Socially	Obsessively	Reformed

Smoke		*Drop down options – Choose One*				
Ask me		Never		Always	Quitting	Vape

Drugs		*Drop down options – Choose One*				
Ask me		Never		Socially	Obsessively	Reformed

Leisure Interests
Choose as many as apply

Antiques	☐	Arts & Crafts	☐	Board Games	☐	Camping	☐	Cars	☐
Clubbing	☐	Comics	☐	Computers	☐	Cooking	☐	DIY	☐
Dining Out	☐	Dramatics	☐	Entertaining	☐	Drawing	☐	Fishing	☐
Gambling	☐	Gardening	☐	Motorbikes	☐	Investing	☐	Hiking	☐
Movies	☐	Music	☐	Photography	☐	Painting	☐	Reading	☐
Shopping	☐	Surfing Online	☐	Strategy Games	☐	Television	☐	Travelling	☐
Walking	☐	Writing	☐	Video Games	☐	Wine Taste	☐		☐

Sport Interests
Choose as many as apply

Aerobics	☐	Football	☐	Baseball	☐	Basket Ball	☐	Bowling	☐
Cycling	☐	Golf	☐	Extreme Sports	☐	Gym	☐	Hiking	☐
Hockey	☐	Horse Riding	☐	Ice Skating	☐	Inline Skate	☐	Jogging	☐
Martial Arts	☐	Net Ball	☐	Racquet Ball	☐	Pilates	☐	Squash	☐
Swimming	☐	Tennis	☐	Triathlon	☐	Volleyball	☐	Walking	☐
Water Sport	☐	Windsurfing	☐	Weight Training	☐	Wrestling	☐	Yoga	☐

Music Interests
Choose as many as apply

African	☐	Ballroom	☐	Blues	☐	Classical	☐	Country	☐
Dance	☐	Disco	☐	Drum & Bass	☐	Electronic	☐	Folk	☐
Garage	☐	Gospel	☐	Grunge	☐	Hip Hop	☐	House	☐
Indie	☐	Jazz	☐	Metal	☐	Pop	☐	Rap	☐
Reggae	☐	Religious	☐	RnB	☐	Rock	☐	Techno	☐
Trance	☐	Skank n Soul	☐						