The Freedom to Be[lieve]

A case study of how Christian Communities of sexual diversity affect the religious
and sexual identity of gays and lesbians in Santiago, Chile

Sara Myhrer

Supervisor

Professor Sturla J. Stålsett

(…) I am at peace with myself, accepting me, forgiving and embracing myself. By doing this I also reconciled with God. If I cannot reconcile with myself, it is extremely difficult to reconcile with God ("Tomas", PADIS).[1]

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[1] (…) reconcilio con mi mismo; aceptándome, perdonándome y abrazándome a mí mismo, por eso también reconcilio con Dios. Si no lo reconciliarme con mi mismo pase muy difícil de la hora de reconciliarme con Dios ("Tomas", PADIS).

Acknowledgement

Abstract

Christian gays and lesbians have experienced losing their position and being discriminated within their church community due to their sexual identity. With these experiences, other Christian communities continue fighting for the inclusion of people of sexual diversity.

This is a study that focuses on the coexistence of religious and sexual and religious sexual identity. It explores how it may be possible to be a Christian community that lets everyone participate without the feeling of having to hide one´s sexual identity and what such a community might mean to its participants. The fact that the subject of religion and sexuality is still a very complicated terrain hence difficult to discuss for many, illustrates the importance of this thesis. With lack of inclusion comes lack of understanding of one´s differences. Those who have to leave their religious communities risk losing their faith as well because they believe they cannot be Christian *and* be gay or lesbian at the same time. In my thesis, I seek to understand better the journey towards this double recognition of religious and sexual identity.

This study is based in Santiago, Chile and has been conducted with the use of qualitative research methods, such as in-depth interviews and observation of workshops and masses, mainly with members of different Christian Communities called PADIS, IELCH and ICM, that focus on the inclusion of Christians of sexual diversity. The majority of the informants in this study are gays and lesbians. By focusing on the experience of attending such a community the research question for this thesis is as follows: *in what ways does being part of a Christian Community of sexual diversity affect the religious and sexual identity of gays and lesbians in Santiago, Chile?*

My findings show how the informants were enabled to return to practice their faith through these Christian Communities and how these communities created a safe space for them to reflect, share and grow within their religious and sexual identity in solidarity with others. I illustrate the difficulties of reaching other people of sexual diversity that is not gay men, due to differences in visibility between private and public space as well as the lack of permanent attending members. I illustrate the Christian diversity within these groups, and further illustrate the experiences of discrimination between the religious and the secular LGBTQ community and the challenges of solidarity due to differences in values and purposes.

My final conclusion of this research is that through active participation in a Christian Community that embraces sexual diversity, the informants experience personal development and

ownership of their religious and sexual identity that they earlier thought was impossible. Informants have expressed that without this kind of *safe* space within a Christian Community of sexual diversity, they would not have reached this state of a more complete self-acceptance with the coexistence of both identities.

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Abbreviations and Definitions

CEGAL	Comunidad Cristiana Ecuménica Gay-Lésbica
ICM	Iglesia de Comunidad Metropolitana Casa de Emmaus
IELCH	Iglesia Evangelica Luterana de Chile
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual and Queer
MOVILH	Movimiento de Integración y Liberación Homosexual
MCC	Metropolitan Community Church
PADIS	Pastoral de la Diversidad Sexual

Orgullo Gay   Gay Pride, a march for LGBTQ-people to promote the desire for equal rights and recognition by the state and as population.

Pastoral   *Pastoral* [Spanish] will in this thesis involve a subgroup of a church, congregation or a small community that hold their own masses or have educative bible study or life groups that focus on inclusion of sexual diversity.

1. Introduction

The tension between religious and sexual identity continue to be a complicated terrain for many, both personally and within religious communities, and perhaps even more so in more conservative countries. It is estimated that 69 percent of the Latin American population identify as Catholic, making it the most Catholic continent in the world (Vaggione, 2017, p. 10). There is a rapid development of LGBTQ[2] rights on the continent and the Catholic Church is considered one of the tremendous oppositions of the progression of sexual minorities rights e.g. condemnation of same-sex marriage, the right for same sex couples to adopt and the use of contraceptives (Corrales & Pecheny, 2010, pp. 20- 21).

Chile may be considered one of the most progressive counties on the South American continent, due to the levels of industrialization, education and urbanization but also considered as one of the most conservative. Chile is considered more conservative due to the fact that it is falling behind with the development of LGBTQ rights in contrast with its neighboring country, Argentina. Increasing economy and wealth and conservatism is reluctant towards the progression of LGBTQ rights and the Catholic Church hold its influences in Chilean culture and politics regarding the complexity of LGBTQ rights and lifestyle (Díez, 2015, pp. 3-5).

In a conservative country the experience of coming out for lesbian and gay in mainstream Christian communities cannot be an easy process due to strong external influences. With the desire of being able to be both, gay and Christian while the society and religious influences tells one otherwise, I am wondering what role a Christian Community of sexual diversity play in the journey towards unifying one`s Christian and gay or lesbian identity and achieve this double recognition.

The concept of double recognition that I have developed in this thesis show that self-acceptance of sexual identity alone is not enough to achieve full recognition as both gay and Christian, it needs to be fulfilled simultaneously with one's religious identity. The feeling of full recognition can be as I will illustrate, found and experienced through solidarity between others in similar situations whom recognize each other.

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[2] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer.

In the following thesis I aim to analyze the possibility of recognition of religious and sexual identity and how their members of these communities express their "truth to power" and yearning to actively practice their faith as gay and lesbian Christians in a safe-space (Scott, 1990, p. I).

1.1. The Crossroad Between Identity and Faith

> Out of two divergent roads they create two converging ones.
> (Wilcox, 2003, p. 11).

A familiar dilemma among the gay and lesbian Christians is the decision that involves religion versus sexual identity, especially for those who are raised in Christian and conservative families that are active in churches. For some, these identities can be considered mutually exclusive, meaning one cannot be Christian and simultaneously be an open and proud lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered person. For people with religious background in Christianity or other religions, knowledge about same-sex attraction can lead to a crossroad of choosing between these two identities. The choice between one´s sexual or gender identity and one´s religious commitment. Some choose to live out their sexual identity, while rejecting their religion that they believe do not accept them for being attracted to and loving someone of the same sex, others choose their religion and struggle to live after the heterosexual expectations. However, it is not just people who choose either/or, there are people that refuse to make a choice between the two crossroads and find a way to combine the divergent roads instead. By doing this, it gives opportunity to reinterpreting one´s belief system so their religious commitment and LGBTQ-identity are compatible (Wilcox, 2003, p. 11).

1.1. Context

This thesis is a qualitative research conducted in Santiago, Chile with emphasis on the participants and functions of two different *pastorales* (groups) and one Church that embraces sexual diversity within their communities. The aim is to seek understanding of experiences and challenges that

Christians identifying as gay and lesbian face. Focusing on the ways these Christian Communities of sexual diversity affect their sexual identity and faith, I aim to understand why they participate in these Communities, and how they experience the convergence of their religious and sexual identity.[3] This is explored through ten interviews with informants from these three groups, and through participating and observing at several services, masses and educational evenings during the weeks I were in the field. In addition, this research will focus on the different public and private spaces of the religious community and the life of the informants. What is the importance of a Christian community of sexual diversity, and how it might be an instrument for personal growth?

1.2. Personal Motivation

I feel the need to mention the lack of dialogue and openness about sexual diversity in the Charismatic Pentecostal community I grew up in. The complicated terrain of homosexuality in this community makes it difficult to create a safe-space and dialogue for Christians questioning their sexual identity. I had friends that had to leave their position in my Church after coming out as gay. Because role models were expected to be heterosexual and being openly gay in their position is seen to send the wrong message. I have been told by several others that repentance is possible and that I still have not experienced God`s truth. The coexistence of these two identities became in my eyes impossible. However, now I know that there are alternatives.

Therefore, with this thesis I wish to help individuals that are struggling with accepting their sexual identity in their Christian faith. In addition, I hope to give an example to motivate churches and other religious communities to include people of sexual diversity. Hopefully this thesis will illustrate that this is possible.

I chose Chile as the destination for this research due to my eagerness to understand and learn more about the Latin-American continent. I have worked in Bolivia and studied in Argentina. My studies focus on international development and relations, and religious and social studies. In my bachelor thesis, I compared the factors for the development of LGBTQ rights in Argentina and Nicaragua, focusing on social and political movements, activism, and the role of the Catholic

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[3] Communities with capital C refers to the groups that are included in this study.

Church. Chile is considered a very Catholic country, and I wanted to see how the sexual diversity is represented within Christian communities.

1.3.   A Christian Community Embracing Sexual Diversity

Often when not having a community that accepts you, the risk of leaving is to lose the connection and affection towards that group. Christian gays and lesbians have several times been forced to quit attending their church because the church`s lack of acceptance of their sexual identity. This hinders them in participating their faith in a community they too feel a part of.

The three Communities of sexual diversity that in this study, actively seek to bring forward Christianity as a loving and accepting faith and religion to those who feel as if they lost their place in their former church communities. Sexual diversity involves all identities that do not identify with the heteronormative definition and values regarding who to love and how to live. Sexual diversity does not just welcome and include gays and lesbians, but all people identifying within the LGBTQ community. Within these Communities in this research I have observed, the majority attending are gay men and a small number of lesbians. Following I will give a brief introduction about the three communities:

Pastoral de la Diversidad Sexual (PADIS) and *Grupo de la Diversidad* (IELCH) are both subgroups of an actual congregation, but with different functions. PADIS emerged from the Catholic Church and is led by several ordained priests and holds its own masses and events outside of the Catholic Church. *Grupo de la Diversidad* (IELCH) emerged from the Evangelical Lutheran Church and is led by a gay Lutheran pastor. The group uses an educative approach and they gathers twice a month to educate and discuss the topics regarding Christianity and homosexuality. *Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana* (ICM) is considered as an independent Church and led by two priests, one gay and one transgendered. They gather for services every Sunday, and schedule events during the week for education and discussion about Christianity and homosexuality.

1.4. Research and Sub Questions

In the beginning of this research my main question was whether gay and lesbian Christians lost their faith completely when they stopped actively attending church and if these Christian Communities of sexual diversity helped them return to faith. During the conduction of this research and simultaneously analyzing the data collected I soon realized that the issue was not whether or not one lost their faith when they do not feel as if they have a place in their church, but rather how the participants was permitted to go back to participate as Christian *and* gay or lesbian in a church community. Based on this, the research question for the following thesis will be;

> In what ways does being part of a Christian Community of sexual diversity affect the religious and sexual identity of gays and lesbians in Santiago, Chile?

To answer the research question, I have decided on these three different sub questions that I developed both prior to and during the research and production of this thesis. By listening to the informants and understanding their experiences, nuances regarding these sub questions surfaced:

1. How do the communities contribute in the journey in achieving self-acceptance in their identity as gay and Christian?
2. In what way does having a Christian Community of sexual diversity create a private space, and what are the challenges?

Before I arrived in the field I had the impression and expectation that these Communities and their participants were more engaged in activism to promote LGBTQ rights. However, I was surprised of how the relationship between the participants and the secular LGBTQ community was, that involves those of the LGBTQ community that are non-religious. On the account of that, I cannot help but asking the question;

3. How is the relation of solidarity between the Christian gays and lesbians and the secular LGBTQ community?

1.5. Clarifications of Definitions

There have been informants participating that belongs to different religious directions of Christianity. When referring to the informants, combined with their religious identity, I will use Christian or Christianity as an umbrella-term to include both the Catholic and Christian, Pentecostal and Evangelical informants. When referring to them in an individual manner, I will use the religious identity they use when talking about themselves.

Throughout this thesis, the terminologies Lesbian and Gay, LGBTQ and Queer will be used simultaneously. Mostly when writing about the informants, I will use the identity they themselves used about themselves and in topics related to their answers.

Lesbian and gay will be the two sexual identities that will be used the most. This is because the majority of people in these Christian Communities of sexual diversity are mostly gay and lesbian. Regarding the use of the acronym LGBTQ and it will be used in consideration to the general and secular LGBTQ community. When I speak of the general community and sexual rights I will use this acronym or the term queer.[4]

Furthermore, Christian Communities of sexual diversity will in some cases, for language reasons, hereafter be termed as "these Communities" or Communities with capital C.

1.6. Outline of the Thesis

In this chapter I have introduced the context that this thesis is based on and the difficulty with the relationship between religious and sexual identity how they might converge, in addition to my personal motivation for this topic and brief introduction of the Communities.

In chapter two I have covered the general background of sexuality and religion in Latin America, including a more narrowed presentation on Chile and the country's history and development of LGBTQ rights and experience, during and after the dictatorship of Pinochet. Chapter three introduces the theoretical framework used in this thesis which focus greatly on

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[4] Queer is an umbrella term for every person that identify outside of the heterosexual and heteronormative definition.

recognition and solidarity, authenticity, the relationship between private and public space and lastly the notion of respectability. Chapter four present the research methods used while conducting this research. It will involve description, decisions, thoughts and challenges I had prior to and during the time of research in Santiago.

Chapter five will give an introduction of the different Christian Communities of sexual diversity I had the honor of following and interviewing members from. Following in chapter six I present the findings from the field in categories regarding *Faith, community and identity, private versus public space* and the *diversity within homosexuality.* In chapter seven I aim to discuss my main findings in light of the theoretical framework and structure.

What follows is the conclusion in chapter eight, where I introduce and answers the research and the sub questions in this thesis.

2. Background

2.1. Sexuality and Religion in Latin America

In the first part of this following Chapter I will introduce a general introduction of different key-topics that have been influencing the Latin-American continent. However, this does not generalize all the countries. It is important to remember that each country has similar yet distinctive history regarding these different matters. How the notion of *machismo* (male pride) is considered in Brazil might have similar characteristics with the *machismo* in Chile, nonetheless the understanding and how it is presented might vary. Considering several of the countries in South America went through a cruel dictatorship in the 70´s and 80´s, the traumas and history are affecting the countries in different ways.

2.1.1. Regulations of Sexuality

Liberalism has been an influential force in Latin America and started debates about democracy, citizenship, social relations and equality which have been on the agenda alongside the ideas about the "Natural Law" since the ninetieth century (Díez, 2015, p. 30). The historically dominant traditional opinion on sexuality is upheld in the Natural Law that was developed by Saint Thomas Aquinas, Natural Law is not a legislative law by government. The Natural Law was written in the thirteenth century and Aquinas argued that sexual act had to be in the frame of marriage and of the productive kind; marriage and procreation was seen as a "human good". Marriage and reproduction is an understanding of characteristics given by nature, and therefore makes it difficult to redefine the concept of marriage. Under this law, sex and reproduction are equivalent. Based on this argument, all sexual activity outside the frame of marriage and that cannot result in reproduction are viewed as immoral; therefore, homosexual acts are viewed as naturally immoral. This understanding of marriage and sexuality has formed the basis for the main Christian religions on difficult issues related to the question of marriage, reproduction, family and the moral of sexuality; and have been very influential in constructing the understanding of homosexuality (Díez, 2015, p. 29).

Because of the mobilization to redefine the concept of marriage in Latin America, the heteronormative society have been challenged and the mobilization for LGBTQ rights have met strong oppositions from the Catholic Church and other Christian religions that have followed the ideas of the Natural Law. Opposition against the LGBTQ rights has been huge because the reforms of policy in this area affects more than just the legal provisions. The change will affect the essential ground for the notion of the ethics of sexuality in Latin America that have been maintained consistently since the colonial times (Díez, 2015, p. 30).

2.1.2. The Notion of *Machismo* and the *Machista* System

machismo is used to describe male sexuality in the Latin American society. The term is used when describing the power relations between other men. Constantly men have to prove their masculinity to others through actions that strengthens their masculine confidence (Lancaster, 1992, p. 237). Since the colonial times gender and sexuality was stratified in the society. Gender is assumed to be parallel so that specific "male" characteristics that emerge in opposition to the similar "feminine" features which results in a type of system of cultural codes and restrictions on behavior. Those men who do not follow the norms of behavior are likely to be called labels such as *puto*, *mariposa* and *maricón* (slut and faggot). These words are used with an indirect understanding in a way that designate emasculate and feminized behavior. The contrast between what is considered as masculine and what is considered feminine occupy the research on Latin American sexuality and homosexuality. There exist an active/passive dichotomy with a strong division between them. *Pasivos* (passive) are referred to as the more feminine and the one that is labeled as the homosexual because *pasivos* are the one receiving penetration – taking the female role. While the *activos* (active) are referred to be the more heterogeneous, the one penetrating in the sexual act and therefore seeking to endorse their masculinity. He is the *machista* (manchovenist) and is therefore not believed to be the homosexual (Girman, 2004, pp. 30-31).

Because of *machismo* is so focused on male dominance in between the sexes, lesbian women are considered less of a threat to the society. In a cultural context in Latin America, lesbian woman are in several societies to some extent "invisible" because culturally, female sexuality is

rarely recognized. The perspective of an absent female sexuality and belief that women that are lesbian have not yet experienced real sex with a real man can be in different settings a justification to sexual harassment and rape. It is not considered real sex if it is not a man involved in the act. Further views as for example if a woman say no to sexual relations with a man it is because she has not yet experienced "her true sexual nature". These perspectives on female sexuality and perhaps especially in relation to marriage, women should idealize themselves after the Virgin Mary, with raising children without the worry for sexual fulfillment. By not being concerned about sexual fulfillment the women maintains her "purity" and are viewed as asexual beings. This notion of the ideal female in contrast to *machismo* is called *marianismo* (Reding, 2010, p. 299-300).

2.1.3. Religion on the Latin American Continent

The history between religion and politics in Latin-America traces its origins back to the Spanish colonization constructed on the image of the cross and the sword, and the influential role of the Catholic Church in the development of shaping the different Latin-American nations. Catholicism shaped a cultural and social foundation that infiltrate the decision-making and discussions. The region honors a forceful religious tradition, and discourses, practices and confessional beliefs continue to play a significant role in public life. The Catholic Church has infiltrated and impacted political decisions, different social practices and cultural systems. In Chile they have a consensual type of politics where the Catholic Church has direct admission to the policy process. Until 2010 their politics were distinguished by consensus that involved policy making by members of the government, but also included dialogue with the Catholic Church hierarchy. This makes the institution have great influence and sayings to decisions regarding policies (Dìez, 2015, p. 13). Regardless of the crucial role of the Catholic Church, there has been an expansion of Evangelical churches in recent decades. A significant amount of the population in the region continue to believe and the number of agnostics or atheist have been stable in its growth during the twentieth century. Still there are challenges to contemporary forms of regulating and understanding religion because of diversity in how people identify with religion and spirituality. Religion today regenerate forms of interpreting and thinking about the world which is believed to be a result of secularization according to Vagionne and Morán Faudes (Vaggione & Faúndes, 2017, pp. 3-9).

2.1.4. Religious Institutions and LGBTQ Rights

Organized religion has been one of the biggest obstacles in relation to sexual rights. Many Christian churches consider same-sex attraction and practice as immoral and sinful. For example, there were conducted a study during Gay Pride in Santiago and Buenos Aires where 33 precent and 24 percent of the participants, respectively, confessed that they had been discriminated against by a religious community. Religious institutions like the Catholic Church and Evangelical communities have had a great influence in the opposition against LGBTQ rights in several countries in Latin-America. Democratic struggles as ending slavery, women`s right to vote, human and indigenous rights have not experienced the same opposition from difficult church groups, the same way they are visible in the opposition of LGBTQ rights today. The only other struggles that face similar opposition from religious communities are rights regarding abortion and reproductive rights (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010, p. 20) It is important to note that not all religious communities have been a barrier in the development and progress of LGBTQ rights. Religious communities vary in forms and are diverse, therefore it makes sense that there are differences in degrees of opposition and how. The Catholic Church have in many countries been influential on the political arena of policy making. This is because they have actively stood against the legalizations and hindered agendas. Having more focus on hindering legalization of rights concerning lifestyle of LGBTQ church members. While in contrast the Protestant Churches (in predominantly Catholic countries) have had less influence on political agenda, but perhaps been more operative regarding regulations of behavior within their religious communities. This does not have to be the case in all religious communities. Within communities and congregations there are differences in opinions and how they stand regarding LGBTQ issues e.g., even though the Catholic Church in Chile condemns homosexuality they aided gay patients diagnosed with HIV/AIDS (Corrales and Pecheny, 2010, p. 21).

Religious diversification in Latin-America is growing between and within each religion. Because of the growing religious diversity, there are new interpretations of defining sexuality, the family and reproduction. Surveys have been done in Latin-America regarding people that have general membership in religious communities that illustrated that people that are assigned to religions like Catholicism do not in all cases agree with the sexual doctrine that is defended by belonged leadership, and some even shows their support to respective sexual and reproductive

rights. The diversification of religions has influenced religious leaders to reveal that they are in favor of different demands regarding LGBTQ rights. LGBTQ and feminist movements have impacted Latin American countries, of course with different consequences in different countries. However, the movements have influenced religious beliefs and religious actors participating in the process of law-making (Vaggione, 2005 in Vaggione & Mòran Faùndes, 2017, pp.12-14).

2.1.5. Inclusive Groups and Organizations

The emergence of the "Gay Churches" haven't in all cases been visible and been quite unusual and foreign in Latin-America. In many cases it's a "Gay Church" is the definition in use, but that does not reflect the vision of the church, but it is a church and a community *for* LGBTQ-people and emerge as a Church especially for people that cannot live out their faith in a traditional religious institution. Another used definition for the term is "Inclusive organizations" that also identify as a church or religious group that organizes around the question of sexual orientation and gender identity (Musskopf, 2012, p. 239).

2.2. Chile

This following part of the background Chapter will explicitly focus on Chile and Chile´s development and experience of LGBTQ rights and community. I have chosen to do this because this following section will define the overview of what might be the impact on the difficulties of coming out for people with non-heterosexual identity in the Chilean society. This section as well will create an understanding of what later will be illustrated in later chapters regarding theory, presenting the findings and the discussion.

2.2.1. General Information

At the lowest end of South-America, but the country that stretches itself over half the continent next to the Pacific Ocean is the Republic of Chile. Bolivia, Peru and Argentina are the neighboring countries. In 2015 the population was estimated to be 17.948.141, and 18.896.684 by 2020. The capital Santiago is located in the heart of the country. The national language is Spanish. The dominant religion in Chile is Catholicism with 70 percent of population identifying as *Catolicos*, 15 percent *Evangelicos* and 1 percent from the Jehovah's Witnesses. Before the elections that took place November and December 2017, Chile's first female president Michelle Bachelet was in government. After elections of 2017 Sèbastian Piñera is new elected president (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperacion, 2017).

2.2.2. Being Queer Under Pinochet

Chile suffered sixteen years under a brutal military regime under Augusto Pinochet. The military-coup of the democratic government of President Salvador Allende happened 11. September in 1973. During the sixteen years under Pinochet´s regime thousands of people disappeared and was detained and tortured. During these years the communication between gay men and lesbian women was almost nonexistent (Gonzalez, 2010, p. 381). During the early years of the dictatorship (1974-1977) was greatest phase of suppression. During these year´s gays and lesbians from the lower and poorer classes were systematically detained by police forces when the regime introduced its terror

campaign, but during the dictatorship there was not an official protocol regarding homosexuality. When the systematic repression of gays and lesbians increased some gay organizations did occur as a reaction to this (Robles 1998 in Díez, 2015, p. 101). A group of fourteen gay men organized a discussion group called Betanía at the Catholic university and was led by a priest that was inspired by Liberation Theology. In this discussion group they talked about the personal understanding of being gay and was not to mobilize for political reasons, but rather with therapeutic intentions. After 1980 when the economic model of the Pinochet regime started having an effect, bars and clubs in Valparaiso and Santiago were allowed to open. Even though gays and lesbians were allowed to socialize in commercial establishments, the tolerance was limited, and police harassment did not diminish. There was not an official policy that allowed repression of gays and lesbians, however the discrimination happened in an indirect manner because it discouraged every form of political organization. With generalized repression of the LGBTQ community during the years of the Pinochet dictatorship, and made it difficult with the public appearance of a movement (Díez, 2015, pp. 101-102).

2.2.3. Mobilization and Anti-Sodomy Law

Chile was one of the last countries alongside Ecuador in South America to decriminalize homosexuality in 1999. During the years after the restoration of democracy the gay mobilization tried to find its way into the public sphere. Because of lack of possible contact with gay men, lesbians or academics during the dictatorship, Homosexual Integration and Liberation Movement (MOVILH) which is the biggest organization working with the promotion of LGBTQ rights in the country had obscure knowledge about the country´s anti-sodomy law. Lesbian feminists had debated the matter of gender and sexuality in the 80´s, but it was difficult for lesbian groups to cooperate with gay activists because the Pinochet regime hindered the emergence of movements and relationship across sectors of the society. Later the activists took to the streets and held their first Gay Pride parade in 1999 (Díez, 2015, p. 105). Still, the topic of homosexuality did not make national debates and the mobilization was seen as so weak that it did not challenge social attitude and heteronormativity. On the account of this the discussion of sexual rights was limited to the decriminalization of same-sex relations (Díez, 2015, p. 207). There have been several opportunities

by the Chilean government to change the Penal Code. Article §365 in the Penal Code prohibited homosexual practices. The penalty of homosexual practices resulted in imprisonment. This abolition of Article §365 did not happen until 1998 (González, 2010, p. 381). Today the penal code still segregate age of sexual consent between partners of same and opposite sex. The age for sexual consent for partners of opposite sex is fourteen, whilst for partners of the same sex the age is eight-teen years. If you are under the age of eighteen and have intercourse with a person of the same-sex the punishment can be imprisonment in low or high degree, depending on the crime (Codigo Penal, 1874, §365). Before the penal code of article §365 did not include women sexual rights, and because of this especially lesbian woman felt left out (González, 2010, p. 385). The legislation of a law that protected the LGBTQ-population of Chile came years later.

2.2.4. Antidiscrimination law: Ley Zamudio

The first antidiscrimination law in Chile was legislated in 2012. It was a consequence to a hate-crime event that happened in the center of Santiago. Daniel Zamudio a gay teenager got tortured and killed by a group of Neo-Nazis 3rd of March that year and three weeks after the attack Zamudio died from the severe damages. This specific episode contributed to the final call and legislation of the antidiscrimination law with the same name as the victim in this hate-crime event (Díez, 2015, pp. 234-235).

2.2.5. Sexual and Gender Diversity Human Rights Annual Report

Every year the NGO MOVILH publish an annual report with information and updates of discriminatory events and updates on current debates and laws in legislation during the past year. MOVILH representative Ronaldo Jimenez held a presentation about the publishing of the annual report regarding the year 2017 and declared that the percentage of anti-LGBTQ acts of hostility has increased with 45 percent. This include discrimination and violence. The number of hostile acts was 152 more in 2017 than in 2016 and counted the amount of 484 incidents. The report states that among the 484 complaints contained two murders, thirty-eight cases of discrimination at

workplaces, twenty exclusions from school, fifty-six verbal and physical attacks and one episode of police abuse. The report included seventy-seven anti-LGBTQ campaigns and episodes of denial of service, community aggressions, institutional exclusions, hate speech, and discrimination in media. Due to these events, MOVILH has named the past year "the year of rage" against the members and activists of the LGBTQ community. During the year a "Freedom Bus" was launched and sponsored by an ultra-Catholic organization that actively works in opposition to the integration of sexual minorities. Yet, even though it is "the year of rage" the evolution of juridical LGBTQ rights is viewed as the most progressive in years, including the government of Michelle Bachelet promoting 107 rulings supporting the rights of sexual minorities (Al Día, 2018; MOVILH, 2018).

2.2.6. Marriage Equality on the Agenda

Former President Michelle Bachelet announced on the 28.th of August 2017 that Marriage equality will be on the agenda in the Chilean government the following years. In her speech President Bachelet said that it is not acceptable to limit love. On the other side of this law, without changing the opportunity for same sex couples to adopt it now as well opens the possibility to adopt their partner´s child[ren] (Baeza, 2017). 25th of November 2018 MOVILH organized a march to promote a gender-identity law and the legalization of same-sex marriage in alignment to the elections held autumn 2017 in November and December (MOVILH, 2017).

2.2.7. The first Christian Community of Sexual Diversity in Chile

> "CEGAL never pretended to be an alternative church for gays and lesbians, rather a community of formation of faith, prayer and the apostles (Juan Cornejo, President of CEGAL in Musskopf, 2012, p. 276).[5]

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[5] CEGAL nunca pretendeu ser uma igreja alternative de Gays e Lésbicas, señao uma comunidade de formação de fé, de oração e de apostolado (Juan Cornejo in Musskopf, 2012, p. 276). Portuguese, Brazil.

Comunidad Cristiana Ecuménica Gay-Lésbica (Christian Ecumenical Community for Gay and Lesbians: CEGAL) was the first religious organization for gays and lesbians in Chile. This group aimed at the development of human, spiritual and theological formation for gays and lesbians. CEGAL experienced eight years of promoting religious activities and events that included courses and services. In addition to religious activities the organization was engaged in work against HIV/AIDS where they trained counselors to have contact with private persons in different prisons. CEGAL was to be understood as a community and had no aim of develop into an independent church. CEGAL wanted to establish dialogue with various leaders of churches where they could emphasis on the theological change for its members (Musskopf, 2012, pp. 175-176). After this there have been other groups emerging as e.g., the Catholic *Testigo de Esperanza* (Testimony of Hope), the Mormon groups Affirmation and then the three Communities in this thesis, PADIS, IELCH and ICM (Information from collected data).

3. Theoretical perspectives

In the following Chapter I will present various theories that I will later use in the in the Chapters in which I present the findings and discussion. Several of these theories focus on recognition and identity, individually and in group, in addition to the safe-space private spheres. I will start by presenting the Theory of Recognition and Group Formation by Axel Honneth that focus on the external recognition of identity in relation to confirmation of identity. In addition, I also wish to include of the Ethics of Authenticity by Charles Taylor in which he discusses the feeling of right and wrong as an instrument as well as an obstacle for being true to oneself. Followed in the Chapter I will present the theory of Hidden Transcripts developed by James C. Scott focusing on subordinate groups and subcultures to communicate in private spaces unmonitored by the dominant elite.

3.1. Recognition and Authenticity

I will start by presenting the Theory of Recognition and Group Formation where Axel Honneth emphasis the external recognition of identity in relation to confirmation of identity. Following second, Charles Taylors theory of Authenticity and the inner voice of morals.

3.1.1. Recognition and the "I" in "We"

German philosopher Axel Honneth is currently the professor in the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University, and has been the Director at the Institute for Social Research at Goethe University in Frankfurt (Columbia University, 2018). In this section I will present his theoretical framework on the theory of recognition. Because recognition on individual and social group level are considered as crucial subjects in this thesis I have decided to merge his study on Social Group formation in the same section as individual recognition.

> The prospect of basic self-confidence is inherent in the experience of love; the prospect of self-respect, in the experience of legal recognition; and finally, the prospect of self-esteem, in the experience of solidarity (Honneth, 1996, p. 173).

Honneth provides his research on traditions that shows the essential role of mutual recognition in the process of self-realization. His theory found in *The Struggle for Recognition* (1996) is influenced by Hegelian theory of recognition and self-consciousness and social psychology theory by Georg Herbert Mead. Honneth emphasizes the significance of social relationships in both the development and continued maintenance of an individual identity. An individual's positive feeling of self and ability to realize one self, relies on the three modes of identity formation: self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem. These modes are based on love and friendship, being acknowledged as a citizen and build solidarity with others when sharing for example a project (Anderson, 1996, p. xi). Love is a crucial emotion in the development of self-confidence. Especially the love that is mutual, such as friendships. This mutual recognition creates self-confidence and trust in oneself and the capacity to express one´s desires and need without the fear of being abandoned. While love forms the basis of self-confidence, Honneth believes that self-respect is based on the rights and status one has as a being a citizen. Self-esteem on the other hand, merges from the individual´s involvement in civil society and solidarity with others. Togetherness creates solidarity (Anderson, 1996, pp. xii-xviii).

> The relation between the experience of recognition and one´s relation-to-self origins from the intersubjective structure of personal identity. The only way in which individuals are constituted as persons is by learning to refer to themselves, from the perspective of an approving or encouraging other, as beings with certain positive traits and abilities (Honneth, 1996, p. 173).

These three modes are maintained through interpersonal relations with others. Relationships where one receives and give recognitions from an individual one also recognizes. Recognition involves interpreting, sensing and understanding one´s needs as an independent individual. From the feeling of recognition, one achieves self-realization. These can happen through networks of shared values and solidarity within the worth of individual members of a community that can be acknowledged (Anderson, 1996, pp. xi-xiiii).

The forms of recognition associated with love, right and solidarity provide the intersubjective protection that safeguards the conditions for external and internal freedom, upon which the process of articulating and realizing individual life-goals without coercion (Axel Honneth, 1996, p. 174).

During his analysis of the theory of recognition, Honneth tries to find an approach where individuals do not feel afraid of being alone and feel self-confidence-, respect, and esteem, also in their independence. Honneth's explanation of the feeling of recognition can be understood as a mirror, the mirror being another individual recognizing the value and abilities of the person looking into the mirror. When an individual receives recognition from another person whom they also recognize, it creates the feeling of self- confidence-, respect-, and esteem (Honneth, 1996, p. 173). A confirmation of self: that one is worthy and that they feel as a part of something.

In Honneth´s further studies of recognition he has developed a theoretical framework concerning recognition in social groups. In this theoretical framework he analyzes the need individuals have to seek what is similar to one self. Groups that represent the mirror of one's need, which lead to original recognition. Development of personality (self-esteem) emerge from the feeling that one´s skills and judgements are valuable to others. Honneth reflects that the importance of being part of a social group might be because of one´s need to develop self-esteem through other individuals with equal status and who are in similar situations (Honneth, 2012, p. 207).

"I" seeks the "We" of shared group experience, because even after maturity, we are dependent on the forms of social recognition imbued with direct encouragement and affirmation (Axel Honneth, 2012, p. 214).

Social groups and the individuals that are a part of these, have characteristics of diversity. These various characteristics can involve reflections of hopes and fears, expectations and concerns that influence individuals through the experience of coming together to form a solid and constant group. Because of shared values, participation and situations, a social group can contribute to personal growth and identity development. The way Honneth describes the function of a social group it can be understood as a social instrument that helps individuals to achieve personal stability and inner freedom (Honneth, 2012, pp. 203-205). Recognition depends on the individual's experience of social acceptance and demonstrates why human beings pursue participation in various forms of social communities.

To describe why people, pursue recognition Honneth gives the example of the socialization between a child and its caretaker that generates individual growth. This way Honneth dears to assumes that the role a social group plays can be similar, because the through the group the individual receives recognition. To achieve and develop a positive relation-to-oneself the individual needs to feel recognized as a member and as a participant within a social group with people similar to themselves. In these groups, with people in similar situations individuals receive constant affirmation of their needs and of their skills in communication with others. Individuals need to be given constant reliable affection in order to retain and strengthen their self-confidence. This constant affection that is obtained is encountered in relationships of love and friendships (Honneth, 2012, pp. 205-206). If individuals experience denial in their status as a legal person, they tend to depend on social groups. If the state does not recognize them as a full-fledged citizen, a social group can offer a sort of redeeming respect to their members. The group support and motivates individuals in becoming conscious of their value and being. (Honneth, 2012, p. 206). In conclusion to Honneth´s theory of recognition and the individual´s an individual achieve self-confidence through interpersonal relation that are based on mutual recognition, as well as the solidarity in being with individuals of equal status increasing one´s self-esteem. In addition, it helps the individual to experience personal growth and development of identity.

The purpose of introducing the theory of Recognition and the "I" in "WE" is because it is crucial in understanding the informants need in pursuing these Christian Communities of sexual diversity and why these may have been an instrument in their journey to recognizing the self and develop self-esteem and self-confidence in their own identity and faith.

3.1.2. The Ethics of Authenticity

In this section I will introduce the theory of Ethics of Authenticity by Charles Taylor, in which he discusses the feeling of right and wrong as an instrument as well as an obstacle for being true to oneself.

The Canadian philosopher and professor Charles Taylor is known for his studies on the modern self, and Huffington post have said he has reshaped debates of what it is to be human. Taylor has global influence as a Catholic thinker. The focus of what it means "to be a person"

involving authenticity and recognition is the theme that is present in most of Taylors work (Calhoun, 2016).

Charles Taylor`s theory on the *Ethics of Authenticity* (1991) works to explain a person's yearning of being true to themselves and expressing their authentic individuality (Fielder & Ezzy, 2018, p. 61). Taylor emphasizes how the ethic of authenticity is something that has been developed in the modern time. In describing the development of authenticity, we need to go back to the beginning of its starting point in the eighteenth-century. During this time authenticity was the notion that human beings are gifted with a moral sense. This moral sense is an intuitive and internal feeling of right and wrong. The initial essence of this doctrine was to oppose the rival perspective and understand the various consequences of right and wrong, especially those morals that was rewarded and punished, in the sense of for example hell versus heaven, and that made it attached to our emotions and how we act. Here, the concept of authenticity is created by rearranging the moral accent. Taylor calls this the displacements of moral accent, which happens when one listens to their independent and moral understanding. In the original view the voice from within is important considering it informs us of the right choice to make. By listening to our inner voice or "gut" we are being in correspondence with our inner moral feelings. Living in correspondence with inner moral feelings would be important as an instrument in acting truly towards yourself in different matters. What makes it difficult is what this inner moral feelings are influenced by (Taylor, 1991, pp. 25-26).

> What I´m calling the displacement of the moral accent comes about when being in touch takes on independence and crucial moral significance. It comes to be something we have to attain to be true and full human being (Charles Taylor, 1991, p. 27).

Taylor relates the displacement of the moral accents to the earlier perspectives on morality. In these earlier moral perspectives communication with a source as for example God or something good or divine was believed as essential of being a fulfilled being. The difference between the earlier moral view and now, is that today the source we have correspondence with is deep within us. This view does not exclude the possibility of communication of morals with God or another greater power or source, which also is considered as an instrument for people (Taylor, 1991, p. 27).

I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else´s. But this gives a new importance to being true to myself. If I am not, I miss the point of my life, I miss what being human is for *me* (Charles Taylor, 1991, p. 29).

Taylor uses the term self-determining freedom to explain the idea that one is free when one decides for themselves what concerns them, and which is not shaped by external influences. Self-determining freedom challenges one to separate the hold of all external burdens and gives the opportunity to decide for oneself alone. This is one of the crucial ideas of authenticity. Being true to oneself and one´s originality and defining oneself is profound in understanding ideal of authenticity, through which you reach the achievement of self-fulfillment and self-realization (Taylor, 1991, pp. 28-29).

The purpose of Taylors theoretical framework of Authenticity will be important with regard to the informant's journey in accepting their true identity and faith. In comparison to the life before and after being honest about how they feel and about their attraction to people of the same-sex.

3.2. Private versus Public

In this section I will introduce the James C. Scott`s theory of Hidden Transcripts to illustrate the separation and difference between public and pirate space.

3.2.1. Hidden Transcripts

James C. Scott is currently the Sterling Professor of Political Science and Professor of Anthropology and is Director of the Agrarian Studies Program at Yale University. In addition, Scott is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Some of the main themes included in Scott`s studies have emphasized on political economy, theories on resistance, hegemony and class relations to name a few (Yale University, 2018).

Scott is using hidden transcripts to explain the relation between public and private space. Sexuality and sexual identity are very much present in the private spheres, while it was not as visible in the public sphere. In consideration to Scotts concept of private versus public spaces, one can clearly see what is meant by so called "safe-spaces". The space one can be safe where there is

no need to hide opinions, sexuality or religion. I will not use Scotts theory as a method of resistance, but rather to distinguish what happens in the public and private rooms and space in the relation to the Christian Communities of sexual diversity and experiences of informants of everyday life.

In the *Domination and the Art of Resistance* (1990), Scott introduces his theory of hidden transcripts. Hidden transcripts are an approach marginalized groups make use of which takes place "offstage" from the public and its power holders; in the case of the research, the heteronormative influence. Scott uses theater concepts of "onstage", "offstage" and "masks" to compare what contrasts the private and public sphere. These hidden transcripts are made of "offstage" gestures, speech, and practices that recognizes, contradict and modify what takes place "onstage" in the public. The "onstage" practices as Scott imply are the public transcripts of the ruling. What the majority and those in charge of expectations and norms that compel the performance of others. The public transcripts are designed to recognize and normalize the influence of the norm and the values the ruling elite create in the society (Scott, 1990, p. 18). The produced hidden transcripts are created for a different audience and are under different influence than the public. The marginalized groups that are a part of a hidden transcript can wear "masks" when in the presence of power, and later take the "mask" "off" in private where the expression of the hidden transcripts is secure (Scott, 1990, pp. 4-11). In public, the marginalized act in a way they know is expected from them, even if they have different opinions than the public in the private hidden room (Scott, 1990, p. 136).

> By definition, the hidden transcripts represent discourse – gesture, speech, practices – that is ordinarily excluded from the public transcript of subordinates by the exercise of power. The practice of domination then *creates* the hidden transcript (Scott, 1990, p. 27).

The locations of the hidden transcripts in social settings are where the ruling culture cannot reach out to the marginalized subculture. In these social locations, anger, bitterness and emotions create relations between individuals that feel repressed. For the hidden transcript to have its full function, two conditions need to be fulfilled. First, when it is voiced in a social isolated place, it is where the observation and control from the ruling is out of reach. Following second, when the people in the social location are persons with similar experience of domination. The first of these conditions permit the marginalized to talk openly and freely about their experience and opinions, while the second condition create room for matters of discussion in their collective subordination (Scott, 1990. pp. 120-121).

The social location of the public transcripts is situated in the public sphere where marginalized are present with the ruling norms. The social location for the hidden transcripts are where subordinates gather in unauthorized, unmonitored secret and safe place. These unpatrolled social private spheres can take place in the privacy in someone's home, or in social places such as a tavern, pub or chapel that the marginalized subculture claims. The illustration of hidden transcripts takes place unpatrolled physical locations and time off from the ruling (Scott, 1990, pp. 121–122). The marginalized change between the public and the private sphere as if it were two different worlds where the one world belongs to the ruling elite, and the other the "offstage world of subordinates" (Scott, 1990, p. 191).

> "Groups which are at the lower end of the Archimedes in relation to social conventions, both in respect to external order and in respect to the common opinions. Since these groups are not bound by social conventions they are capable of an original attitude towards the meaning of cosmos" (Max Weber Cited by Scott, 1990, p. 124).

Scott explains that engagement in debates creates the bond of the marginalized communities and is crucial in developing and strengthening these bonds. Furthermore, Scott explains that the approach of domination produces possibilities for the development of a hidden transcript. How these hidden transcripts are produced depends on the size of subordinates and support the expansion of the power field. The creation of a hidden transcripts that remain solid and strong and are advocated by the existence of the cultural and social barriers that exist between the subordinates and the dominant elites (Scott, 1990, p. 132).

Scotts emphasizes how the relation between the hidden transcripts divided by the members of one marginalized group. The inequality between the action that happens in the public and the events taking place in the private depends on the graveness of the domination and influence. Communities that fall into the marginalized groups creates a unified, yet distinctive, subculture with the use of codes, myth, heroes and social standards, or other values, morals and demands. By creating this kind of subculture, the social setting or location where the hidden transcripts are developed are places for gathering with the bond of the marginalized, and the wish to maintain the ruling elite at a distance. However, by isolating a subculture in the private sphere or setting, the emergence of a "us versus them" social perspective can be a possible risk (Scott, 1990, pp. 134-135).

The purpose of Scotts notion of Hidden Transcripts will be used in the chapters of Findings and Discussion. Scotts separation of the private and public sphere will be illustrated, discussed and highlighted in the findings regarding the secrecy of the Christian Communities of sexual diversity, with regards to hidden identity, experiences of coming out and communication between the community and their members.

3.3. Respectability

In this section I will introduce the theoretical framework of the Respectable Queer and how this could be a presence in the LGBTQ-community, specifically in these Christian Communities.

3.3.1. Respectable Queerness

> "Respectable queerness" – suggests that the newfound public recognition of gay people and relationships is contingent upon their acquiring a respectable social identity that is actually constituted by public performances of respectability and by privately queer practices (Joshi, 2012, p. 416).

Yuvraj Joshi (2012) holds a law degree from Yale Law School and University College of London, with earlier he has experience as a fellow in Human Right Watch where he was advocating for LGBTQ-issues and rights. Joshi has published several academic journals in Columbia Human Rights Law Review, Stanford Law review and The Guardian. Joshi advocates for policies promoting equality for sexual minorities, as well as juridical independence and juridical diversity (Lambda Legal, 2018).

Joshi has developed a theoretical framework of the notion *Respectable Queerness* which focuses on the matter of same-sex marriage. Here I will use the most relevant aspects of this framework, not taking the concept of gay marriage into consideration, but only the emphasis on who is the Respectable Queer.

Joshi starts his framework with introducing the difference between the concept of respect and respectability. The notions contrast with one another because respect is something you give, which is deserved, and respectability is the expression of being correct, proper, and socially

acceptable. A person that is respected can get the feeling of social worth because they are treated in a way that recognizes them. One is giving respect and the other one is behaving in a respectable manner. Respectability is about acting according to the public norm. Respectability and what is viewed as socially acceptable involves a consequence in creating a distinction between oneself and those who do not fit into the public norm. That way the notion of respectability creates a system of hierarchy and ruling that is based on differences between the "good" and "bad; the respectable versus the immoral. To achieve respectability is through mundane behavior of social norms the society considers respectable (Joshi, 2012, p. 419).

> It is constituted by performative acts that align one´s behavior with social norms that are gendered, white, middleclass and heterosexual (Joshi, 2012, p. 419).

There is however a separation in how one person behaves in public and what a person does in private. There are distinctive aspects of living out one´s private and public selves. When gays and lesbians are justifying their status in the public sphere, they have to camouflage or restrain the aspects of their queer identity that does not seem to fit into how one is seen as respectable. Sexuality is constructed as something taking place in private and therefore is not to be visible in the public sphere. During the era of anti-sodomy laws because of fear of state-punishment, being respectable then implied queers to act straight or asexual in public, while their same-sex attraction and practices remained private (Joshi, 2012, pp. 446-448).

> It can be understood in a functional sense as a kind of coping mechanism for lesbians and gays confronted with the demands of respectability; it enables them to cultivate a publicly respectable social identity, while privately maintaining their queer identity (Joshi, 2012, p. 448).

Joshi reflects that some of the core values that have influenced queer liberation and movements are solidarity between the identities in sexual diversity that together struggle for justice regardless of their differences. By differentiating being "respectable" and "non-respectable" queers, as Joshi defines it can result in losing these ethics. Therefore, Joshi expresses that queer movements must seek to protect these values in order to challenge the heterosexism and homophobia that penetrate the public world (Joshi, 2012, p. 454). Another consequence of establishing moralistic hierarchies is that it can intensify after for example same-sex marriage, is nourishing moralizing discourse.

Where on the one side there are "respectable" queers who criticize other queers for representing the LGBTQ community in a negative way and view them as morally disgraceful. This moralizing can go both ways for those who are conservative queers and those who view those "as selling out" the queer identity to get respect. However, the moralizing is still not equal because the *Respectable Queers* have the power of heteronormative hegemony behind their moral judgments" (Joshi, 2012, pp. 459-460).

What Yurvaj Joshi has developed is the framework around respectability between queers. The aim with this framework theory about respectability is to illustrate that within marginalized groups it is possible to develop certain power-structures that differentiate them from one another.

The purpose of presenting the theoretical framework of *Respectable Queerness* in this Chapter will be used during the chapter of findings and discussion. This theoretical framework will be highlighted when presenting the data collected based on the prejudice toward the secular LGBTQ community, within sexual diversity and masculinity.

4. Methodology

In the following Chapter I will present the various qualitative methods used while conducting this research. Each paragraph will start with a brief introduction to the given method, thereafter I will present how I used these and why I chose the different solutions for the various methods.

4.1. Previous Research

There has been lot of research about religion and sexuality in both sociological, religious and theological disciplines. Perhaps the most influenced are the philosophers Michel Foucault with *The History of Sexuality* (1984) and Judith Butler with *Gender Trouble* (1990). They created the ground for the development of Queer Theory. Other scholars that have contributed in the area of religious studies in relation to LGBTQ-identity and Christianity are Edward J. Sumerau, Yvette Taylor, Donald Boisvert, Bronwyn Fielder, Douglas Ezzy, Melissa Wilcox and John Boswell. The Metropolitan Community Church have been part of several case-studies in US and in Australia by some of the scholars that I just mentioned. Topics that involve Queer Theology and Queer Theory are popular, and several studies and researches have been conducted in relation to studies focusing religion and homosexuality. There is not only within Christianity and Christian communities these kinds of studies have been conducted. There are also scholars that have emphasized on Islam and homosexuality, with similar focus on authenticity, recognition and experience.

Following, I will mention a few different studies by scholars that have conducted similar qualitative researches that have influenced the planning and construction of this study. During Chapter 7 I will correlate some of their findings from their research into the discussion in this thesis.

Assistant Professor in sociology at university of Tampa J. Edward Sumerau has conducted a similar study. In the journal articles *"Some of Us Are Good, God-Fearing Folks"* (2014) and "They just Don´t Stand for Nothing" (2016) Sumerau writes about a fieldwork conducted in a church affiliated with the United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in the US with the duration of thirty-six months. During the research interviewed and observed members, services

and bible-study groups and so forth. After the time in field was finished, he has published several journals regarding the experience of being Christian and identify as gay and lesbian and the internal and external struggles regarding that identity and participation in Church (Sumerau, 2011, 2014).

Postdoctoral researcher Bronwyn Fielder and Professor of Sociology Douglas Ezzy from University of Tasmania have written *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexuals and Transgender Christians* (2017) about their qualitative study regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Christians in Australia and their journey and struggle to live accept their authentic selves. Later in Chapter 7 I will use their findings in relation to the shaken world of two identities and the possibility of unifying them (Fielder and Ezzy, 2017).

Professor Yvette Taylor from Starclyde University has conducted several researches focusing of women`s and gender studies. In *Making Space for Queer-Identifying Religious Youth* (2016) conducted a helpful study related to creating safe-space for religious LGBTQ-youth and she emphasizes to combine youth studies, with religion and sexuality. Where she utilizes and illustrate different approaches to help LGBTQ-youth live in authentically whit themselves and their religion. Taylor focuses on creating a safe-space for religious youth to express their religious and sexual identity, as for example the term that I will later use in relation to reconciliation of identity, the notion of "spaces of reconciliation" (Taylor, 2016).

Lastly, is a study conducted by Associate Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies at Emory university, Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle. In *Living Out Islam* (2014) Kugle emphasize the experience of gay, lesbian and transgendered Muslims in different secular countries; United States, South Africa, the Netherlands and United Kingdom. Kugle observed support groups for LGBTQ-Muslims where they strived and learned how to live out Islam simultaneously recognizing their sexual and gender identity. As well as how they confront their religious traditions, find compassion within Islam and challenges the norms (Kugle, 2014, 22).

4.1. Case Study

A case study is a study that include one or just a few study units. These study units can include a person, a family, an organization or a specific society and so forth. The goal of the study is not to generalize, but to analyze. The researcher can choose a case study that is considered unique or as

common. In these types of studies and use of methods the researcher is interested in processes in how a particular phenomenon develops and enhance itself. The use of qualitative methods is the most common approach that includes in-depth interviews or/and different forms of observation (Halvorsen, 2008, p. 105).

This case-study is based in Santiago, the capital of Chile. The duration of this case-study was seven weeks. During this time, I observed three different Christian Communities of sexual diversity (as mentioned in the introduction chapter). I participated in various events, workshops and masses and interviewed several members of each of these Communities. Two *pastorales* (groups that connected to a church or are independent) and one official church, however a quite intimate community. These three Communities are Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical Lutheran sects of Christianity. The data for this research was collected by attending various events and observation and interviewing members from each community.

4.2. Arriving in the Field

Before leaving Norway the amount of contacts and informants collected was not the amount I thought I would end up with, nor the actual preferred informants I was looking for. Before I left I had contact with two Pastors in the *Iglesia Evangelica Luterana* and a contact outside of the Church that would help me get in contact with members from PADIS and *Grupo de la Diversidad* (IELCH). Therefore, I was relying on the snowball-effect, a method used when relying on one contact or informant and that contact can help the researcher find other informants that qualify for the study (Johannessen, Tufte and Christoffersen, 2011, p. 109). Before arriving Chile, I already had knowledge about ICM, The Metropolitan Community Church, however I was unable to contact them. When I arrived, I continued trying to contact ICM on Facebook since they were the only Church out of the Christian Communities of sexual diversity that had a semi-open group online in addition to a hidden one. The snowball-effect went better than I expected and the people that I was already communicating with gave me advice and further contacts to reach out to other informants. For example, I met with a gay couple the first week I was there, they gave me Tomas´s number and texted him "Is it okay if Sara text you now to schedule an interview?", when I got green light I sent that message to Tomas, and he was the one who got me into the community from there.

The first week in Santiago I met with the informants I had contacted before leaving Norway, and the second week in I started conducting interviews with various informants from various the three different communities. By going to the masses and meet-up events held by the *pastorales* I got in contact with people that I was looking for, for this particular study.

4.3. Qualitative Research

Research concerning religion and sexual orientation and identity are sensitive matters for many, therefore I preferred using qualitative research methods. This research is not about "yes" and "no" questions, but about personal experiences, sexual identity and faith. Therefore, I would not receive the same data using quantitative research methods. I emphasized in using in-depth interviews and open conversations with informants, included participant observation as method. Because of the subject's sensitivity I needed to gain both the trust of Christian Communities of sexual diversity and the informants. Therefore, it was important to participate in events and masses as well as share my story and experience. I will now describe the different methods used in this research more carefully. I have interviewed ten informants and observed seven to ten observations of reflection groups/ bible-study, masses and services.

4.3.1. Qualitative Research Interviews

The intention in qualitative research interviews is to seek an understanding of the world from the informant´s perspective and to illustrate the significance of their experiences. In research interviews, we have conversations with people because we want to know how they describe their experiences and how they articulate their choice of action. Research interviews requires strong communication skills, and the ability to really listen. There are many types of conversation in everyday life, varying from light conversation, to discussion and deep conversations about personal life and, experiences and thoughts. Different forms of interviews have distinct purposes; journalist interviews are interested in register and to report important events in society, and research

interviews wish to produce knowledge about a specific phenomenon (Bringmann & Kvale, 2015, pp. 30-31).

To conduct this research, I decided to use semi-structured interviews with an interview guide or various bullet-points I had to go through. This was the appropriate method to use because I wanted to receive information beyond the core questions, in addition to the informant's emphasis on various topics concerning this research. Because of this reason I brought a note with different matters and questions I had specialized for the specific informants. These questions and bullet points of topics were collected from either my interview-guide and/or issues that were highlighted in other interviews.

4.3.2. Semi Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interview is a method in-between structured and unstructured interviews. According to Brinkmann (2013) this type of interviews is the most widespread in human and social science. In semi-structured-interviews there is a potential of knowledge-producing dialogues because there is more room for the researcher to ask following up questions to what the informant consider important in his or her answers and responses. By using semi-structured interviews, the researcher does not hide behind an interview guide, but are much more visible and present in the conversation. By adding follow-up questions, the researcher has the potential to focus the conversation on topics that the researcher finds important for the project (Brinkmann, 2013, p. 21).

I chose to use the semi-structured interview approach because as will be shown in the Chapter 6 where I present the findings, along the way during the research in Santiago, patterns that did not consider before leaving occurred. New patterns resulted in changing the interview-guide that was pre-made, and I focused more on the essential question about their experience coming out, attending a Community of sexual diversity, the importance and the crossroad between faith and identity. During the interview I had a lot of follow-up questions. This created the interview almost as an open conversation with bullet-points. However, the dialogues during the interviews were fluid and I was a part of the conversation rather than being too focused on asking question chronologically. I asked the question in order with direction the interview was taking, allowing the informants focused on during their answers.

4.3.3. Observation – Participant as Observer

There are four diverse types of observation methods that arepossible to use. 1) complete observer, 2) participant as observer, 3) observer as participant and 4) complete participant. The observation methods used for this study was observing as participant. This observation method requires the researcher to engage and build rapport with the group, and to observe through participation in group activities. In this type of observation method, the status as a researcher is made clear to the participants in the group. In this method the researcher needs to be open about why they are participating for research and capturing their observation as collected data (Nicholls, Mills & Kotecha, 2014, p. 103).

This observation method was crucial during this research; I attended services, study-groups and other events. My status as researcher was public and everyone knew about it. Being a participant as observer also made my informants comfortable and I gained their trust. When the group opened to share their experience, I as well had to share when participating

During this research, I was invited to observe and participate in group-discussion and events about Christianity and sexual identity. These events took place both with IELCH and ICM. Topics were presented, and questions were asked from the priests and coordinator for members. Participants shared their thoughts and discussed the different matters and questions. During these group-sessions there were also people sharing their coming-out story or struggles with guilt and fully accepting who they are in God. While listening, sharing and taking notes I gained a better understand of the main focus of these three faith communities and that was educating about love and about homosexuality in the Bible.

4.4. Interview Guide

Before arriving in the field, I constructed a draft for the interview-guide. Constructing a draft gave the opportunity to be flexible and to change directions if the research did not go in the direction I

was expecting. By using semi-structured interviews, an interview-guide had to be developed. The questions have to be open and give room for what the interviewee considers important to them. The interview-guide is also created to point out the questions that are important for the research that I am conducting.

The pre-constructed interview-guide in separated into different categories. The different categories are separated into topics: the Christian Community of sexual diversity, identity, LGBTQ rights and experience in Chile and safe-spaces to name but a few. The other categories are divided into whom the informants were, e.g. persons that are Christian and identify as LGBTQ, leaders of the church and *pastoral*, organizations and persons that are LGBTQ yet does no attend one specific church anymore, and straight priests. I was doubting whether or not I should only follow the questions from pre-prepared interview-guide, however quite soon I realized that I had to be more flexible because my informants (gay or straight) had different interpretations of the questions. For several of the interviews I arrived with a note with keywords of matters I wanted to learn more about, this also allowed them to interpret the questions when asking about the various topics. Basic "getting to know the person" questions were always asked at the beginning of each interview.

4.5. Selection of Informants

When constructing the criteria when selecting informants, I had to be open or flexible to the possibility that I would not get in direct contact with the different Christian Communities of sexual diversity. Including the possibility that no one would want to participate in this research. I was expecting that finding lesbian and gay persons that would participate would be more challenging, yet it was easier than my expectations. When I first manage to get in contact with the Communities they suggested who I could talk to as well as offered themselves.

The majority of the informants in this study are gay men and a few lesbian women. I did not manage to get in contact with people identifying as transgendered or bisexual people. The explanation for this is that my focus was on these Christian Communities that are not just inclusive in an open sense, but specifically created for people with various sexual orientation outside of the heteronormative. It was also much more difficult to come in contact with women, because the

representation of lesbian women was lower than for gay men. The imbalance between the visibility between queer men and women was similar in all three communities.

I had to use different digital platforms such as Facebook, e-mail and Tinder to find informants at one point. I used Tinder because I wanted to get in contact with more queer women since the majority of my informants were male and as a back-up plan if the research did not go the direction I expected. When writing to women on Tinder I first explained why I am in Santiago and if they had any advice or knowledge about the subject. For me this was the key into the more private world of apps and chat-groups that were not public to the majority. Especially among lesbian women both engaged in Christian environments and those who did not. The main difference here was that the women attending PADIS, Iglesia ICM and Grupo IELCH had a potential place to meet, and those who were not in these kinds of groups had nowhere to meet people in similar situations regarding faith and identity.

4.6. Transcription

All interviews were held in Spanish. Before I went down I decided to transcribe all interviews myself to enhance my own fluency of the language, and to achieve a greater depth to the content of my interviews. Transcription took a lot of time, much longer than anticipated. Doing the transcriptions, myself only helped me get to know the data on a deeper level and I was able to have a more nuanced understanding of the informant's experiences. At some point I was in doubt if I could complete all the transcriptions in time and was considering hiring help. I managed to complete all interview-transcriptions in good time to start writing the finding for this thesis.

The interviews were conducted in different public and private places. Depending on their schedule and for the interview was planned locations varied from cafes, homes, bars, churches and parks. Places with more people present had more noise and made the recordings more difficult to transcribe, versus the interviews with less background-noise. I gave the informants instructions to wear a headset with microphone so that their voice would be as strong and clear as possible for the recoding.

4.7. Ethical Considerations

Sexual orientation and religion is still considered a difficult matter in Santiago, Chile. Therefore, it is important that the safety and information of my contacts are safe and anonymous. They will all have fictional names in this thesis. Some of the informants said that they were comfortable with their real names presented, still I am choosing to keep their actual names private and used fictional ones instead. In 4.7.1 and 4.7.2 I will explain more thorough what kind of ethical choices as researcher I had to take into consideration.

4.7.1. Informed Consent and Confidentiality

I waited until I received the approval of conducting this research from Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) before I started interviewing informants. Prior to the approval I had to upload a draft of the interview guide and a draft of the document of confidentiality that I would hand out to my informants.

Informed consent means that the participants in the given research are informed about the purposes and the main elements of the research-design and possible risks and benefits with participating. Informed consent is important to make sure that the informant participate voluntarily and the know their right to withdrawal from the study at any point. The informed consent can be an oral agreement or in written form (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 104).

Confidentiality in research refers to the consensus with the informants about how the data collected from the informants can be used. This requires that personal data that could identify the participants are not revealed. If there are information that are recognizable to other, the informant should have the understanding that identifiable information is published (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 106).

Before interviews were conducted the informants received a document of confidentiality. The document had information about the research, the researcher and confidentiality clause stating that their names and information would be kept anonymous. The information they gave during an interview will not contain any identifiable information, they were aware that participation was

voluntarily informants are and included information that participation was voluntarily and that they had permission to withdraw from the research at any time.

4.7.2. Role as Researcher

The researcher's role and integrity as person is crucial for the quality of scientific knowledge and is necessary for the ethical considerations and decisions one can meet while conducting qualitative research. Integrity, empathy, sensitivity and engagement in moral questions and actions are in connection to the responsibility and ethical behavior of the researcher. As well as the researcher's honesty, experience and sense of justice are also crucial factors in the quality of the conducted research. However, the researcher interpersonal communication with the informants can affect the interview object and their answers. Researchers who can identify themselves with the participants can influence the professional distance between the informant and the investigator. Researchers need to distinguish between professional distance and a relationship that becomes a personal friendship (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 108).

Before attending PADIS and *Grupo de la Diversidad* in IELCH I had to wait for a clear signal. ICM was a more open in the sense of availability, and the time of the services was informed on one of ICM's open Facebook groups. Before the initial service, I sent them a message informing them that I wanted to conduct a research about them. Without hearing from them first I showed up where the service was held. That resulted in me not finding the actual building, however a few days later they answered my messages and invited me to a workshop. While attending different events and focus-groups they had my title as researcher was acknowledged. I had to be particularly considerate and careful when asking for interviews in case they did not want to talk to me. In IELCH one of the leaders told the group that they could contact me or him after the event if they wanted to participate in an interview. In PADIS and ICM I was allowed to personally ask different people if they wanted to participate in an interview. The participants wanted to get to know me and asked me questions about this research: why I study religion and society as well as why I chose to travel to Chile. After this I could ask them if they wanted to participate with an interview. A respectful amount offered to participate without me asking, and some needed to feel more comfortable and ready to approach me instead. However, the majority of the informants were

relatively open, and sometimes they would ask me questions in response to my own, and I would answer then we would move on with the questions. For example, when I asked the men questions regarding why there are less queer women in these faith communities they were very curious to hear my thoughts on this issue and wanted to know if we have these types of religious communities back in Oslo.

4.8. Challenges and Dilemmas

When conducting any research, there is always challenges, limitations and dilemmas. Challenges were inevitable as this research was held in a foreign city and country (Santiago, Chile) and in different language that my first and second language, but in Spanish.

The concept of time is different here and the normal is to arrive later than the designated time. For example, when conducting a one on one interview the interviewee would be punctual. However, the challenge occurred when I had interviews that involved more than one informant at the time of observation – then the norm was to arrive anywhere twenty minutes to one hour and half hours after the scheduled time. Several times there was a time-gap between me showing up earlier than the informants and the misinformation or misunderstanding about what was considered a respectful time to arrive to a lunch, dinner and other events.

To give an example, when arriving to church services with ICM the official time said eleven thirty, yet the service itself could begin at that time, thirty minutes later, one hour or one hour and a half later. Because of this I tried several things; being punctual or arriving late, sometimes it went wrong and other times it went well. Still, not knowing exactly when the service would start or when it would end made it difficult to schedule other interview or events later than same day.

Expectations from the informants is a challenge. In one of my interviews with two female priests it seemed that they were more focused on domestic violence during the interview, despite giving them information about the topic prior to the interview. I interviewed them twice, because the first interview was not entirely what I had expected (it was also my first interview in the field). however, the second one was much better and informative. After interviewing members of the various LGBTQ-faith communities, I scheduled a new interview with the two female priests with

better and more focused questions than I had in the first interview). several interviews I had to bring the informant back to the main topic because the focus was shifting to a different direction.

During this research I was hoping to conduct a group interview, however did not happen. Yet, two times it occurred unexpectedly in the way that when I planned an interview separately from two informants (who knew each other) suddenly the informants wanted to join the interview together. Still I had the opportunity to ask the questions I planned, and both were eager to answer and discuss them. While listening to their thoughts and experiences, I received a lot of useful information of different issues that I used later in interviews to gain more knowledge and understanding. Two interviews including two informants where were conducted during this research. Isabela and Rafaela whom I interviewed two times and then Romina and Paulina. Despite the surprize-interview accompanied by two informants, I have chosen not to call it a focus group or group interview because I did not actively try to start a debate and see how their interactions with each other.

4.8.1. Linguistic Challenges

Because Spanish is the national language of Chile, all communication was held in Spanish. Chilean´s are known for using a lot of slang and talk incredibly fast. This resulted in me sometimes having to ask a question a second time if I did not understand a few words during their answer. However, through daily communication my comprehension improved, and I was able to more quickly translate the interviews in Chilean Spanish.

There were a few problems transcribing the field interviews as some Chilean slang words do not exists in any dictionary, and in also not known to every Chilean citizen. The Chilean Spanish in words and accent is quite different from its neighboring Spanish-speaking countries as well as Spain. During the research people kept saying that in Chile they don't speak "Spanish", they speak "Chilean". A lot of slang made it difficult to translate some sentences and made the comprehension of some sentences more complicated. At the starting point this research my Spanish was not as strong, however the language skills became much better and my confidence increased the more I spoke with people. During the two first two interviews I conducted, there were times when the informants took the lead and started talking about topics not related to this specific research. This

changed after my Spanish communicative skill improved. The more interviews I held the more confident I became with language, and the more they wanted to know about this research.

4.9. Coding the Data

The most common approach for coding in research methods in social science is by categorizing the collected data from the interviews. The researcher reads through the material and take aside quotes and paragraphs that are relevant for the research report. Then they categorize the data. Data that belongs in the same category can be recoded or combined with other codes. The various categories depending on the data collected can be developed prior or during the coding. The aim with coding is to develop different categories that discover the experiences and actions of the informants and the case. During this the researcher collect similarities and dissimilarities from the research that leads to new data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, pp. 227-228).

After I was done transcribing the interviews I conducted in Santiago, I wrote down topics and divided the data into different categories. These categories involved sexuality and machismo, identity and religion, coming out experience, discrimination and prejudice, secrecy and relation to the secular LGBTQ community. When reading through the transcriptions I used different colors as codes for different topics of the categories. For example, the color purple was the code for everything regarding the faith community, while the color pink regarded the matter machismo. After coloring an entire document divided the paragraphs as answers depending on the color into different documents. These documents represented the different categories with the different color-codes from the various informants. After dividing the data into categories I went through it again and highlighted the font of the quotes that I wanted to use in the presentation of findings that I considered important in the understanding of their experience and reflections.

4.10. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability is regarding to what extent the collected data is trustworthy and credible. This can be related to our everyday language such as for example "your passport is not valid" or

"that newspaper is not reliable". Reliability involve the consistency and the credibility of the collected data-result for the research. Reliability is often worked with in relation to the research question and whether one can reproduce the similar results by other researchers in another time. One can for example question reliability in leading questions during interviews. Validity is characterized by for example the truth of statements and its correctness and strength. Validity in social science involves whether methods used in the research is suitable in the research it is going to be used (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015, pp. 275-276).

This study is reliable due to the fact that I earlier introduced similar studies conducted by other researchers with similar outcome as this. However, this research stands out because it is conducted in Santiago. During interviews I noticed that informants quite often had the same kind of reflections and thoughts regarding their identity, faith and community without attending the same group. Before going and during this research I was thinking about the research method that I had chosen for this investigation. If I had decided to do a quantitative study I would not have achieved the same understanding nor had those deep conversations with the informants that participated in this research. Considering I also did the transcription of the interviews as well the translation of the quotations, the reliability and validity of this research is strong.

4.11. Concluding Remarks

The reason for such a detailed methodology chapter was to include the reader to understand and be aware of the different challenges, decisions, thoughts and choices I had prior, during and post-fieldwork. I hope this chapters gives a clear presentation and understanding of how I have worked with this research in the field and can relate it to the proceedings of how I present the findings in Chapter 5 and six.

5. The Christian Communities of Sexual Diversity

In the following Chapter I will present the three different Christian Communities of sexual diversity I had contact with for this research. I will first give an introduction of the communities and their main visions and values, following a map of informants at the end of the chapter.

5.1. Pastoral de la Diversidad Sexual (PADIS)

PADIS is short for *Pastoral de la Diversidad Sexual* (Pastoral of Sexual Diversity) and is a community that welcomes and supports Catholics of with LGBTQ identity. PADIS is a place for people that are searching for spirituality and community. It is a community that wants to encounter the love of God and the inspiration to follow Jesus Christ. It exists as an inclusive, welcoming, kind and diverse way of life, and is a living testimony of faith and service to the Church (PADIS, 2018).

PADIS started meeting in 2007 and became an official *pastoral* (group) 2010 and was the first *comunidad* (community) for gays and lesbians in Chile recognized by the law of the Catholic Church. In the beginning there were only a small group of gay Catholic men that met once a week and talked about spirituality and faith. They met without having to hide their identity and they shared their problems. PADIS grew rapidly and the first mass with just fifteen people at the first event, then twenty- five, and then around eighty members today (Aldeda, 2017).

There areeighty members in PADIS, but only around fifty of them participating actively. PADIS have *Misas* (Masses) twice a month and the time and place are published on social media just a few days before the mass is held. There are two communities*,* one is located with a group in Chile´s capital Santiago and one in the city of Valparaiso. Before the mass (held on Saturdays) they gather in *Comunidades de Vida* (Life-groups) where they talk about life and have conversations about faith, spirituality and homosexuality. The first time a person attends a mass with PADIS they need an invitation either through Facebook, e-mail or through a friend that also attends the masses ("Tomas", 02.11.2017).

5.1.1. Grupo de Padres de PADIS

The *Grupo de Padres de PADIS* is a community that exists for mothers and fathers who seek a community to help grow a broader and better understanding about sexual diversity. They accompany their children in the process of acceptance and integration of their sexual identity. This group is also a space for parents who are looking for support. Padres PADIS is a safe-place with an atmosphere of respect and confidentiality, where everyone can share their family experiences. The aim of this community is to develop a total inclusion of diversity within sexual orientation (PADIS, 2018). *Grupo de Padres de PADIS* gives opportunity to Catholic parents with LGBTQ-children to learn, discuss and understand how homosexuality and religion work together, at the same time get to know other parents in the same situation ("Oscar", 20.11.2017).

5.2. ICM Casa De Emmaus

"I am not free while people remains enslaved"
(From Thanksgiving Prayer of ICM, told by "Matias").[6]

We are a global movement of spiritually and sexually diverse
people who are fully awake to God's enduring love
(Quote Metropolitan Community Chuches, 2018).

ICM Casa de Emmaus (*Iglesia de la Comunidad Metropolitana*) is a part of the global Church Movement Metropolitan Community Churches (MCC). MCC was founded in 1968 and has since its beginning has addressed important human rights issues such as; homophobia, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression. The Church has also been active in the fight for marriage and LGBTQ equality movements in nations worldwide. Today, MCC is present in thirty-three nations. Fifteen of these nations are in Latin America. The core values that MCC represent are inclusion, justice, community and spiritual transformation (Metropolitan Community Churches, 2018).

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[6] Yo no soy libre mientras que una persona sigue haciendo esclava (ICM Oración de Agradecía, ("Matias, ICM")

ICM Casa de Emmaus Chile was founded in Santiago in 2013 and held their first service in March 2014. ICM is led by two priests, one is gay and one transgender. Together they work to build a different Church that welcomes everyone without distinction and discrimination. The core message of ICM Casa de Emmaus is that God does not exclude, but radically includes in the coexistence based on the gospel, and that God loves everyone for exactly who they are (Cristianos Gay, 07.02.2018).

The Church is a diverse Church for everyone, not only for queer Christians. ICM itself identify their Church as inclusive to everyone who has ever felt oppressed or not included in other Churches. Their services take place every Sunday at eleven thirty in the middle of the center of Santiago, just a few blocks from a metro-station. When I participated there, there was among five members on regular basis, however in earlier days there were up to thirty people attending the services on regular basis ("Matias", 17.11.2017).

5.3. Grupo de la Diversidad (IELCH)

"We have no problems to publicly announce that we are a church who
supports the inclusion of sexual diversity ("Isabela, IELCH").[7]"

Grupo de la Diversidad is a group in one of the congregations of the *Iglesia Evangelica Luterana en Chile* (IELCH). IELCH is a member of the Lutheran World Foundation (Lenski, 2018). During the analysis and thesis *Grupo de la Diversidad* will be referred to as IELCH when writing about them into this thesis.

Grupo de la Diversidad gives the opportunity to share experiences on being Christian for those who identify as LGBTQ. They use an educative approach so that LGBTQ-people can learn about sexual diversity and Christianity, in addition the group is open for heterosexual people too attend if they want to learn and understand sexual diversity. IELCH believe that is important to seek shelter and refuge in an environment where Christianity and diversity are compatible. In this

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[7] No tenemos problemas de públicamente dice que estamos una iglesia en favor de inclusión de la diversidad ("Isabela, IELCH").

community they wish to present a different focus on how God loves and accepts everyone who wants to reach him (Iglesia de la Trinidad, 05.02.2018).

Grupo de la Diversidad is three years old and was initiated by one priest of one congregations in IELCH to create a space for Christians identifying as LGBTQ, where they had a place to converse on subjects about diversity. They started this initiative as they found it is not always easy to talk in bigger groups about subjects relating to the Bible and Homosexuality. The concept of the group is that people of all sexual diversities are welcome. As for now, there are 20-25 members and 10 of them who are permanent participants. *Grupo de la Diversidad* gather twice a month, once in the in the offices of the congregation and once in the home of one of the members. The activities can vary from time to time. They have organized Picnic of diversity in different parks around Santiago. The coordination group gather once a week to plan subjects and activities for the next gathering coming up.The congregation where *Grupo de la Diversidad* is located offer blessings of same sex partners that are living in Civil union, however only for the members of the congregation if it is taking place in the church ("Carlos", 18.11.2017).

5.4. Map of Informants

In this section the informants are organized into gender, identity, Christian direction and which *pastoral* they attended. To have a table that gives an overview is important when understanding the informants' answers and experiences. The map of informants gives information of which Christian LGBTQ community the different informants attends, their age and gender and sexual orientation. The map will also include which date they were interviewed, as well the length of interview.

Table 1.0.

Informants (fictional name)	Gender	Age	Sexual Identity	Christian direction	Interview conducted	Length of interview
Pastoral de la Diversidad Sexual (PADIS) **Catholic**						
Tomas	Male	48	Gay	Catholic	02.11.17	1h 51 minutes
Marcela	Female	30	Lesbian	Catholic	11.11.17	1h 04 minutes
Oscar	Male	65	Gay	Catholic	20.11.17	1h 15 minutes
ICM Casa de Emmaus: Iglesia Comunidad Metropolitana **Pentecostal**						
Matias	Male	40	Gay	Evangelical	17.11.17	1h 35 minutes
Christopher	Male	27	Gay	Evangelical	02.12.17	40 minutes
Grupo de la Diversidad in Iglesia Evangelica Luterana en Chile (IELCH)						
Rafaela	Female	47	Straight	Lutheran	30.10.17/ 06.12.17	2h 5 minutes
Isabela	Female	60+	Straight	Lutheran	30.10.17/ 06.12.17	2h 5 minutes
Carlos	Male	51	Gay	Lutheran	18.11.17	1h 10 minutes
Other						
Romina	Female	32	Lesbian	Catholic	03.11.17	1h
Paulina	Female	40	Lesbian	Catholic	03.11.17	1h
MOVILH NGO	All	Founded 1991	LGBTQ rights Movement	Non-religious	03.11.17	30 minutes

6. Findings

The research question for this thesis asks about the experience of reconciling one´s religious and sexual identity in Santiago, today;

> In what ways does being part of a Christian Community of sexual diversity affect the religious and sexual identity of gays and lesbians in Santiago, Chile?

In this chapter, I will present the findings from the research conducted in Santiago, and I am seeking an understanding of how attending a Christian Community of sexual diversity has affected religious and sexual identity for the informants. During my time in Chile, and through the ten participants and interviews, I noticed the patterns that started to take forms on various matters that the informants considered as important or informative to this research, as well as the bullet points and questions I had made ready for each interview. I have organized the important finings into three different main categories; the first *faith, identity and community*, the second, *the spheres in clandestine* and lastly*, within homosexuality there is also diversity.* Under each of these categories there will be topics that relate to the three titles. The first two parts of this chapter will focus on the informants' experience, before and after attending these Christian Communities, and the last part of the chapter will focus more on the diversity within the LGBTQ community in general. I have chosen to do this to gain a better understanding on the relation between the Christian and secular LGBTQ communities in Santiago.

I will present the various matters and stories that came forth during interviews. For this chapter the quotes are used to describe personal thoughts, understandings and experiences that are important to the informants. Because these communities have different names and are from various Christian denominations, when writing in plural I will refer to them as these Communities or Christian Communities of sexual diversity*,* and when describing these Communities individually I will use their acronyms: PADIS, ICM and IELCH.

During the presentation of the findings, various quotations used will be the translated version. The text will also include ellipses with my remarks with references from the setting of the story. This will provide the reader with a full understanding of what the informants are

communicating. The original quotes from transcription will not include those remarks to remain in its original Spanish quote.

6.1. Faith, Identity and Community

This part of the Chapter I will focus on categories from the coding concerning, faith, sexual identity and how they experience and how being a part of a Christian Community of sexual diversity may have contributed in uniting their conflicting religious and sexual identity.

6.1.1. Two Identities Unite

When asking my informants about their faith I wanted to know how their experience of being a Christian as well as gay or lesbian, impacted them, and how they came to accept both identities simultaneously. An aspect of this was to also focus on which the need and the importance of attending a Christian Community of sexual diversity has had during that progress. Looking back to Chapter 3.1.1 and Honneth´s three modes of recognition he explained that the first approach crucially relies on love received from friends and how recognition in connection with love, rights and solidarity creates internal and external freedom (Honneth, 1996, p. 174). Internal and external freedom can also be related to Taylor´s (1991) notion of authenticity and self-determined freedom. The informants told me about their guilt and bad conscience after having relationships with or attraction towards a person of the same sex. This kept haunting them until they found a faith community that accepted them and started attending on regular basis. Taylor described how being honest to oneself and not being influenced by external factors of what is viewed as right and wrong will give the true authenticity of self and the opportunity to live out one´s full potential as a human being (Taylor, 1991, p. 27).

Before my informants started participating in these Communities they did not completely lose faith in God. However, the majority stopped attending their former church, while others continued to attend services, but chose to hide their true identity. Before discovering these Communities their faith and everyday life was greatly influenced by guilt and shame of how they lived their life. Questions like "does God love me even though I am gay?", and "is it possible that

I can change from this?" were common thoughts while struggling with self-acceptance and self-confidence. Informants feared being the one standing out and being different from the heteronormative, safe way of living and accompanying societal expectations. I got the impression that the informants and others in these Communities attend not only to have a safe-space, but also to feel acceptance and recognition from God and their religious community in general:

> Reconciliation and forgiveness was the topic of last week [in PADIS]. I am at peace with myself; accepting me, forgiving and embracing myself. By doing this I also reconciled with God. If I cannot reconcile with myself, it is extremely difficult to reconcile with God ("Tomas", PADIS).[8]

Tomas later during his interview reflected:

> PADIS for me, is an instrument where I can express something. Yet it is not absolute for me, the absolute for me is my faith. PADIS is not my faith, still there are people that understand it like that. PADIS does not have the monopoly of faith nor the truth ("Tomas", PADIS).[9]

For Tomas, PADIS is not an absolute, his faith is his first priority. PADIS functions as a support for him to practice his faith in a community with people in similar circumstances. Oscar, similarly to Tomas, sees PADIS as an instrument to help him express his faith. Considering that Oscar has lived as a quite conservative Catholic for the most of his life, he had not been participating in one specific church for many years after he decided to live out his authentic self as a gay man. When Oscar discovered PADIS things changed. Before then, Oscar expressed that he constantly felt that he was sinning while being in long-term relationships with other men. After he discovered PADIS he felt as if he belonged to any church. He now attends other Catholic Masses without hesitation and fear. For Oscar it is not the institution itself that was his obstacle, but rather the faith he thought he could not combine with his identity. Oscar explained to me what PADIS signifies to him, and for him it was about the opportunity to return to his religiosity:

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[8] En la semana anterior fue el tema de reconciliación y perdón. Yo reconcilio con mi mismo; aceptándome, perdonándome y abrazándome a mí mismo, por eso también reconcilio con Dios. Si no lo reconciliarme con mi mismo pase muy difícil de la hora de reconciliarme con Dios ("Tomas", PADIS).

[9] PADIS para mí es como el instrumento que yo puedo entregar algo. No es algo absoluto para mí, [el absoluto] para mi es la fe y PADIS para mí no es la fe, pero hay mucha gente que véala así […] la PADIS tampoco puede tener en monopolio de la fe o de la verdad ("Tomas", PADIS).

I think I am quite satisfied with the space PADIS gives. To me [PADIS] signifies that I can return to live my religiosity, my faith in a purer and more profound form ("Oscar", PADIS). [10]

Marcela told me that PADIS was not the main reason why she accepted herself as lesbian, but that it was God helping her. The experience of attending a mass with a rainbow flag at the alter for her represented a place where mixed identities could converge, and she did not have to choose between being Catholic or lesbian:

Truth is I believe God [helped me accepting who I am] and that it exists different ways to reach him. [I believe] getting to know PADIS and the group of young people, moms and dads, was an important part of that and they have fought for this group and continue to fight those people who do not understand and obstruct the way. It is a really important path and I think I could never be thankful enough to have a group like this [...] I will never forget the first time I went to a communion and received the body of Christ and felt so complete ("Marcela", PADIS). [11]

Matias told me his stories about him participating actively in his Evangelical Church at the time of his process of coming out and accepting himself and his faith. When he was a teenager Matias had his first sexual encounter with a person of the same sex. After the incident, he prayed for many years that God would change him to become heterosexual, because he felt as if he was not who God had planned for him to be:

And what happened was that in my adolescent years I had a sexual encounter with a friend, but that passed and from there nothing else happened until I entered the Church. In this search, I used a lot of time thinking that God would change me after seven years. I prayed every day that I would change, and I had a lot of

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[10] "Yo creo que bastante estoy muy contento de abriga de la PADIS. [PADIS] significa que puedo volver a vivir mi religiosidad, mi fe en forma más plena más profunda ("Oscar", PADIS).

[11] La verdad es que yo creo que es Dios [que me ayuda de aceptarme] pero para llegar a él existe muchos caminos. Yo creo que un camino importante fue a conocer a PADIS y este grupo de jóvenes, de mamas y papas que en otra manera ha luchado por este grupo sigue adelante a luchar con personas que no entienden la en trataba de cerrar. Un camino súper importante como que creo nunca voy a estar tan agradecida con un grupo así [...] nunca se me olvida la primera vez que estuve en la misa y recibí el cuerpo de Dios y lo puede ser tan pleno ("Marcela", PADIS).

thoughts […] like similar to an evangelical structure like "that happened now ask for forgiveness" ("Matias", ICM).[12]

Today, Matias is quite confident when he talks about struggles with identity and Christianity. Often others in ICM can seek his help and guidance if they have questions and doubts about homosexuality and Christianity. Matias told me he believed it was important for people that seek God to receive a spiritual answer where they can encounter faith in Christ himself on a personal level. Further Matias explained the feeling of recognition and acceptance of self:

> When you feel accepted, you feel loved, valued in your individuality, with all your characteristics and with all your strength independent of your gender identity and with your sexual orientation. Then you feel with all of that God loves you, and that is awesome ("Matias", ICM).[13]

The quote just presented from Matias summarize the concept of Recognition by Honneth, which is when an individual receives constant affirmation from a group or another person. The individual grows in their identity as an independent person and that makes them feel loved and valued. Love according to Honneth, is the most important factor for the process of experiencing self-confidence (Honneth, 1996, p. 173).

Christopher expressed that he had a long history of carrying guilt and having a bad conscience which made him struggle a great deal before slowly starting to accept and embrace himself for who he is. Christopher grew up in a very conservative Evangelical Church. After finding ICM he learned more about the relationship between homosexuality and the Bible. Christopher told me that ICM was one of the crucial factors in the tranquility he is now experiencing. He truly believes that God loves him instead of speculating if God will send him to hell because of his identity and loving someone of the same sex. This feeling of recognition from

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[12] Y paso que como cuando tenía, en mi adolescencia tuve una, un cercamiento sexual con un amigo, pero eso paso y de ahí no pasa nada más hasta que nuevamente entre la iglesia. En esta búsqueda, estuve mucho tiempo pensando que Dios me cambiara al redor de siete años. Oraba todos los días que yo me cambiara y tenía muchos pensamientos (...) como estaba en una, una estructura evangélica que pasaba pasa eso pedía perdón ("Matias", ICM).

[13] Cuando tu sientes aceptada, te sientes querida, valorada de tu individualidad, con todas tus características y con toda la fortaleza (...) independientemente de tu identidad de género o tu orientación sexual. Siente a una así con todo eso Dios te amo, eso es muy bacán ("Matias", ICM).

God and ICM was something he expressed as difficult to achieve at his Evangelical Church where his family also attends services. At this church he was not able to be open about his boyfriend without other members praying for his repentance. The church he grew up in is not however active in marches against same-sex marriage, as for example the more conservative Catholic Church. Christopher mentioned that the gates to several churches have been closed and are not welcoming towards LGBTQ people. Nonetheless he still believed in the possibility of an inclusive church that open its doors to those who seek God:

> So, if you open this door or this window so they [LGBTQ-people] can enter it is obviously beneficial, so they as well feel the same – where they can follow God. All in all, everything they seek or what one wants is that they want fellowship with God […] For God it is not important if you are homosexual, God loves just as you are, and he waits for you with open arms ("Christopher", ICM).[14]

For many of the informants, it was extremely important to reconcile with God and that they were loved and valued in their faith. This was also important to Carlos, however one of the things that helped him accepting and understanding himself, was through books, art and movies, which he also combined with studies in theology;

> So, for me let´s just say it is extremely important to be able to reflect. Before I came out I read a lot, investigated a lot, I read novels about sexual diversity from the university [and] watched movies and art, all that together with theology. So, it was my interpretation and my idea of everything, you get it? To me it was extremely important because it was a world that was in a way totally unknown to me ("Carlos", IELCH).[15]

When Carlos was nineteen he started his process of coming out, however it was not until he was twenty-seven years old that he fully accepted himself as a gay man. In his teenage years, he met a

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[14] Entonces abrir esta puerta o esta ventana para que puedan entrar obviamente es beneficioso para que ellos se sienten también con su lo mismo - donde pueden seguir al Dios. Si en el fondo todo lo que uno busca o lo que uno quiere es que esa alma tenga una comunión con Dios […] Por Dios no le importa que eres homosexual, Dios te ama tal cual eres y te espera con brazos abierto ("Christopher", ICM).

[15] Entonces para mi es súper importante poder reflexionar digamos eso. Yo antes de salido del closet, leí mucho, investigué mucho, leí novelas de la diversidad sexual, vi películas, vi arte, todo eso en con junto con el teológico. Entonces me dice mi interpretación y mi idea de todo, ¿Entiende? Para mí era súper importante eso porque era un mundo en mucho sentido desconocido ("Carlos", IELCH).

man who also identified as gay and he was a crucial factor in Carlos´s belief in an inclusive church that does not condemn one for being gay or lesbian. In the next part of this chapter I will present what it meant to the different informants to have and to attend a Christian Community of sexual diversity.

6.1.2. The Significance of a Christian Community of Sexual Diversity

Informants expressed during interviews that their Christian faith did not fade when distancing themselves from other churches, but rather their identity as active Christian did. The informants expressed the importance of having a Community where they met people in similar situations and finding out that they are not alone. As Honneth (2012) states in his Group Formation theory; "I" seeks the "We" of shared group experience, because even after maturity, we are dependent on the forms of social recognition imbued with direct encouragement and affirmation" (Honneth, 2012, p. 214). Having this kind of community can function as an instrument in the process of "coming out" to themselves and combine and embrace their sexual identity within their religious identity. All groups in this research are functioning as a shelter for some people that attend other more conservative churches, such as the Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Mormon, Baptist or Protestant churches. IELCH, PADIS and ICM have been in many ways the place to go to for recognition and being a part of a group - recognition they do not receive in their actual church, as Rafaela had observed:

> Earlier I have participated a few times in *Grupo de la Diversidad Sexual* [IELCH] and there are a few people from different Churches, and their testimonies [that] I have heard is that the majority of the participants are distanced from the Church they come from; they are not allowed nor have the opportunity to live out their faith in their sexual identity ("Rafaela", IELCH).[16]

When Matias was a teenager he was very active in his Evangelical Church, however when he came out to the church leaders they told him to "find a prostitute and you will be fine" because Matias

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[16] Antes […] participa algunas veces en el grupo de la diversidad sexual y […] llegan personas de otras y el testimonio que escuche de ellos son la mayoría de ellos se distanciado de la Iglesia, de la iglesia de donde vienen. No les permiten vivir, no hay posibilidades de vivir la fe de su sexualidad ("Rafaela", IELCH).

did not have sexual experience with women, and apparently having sex with one, would help him heal from his desires towards men. They told him if he wanted to continue to serve in the church he could clean the restrooms. After some time, Matias left the church he attended, and after a few years he found *Testigo de Esperanza,* (Testimony of Hope) whom other informants also have participated in before they discovered PADIS and ICM.

> I was told it was like I was polluting the church with my condition, in a certain way I felt abused (...) because they believed that I was possessed by demons ("Matias", ICM).[17]

These three Christian Communities of sexual diversity share values that recognizes people identifying outside of the heteronormative. They create a space where one can be lesbian and gay. Honneth´s Theory of Recognition and Group Formation (see chapter 3.1.1.) explain that communities, similar to PADIS, IELCH and ICM will support personal development (Honneth, 2012, p. 204).

Marcela, for example, only attended PADIS, and no other Catholic Church. She told me she does not have time to attend another church, but that she probably would if here parents attended one. In PADIS she feels at home and relaxed. She also volunteers with different tasks. Marcela feels a part of the community and it has given her peace and tranquility. During the interview, she told me that before discovering PADIS she could not say the word lesbian and Catholic in the same sentence, now she can and express it with pride and confidence. PADIS made that possible for her:

> If I hadn't discovered PADIS, I would not feel the same way I do [now] (…) I would still be questioning my sexuality, still thinking I was bisexual [and not lesbian], yet still close to God, however without the calamity I have now. [I would be] without this peace. [Before] I could never get myself to say that I was lesbian and Catholic ("Marcela", PADIS).[18]

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[17] En la iglesia conté mi condición, lo que […] me sucedía la iglesia, ahí en cierta manera sentí un abuso por parte de mi porque creen que estaba endemoniado ("Matias", ICM).

[18] Quizás yo no hubiera encontrado a PADIS estaría participando mi pastoral, no me sentir tan como a quizás que todavía estaría haciendo como esta bisexualidad, ambigua, estaría cuando bastante segura igual cercan a Dios, no tendría la calma que tengo ahora, no con esa paz podía decir que yo soy lesbiana y católica ("María", PADIS).

Oscar stopped taking part in church activity at age thirty-five. Coming out at age twenty-nine and deciding to never repress his sexual orientation again, his faith faded following his participation in the church. Even if his faith faded, he went all those years feeling as if something was missing. However, thirty years later he discovered PADIS through a friend and he could finally flourish his religiosity again:

> [PADIS] is a place where I can flourish my spirituality that have been reduced and denied (…) [For me] the time that I was away from church, one year and a half [ago], I lived in a reality where I never imagined that I would now be in a religious community [and] a Catholic [community] where all of us are in the same circumstance, surrounded by different stories. It is like learning how to live again ("Oscar", PADIS).[19]

Tranquility is a shared state felt between the informants. The feeling of not being accepted in their actual church made them feel ashamed and in constant guilt, while these specific Communities created a space for them to not carry the burden that is otherwise quite heavy:

> It is genius! It is incredible [to have ICM] because I don't have guilt. Whenever I went to the other smaller church I always had the feeling of guilt and that what I was doing is not right. [However] to be in a place where I can share my faith with people like me, it is beautiful [and] very relaxing and encouraging ("Christopher", ICM).[20]

It is quite simple what Christopher wishes for his life in his familiar church;

> Because, altogether I wish to attend church as every other brother and sister with their partner, girlfriends/boyfriends and such, [but] if I would they would look at me weirdly ("Christopher", ICM).[21]

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[19] Entonces para mí, así como un desarrollar de espiritualidad que estaba comprimida, que estaba negaba (…) estuve alejado la iglesia a este año y medio estaba viviendo una realidad que nunca pensé en que va a estar en una comunidad religiosa, católica en donde todos éramos de la misma condición y donde hay historias distintas (...) es como aprender a vivir de nuevo ("Oscar", PADIS).

[20] ¡Muy genial! Fabuloso porque en el fondo no tiene culpa. Yo cuando llega a la Iglesia de chico siempre estaba este sentimiento de culpa de que estoy haciendo (...) no es correcto. Para estar en un lugar donde compartir tu fe con gente que es igual que tu es muy bonito, y muy tranquilizante, es muy esperanzador ("Christopher", ICM).

[21] Porque en el fondo uno de igual le gustaría llegar a la Iglesia como llega todos los hermanos con su pareja, novias y eso, por uno cuando llego miran raro ("Christopher", ICM)

As Christopher told me he does not carry the same amount of guilt that he carried earlier, and he gives thanks to ICM. Christopher also credits ICM for helping him deal with his coming out event, where his mom and aunt cornered him to confess about his identity. He values having a private space, not hidden, where he can share his faith and thoughts with individuals who can empathize with him. I remember the first event observing with a Bible-study session on the topic of homosexuality and Christianity, Christopher arrived with his boyfriend. That was the first time I heard about Christopher's coming out experience. We were seven people at the location of ICM, all listening while he told his story. Later I had an interview with him. In this session he also told us that he still felt guilt and shame, even though that did not stop him from being his true self. It was more about the struggle of living a sort of double life. However, this group became a space for him to reflect on this, while the leaders and others where listening to what he had to say. It is a place of reflection, as Carlos from IELCH also mentioned during his interview:

> (…) It is necessary to have a group of [sexual] diversity for reflection close to your reality, because [they] do not have other spaces and because people of [sexual] diversity are in different stages with their coming out process. (…) It is a process, therefore, when people are in this process they need support and Grupo de la Diversidad is support. It is a space for reflection ("Carlos", IELCH).[22]

Having a place to reflect on one's identity, receive support in their journey of acceptance and coming out process is the main reason why IELCH exists. As Carlos said, "they do not have other spaces", and therefore they have to create a space for this subject specifically. Carlos had an important position in The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile, and he decided to be open about his sexual identity, telling the board and the congregation made him stay. He felt safe and he wanted to continue with his job there. Now that new people are coming and going to church it is not important for them to know, because to Carlos his identity is not really a topic of concern in the church, if the church is open and loving towards people of sexual diversity and others as well. The love of God is what counts to him:

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[22] (…) un grupo de la diversidad necesario porque reflexión acerca de su realidad porque no tiene otro espacio y porque las personas de la diversidad esta en diferente momentos relación con su salida del closet (…) Esta en el proceso, entonces cuando las personas están en el proceso necesita un apoyo y el grupo de la diversidad es apoyo. Es espacio de reflexión ("Carlos", IELCH).

I define myself as Lutheran because I believe that the testimony of the Lutheran Church is genuine in the way that we believe in a God that accepts us because he loves us; not based on what we do. However, we believe love is something we receive. It is important to note that every loved person have a feeling of dignity. I believe in an open, loving and forgiving God ("Carlos" IELCH).[23]

ICM and IELCH is a church and a group of sexual diverse individuals however it was also very important for the various informants to tell me that even if they focus on including LGBTQ-Christians, it does not mean they are excluding anyone else. People that are heterosexual are welcome to learn more about the Community, and inclusion of for example migrants, people from other religions and regardless of one´s socioeconomic background, all are welcomed. Carlos explained it quite well:

I tell them that the principle of me being here is to work for an open community, it does not mean that I am a pastor for the gays, it means that I am a pastor for all ("Carlos", IELCH).[24]

While it creates a space for dialogue and shelter, this room can also create a risk. Oscar points out that if it were not for *Padres de PADIS*, the group for parents of lesbian daughters and gay sons, PADIS would perhaps not have the same contact to "the real world". "The real world" is how Oscar chooses to describe it if the private safe-space of PADIS never opened up to the outside and merged with the society. Marcela, Oscar and Tomas all expressed the gratitude to *Padres de PADIS* and agree that it is one step further in the recognition of Catholics of sexual diversity.

PADIS is a blessing of new times, where you can live in spiritual wholeness, that can open a horizontal world within the Church where in theory PADIS should not to exist […] and we are together with heterosexuals, if not there could be a risk that PADIS becomes a *ghetto* where everyone is similar and in a culture that distances

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[23] Me defino como luterano porque creo que testimonio la iglesia luterana es un testimonio valedero en el sentido que nosotros creemos en un Dios que nos acepta porque nos ama y no por lo que hacemos en este sentido el amor es algo que una recibe. (…) Importante decir todas personas amada tiene un sentido de dignidad. Yo creo eso. Yo creo que todas personas son amadas por Dios. Creo en un Dios […] que es abierto, que es amoroso que es perdonador, que es luz, vida ("Carlos" IELCH).

[24] Yo les dije desde el principio que yo venía a trabajar por una comunidad abierta, pero no significaba que era pastor de los gays, que era pastor de todos, todos y todas ("Carlos", IELCH).

us from the real world, fortunately the presence of *Padre* PADIS guarantees this [horizontal world]("Oscar", PADIS).[25]

Both Oscar and Tomas informed me that the ultimate aim of PADIS is to not have exists anymore, and when that day come it is because the Catholic Church accept all people of sexual diversity within their mainstream community: where they do not feel discriminated or judged anymore. One way of getting closer to that goal is by including the parents of gay and lesbian children. They merge with the heteronormative world, in attempt to create a balanced setting.

6.1.3. Lack of Permanency

While observing these three different Communities and seeing who attends the events and services, the representation varied between the different groups. Respective informants mentioned lack of permanent members participating in these Communities. One of the important questions both Rafaela and Isabela asked was:

> This is interesting, right, because they say this group is inclusive and that they [LGBTQ-persons] have a community [here]. So why do they leave? ("Isabela", IELCH)[26]

The question asked is one to take into consideration. Why do they leave, or why do they not stay for a longer amount of time? During observation, listening to how these groups function, and by seeing the number of participants, follow-ups are different. PADIS is the group with the most frequently attending members, almost 60 or more members than ICM and IELCH. PADIS was the only community that had *Comunidad de Vida* which translates to life-group. These groups are for ten to fifteen people to gather, share and listen to each other's faith, doubts and experiences. Matias shared some thoughts regarding ICM and the challenges of permanent attendance:

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[25] La PADIS son un signo de los nuevos tiempos, en donde se va a vivir, una espiritualidad más plena, hay se abre un mundo una horizontalidad dentro de la iglesia en que nosotros, la PADIS en teoría no debería existir […] lo que quiera junto con todos los heterosexuales por que se corre el riesgo en la PADIS de formar un ghetto en donde juntemos todo iguales y en una cultura muy especial y nos alejemos del mundo real y afortunadamente eso está garantizado por la presencia de los Papas PADIS ("Oscar", PADIS).

[26] Es interesante eso, dicen que este grupo es inclusivo, aquí tienen lugar. ¿por qué se fueron? ("Isabela", IELCH).

There was a time when we were 30 people and a time we were four. With highlights and challenges, we are still here. Obviously, we realize what characteristic ICM has as a very fluid Church. People come, look, understand the vision and recognize that God loves us and then they leave. Not like any other church where people stay, certainly some stay, however that is not the majority ("Matias", ICM).[27]

Matias explained a possible reason why ICM lacked members and PADIS had more. This is because Chile naturally is a Catholic country. Further he reflected if people do not stick around for other masses in ICM, it might be in relation to that gay and lesbian people just needed to know that they are loved and accepted by God and their religion. The reason why they do not stay might also be because of fear of staying, or because they are attending other churches. There are some theories why these groups are so *flotante* (fluid). e.g., Christopher has not been able to participate in ICM every Sunday because he normally attends his Evangelical Church with his mom, and he expressed that it would be weird to explain to his mom that he is going to a service at ICM.

An interesting observation during this research was that the majority of people attending at least IELCH and ICM were older middle-aged men. When I attended and observed workshops and various events most of the participants were approximately between the ages of thirty and fifty year. I asked several informants why there were not so many individuals from younger generations, and I was told that could have something to do with the change of generations, meaning sexual orientation is not "too" important anymore and people do not bother you if you are gay or straight. Carlos reflected during our interview that the reason why there were so many middle-aged men attending IELCH was perhaps because of his age and their lived experiences, and therefore that could reflect why the more permanent members were the older generation of gay men. Not only do these men share the experience of being religious and gay, but also the experience of living under different circumstances. As introduced in the Background chapter being gay during the dictatorship of Pinochet was not easy and LGBTQ-gatherings happened in secret. The reason the older generation of men often are the permanent members of these safe Communities could be because they shared this experience. Isabel reflected that these Christian Communities of sexual diversity

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[27] Llega un momento que tenemos 30 personas, como en un momento eran cuatro. Así como alto y bajos y todavía estamos acá […] claramente nosotros dimos cuenta de que la ICM poner la característica que tiene como iglesia más flotante. La gente viene, ve, se papa la visión, se da cuenta que Dios los ame y después se va. No como otra iglesia como que la gente que se queda. Claramente hay gente que se queda, pero no son la mayoría ("Matias", ICM).

gives space for the older generation to liberate themselves, perhaps after several years of living in clandestine with their identity, and now it is their time to live out their true self.

6.1.4. Christian Diversity

These three communities are of different Christian confessions: PADIS is Catholic, ICM is mainly Protestant and IELCH is Lutheran. However, this does not hinder members of different Christian directions to attend. As Rafaela mentioned (see chapter 6.1.2.), people from different churches attend these groups because they do not feel comfortable in their former religious communities.

Carlos is one example of a person that has been active in several churches of different directions of Christianity, because he did not settle in one direction because felt condemned for being attracted to men. Carlos was born into a conservative, Evangelical family and in a church that had adapted different aspects of the Pentecostal Christianity. During his adolescence he was very active in a Baptist Church. When Carlos was nineteen he befriended a gay Lutheran pastor, who helped him to believe in the possibility of an inclusive church that accepted him for who he is. He started studying Lutheran theology and in later years, Carlos got ordained as a priest.

The idea that members do not feel welcome in their former churches and believe that is a lack of spaces for lesbian and gay Christians, which occurs within every direction of Christianity, can in this case seem to result in an increase of diversity in one specific community, such as PADIS, IELCH and ICM. As Honneth (2012) believe that individuals have a natural need to be acknowledged in a social group where they can receive constant affirmation by other members on their needs (Honneth, 2012, p. 206). Members seek these groups because their former churches do not offer the same space for reflection. Furthermore, Honneth reflects that the individual seeks to be a part of the "we" even after they have matured in their identity. Nevertheless, when they have matured, individuals are still dependent on various approaches of direct recognition and motivation to continue in their self-confidence and self-esteem (Honneth, 2012, p. 214). Even though they follow different directions of Christianity, they follow a group that recognizes them as religious people and simultaneously embracing their sexual diversity. They follow the affirmation; the members have their identity and religion in common however in diverse forms:

> For me it has been quite helpful discovering PADIS, because there is no obstacle being both a lesbian and being Catholic. The only difference between [PADIS and] another pastoral is that I like people of the same sex. I like the differences, to be honest I love that everyone is free; there are believers, or Catholic's and Evangelicals, which is beautiful because I learn to know people in different ways ("Marcela", PADIS).[28]

The phrase that God loves you just the way you are, is something all the informants in this research focused on when they talked about their faith, especially when it came to their sexual identity in their faith. If you are from another Christian direction it does not matter if you attend a Catholic mass or a Protestant service, because what the members share is a faith and the message that God loves everyone just as they are.

ICM have various Christians directions represented in their leadership and in their members. They have members and leaders that are Protestant, Mormon, Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical. In addition, ICM has been doing workshops in different churches, such as visiting the Baptist Church and teaching them about inclusion of people of sexual diversity. However, the workshop activities in different churches are not happening too often. The leaders of these Communities cross-communicate with each other, yet it has not yet developed into a fluent dialogue.

Christian diversity is illustrated and visible in different ways in these Communities. What these groups have in common is that they all have members from different directions of Christianity. Yet it is only ICM that has services and masses that include traditions from Catholic, Protestant and Evangelical traditions. The services I attended changed from being a Catholic mass to an Evangelical kind of service. They had the variety of Evangelical music styles, Catholic salute of peace, and more Evangelical and Protestant types of prayers. Matias spoke a lot about this and he explained that the reason for their mixture of rituals and traditions was because their leaders are from different Christian directions. The different Metropolitan Community Churches from Spain, Brazil and the United States have different names for Virgin Mary, *Virgen de Guadalupe* and *Nuestra Senora de Aparecida,* while ICM Chile uses *Maria* to declare the Virgin Mary.

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[28] Para mi hace súper bonito porque en un lado encontré una pastoral así que estoy lesbiana y no es problema que somos creyentes, somos católicos. Creo que, si yo la comparo con la otra pastoral el aquí estado, la única diferencia es que me gusta la persona de mismo sexo. Me gusta la diferencia más, la verdad es lo que me encanta que todos son libres, hay personas católicas y personas evangélicas, y eso es bonito porque uno aprende, se trabaja en comunidades (…) Yo lo aprendiendo conocer a tu hermanos o hermanas de otra manera ("Marcela", PADIS).

6.2. The Spheres in Clandestine

6.2.1. "Lo Saben, Pero No se Hablan"

"They know, yet, they do not talk about it" (to each other) is the translation of the title above. Continuously throughout this research, I met gay men and lesbian women that were not open nor public about their sexual identity, however this would also differ between the informants. Some were open among friends and family; others were only open within the safe walls of these Communities. Work was the last place anyone was open, depending on their job and age. In part of the chapter I focus on the informants' experiences of coming out to their parents and the difficulty regarding this subject. Scott´s Theory of Hidden Transcripts (see Chapter 3.2) is relevant in this particular case because openness belonged to different spaces in one's life. There was a rearranging of what was public and what was private space. The openness could be present in both private and public sphere, however this was limited and did not include everyone or everywhere. Suddenly family was in the category of public space where the dominant group was in charge, in addition to work and the more obvious: the streets of Santiago. The Christian Communities of sexual diversity are considered as the clandestine, private space where hidden transcripts are communicated and unmonitored from the ruling or societal norms. The Catholic Church and other congregations are considered public.

When interviewing the organization MOVILH, they explained that the age of coming out in Chile used to be an average age of twenty-eight years, now that has changed along with the development and progression of LGBTQ rights and focus (MOVILH 03.11.2017). The informants participating in this study came out between age twenty-seven and twenty-nine years. This creates an image of the secrecy the informants might have lived in and how they only lived out and open with their identity in private spaces away from family, work colleagues and the public streets of Santiago:

> So, I believe the population of sexual diversity in Chile is more empowered of their rights, they are much more prepared to fight for their personal rights, not the only the collective, whenever they affect you they change to be something collective and this seems to affect that the age of "coming out" as gay, lesbian or transsexual much more earlier, before the age [of coming out] as gay was twenty-eight years, now it we can

say at age fourteen-fifteen boys and girls tell their parents that they are gay, lesbian or trans. And this was not the situation in the past. And this makes them more visible today (MOVILH).[29]

As mentioned above the safe-space was found in these three specific Christian Communities. Respective informants were in many cases not open at all to their families and if they were the matter about sexual identity or life partners was the "elephant in the room". The majority of the informants also were not open at their work-space or when walking in the streets of Santiago. All participants mentioned that when walking hand in hand with their partner of the same sex they would get uncomfortable attention and negative comments from other men in the streets. This is relative to Scott´s notion of hidden transcripts (1990) and the behavior that is changing when "off" and "on" stage. They know what the society expects from them in relation to norms and on how to be. In public they were not who they are when attending a mass or services in these Communities. Some of the informants still lived at home with their parents. If their parents knew about their relationships or identity it would not be recognized and they would be silent about it. Their relationships were ignored, as if they did not exist and it was never mentioned to them. There were of course different reasons for this, depending on their type of work and position, or depending on their parents´ moral and values. Many times, the answer to this was because their fathers were considered *machista.* It is important to note that this was not in all cases.

Questioning the informants about whether homosexuality and the subject of sexual identity is considered a taboo in Chile, most answered no, however that did not mean the subject was a public transcript or in sight. Rafaela told me that families and other type of settings do not talk about it, almost as if it does not exist - "it is just not a topic". On one occasion, the elephant left the room in Christopher´s house for a day when he experienced being cornered by his mom and aunt and was forced to confirm his homosexuality just a few weeks before I met him. Christopher grew up in an Evangelical family and he has been going to church for most of his life. He came home from work one day and his mother was waiting in the living room. Here is Christopher´s story:

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[29] Entonces yo creo que la población de la diversidad sexual en Chile está mucho más empoderada de sus derechos, está mucho más dispuesta a luchar por sus derechos personales, no colectivos, pero cuando te afectan pasan a ser algo colectivo y eso hace que la salida "del closet", asumirse gay o lesbiana o transexual son cada vez más a temprana edad, si el promedio de asumirse gay era de 28 años, ahora se puede decir que es a los 14 o 15 años, los chicos y chicas ya le están diciendo a sus familias que son gay o lesbiana o trans. Y esa situación no sucedía en el pasado, eso hace que hoy sean visibles (MOVILH).

It was my aunt [and] my mom pressuring me [into confess that I am gay] so I just okay, I did not like that the situation was like this, under the pressure, to be honest. However, if this was how God wanted it to happen […] I said to them "I confirm because I know what you know. Yes, you have a homosexual son, I am gay".[30]

I was absolutely cornered because I was having an argument with my mom and during that my mom called my aunt to tell her about me. My aunt is very Evangelical, very religious and she has a huge influence in decisions made within the family, therefore my mom called her, so she could help repel my homosexuality. That was when my mother [and my aunt] blocked my way and then called my father.[31]

It was rather tough. Truth is, the pressure made me feel like it was almost mandatory [to tell the truth] yet on the inside I was calm, and I explained them [everything] with tranquility. I did not have another option to be honest (…) Right now things are like before; both knew [it earlier] however they never mentioned it, as of now it is the same, the only difference is that now everyone knows.[32] ("Christopher", ICM; The storyline collected is from different parts of one interview summarized together).

After Christopher was pressured to finally confirm to his parents about his sexual orientation to his parents, his father told him he could not live at home anymore. For two weeks Christopher was not allowed to return back home. When he could finally return they never spoke about the topic of Christopher being gay again, everyone knew, yet it was not a topic up for discussion nor visibility. It is ignored as if it never occurred. Christopher told me that this makes him feel both uncomfortable at home as well as a sort of peace. because his "secret" is out. He did not have to be cautious or afraid that his family will find out. One can say that the experience of coming out for many gays and lesbians and others that belong to the sexual diversity, that the feeling of coming out and let

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[30] Estaba mi tía, mi mama presionándome para que yo le dije bueno, la verdad no me gustado que la situación era así como bajo la presión. Pero bueno, si Dios que hizo así fue […] "Te confirmo porque yo sé que tú lo sabes". Así le dije; "Lo confirmo, tiene un hijo homosexual, yo soy gay" ("Christopher", ICM).

[31] Fui totalmente acorralado porque estamos como en una peleíta con mi mamá, entre eso mi mama llamo a mi tía para anticipar a contextualizar mi tía. Mi tía es una cristiana muy cristiana, muy Evangélica, muy creyente que tiene una gran influencia en las decisiones hechas en mi familia. Entonces mi mama la llamó para ayudar combatir mi homosexualidad. Y ahí fue cuando mi mama me hicieron una cerrara y llamaron a mi papa para yo lo que contara. Fue bastante duro. La verdad, la presión no me gusto todo como que casi obligado, pero yo por dentro igual estaba tranquilo dijera cosas con calma. Porque no tenía otra opción en realidad ("Christopher", ICM).

[32] La verdad ahora las cosas esta como antes, como los dos sabían, pero no dice nada, ahora lo mismo, pero todos saben ("Christopher", ICM).

the secret go is liberating. Which is what Christopher experienced, even though it was under a pressured situation and not with much of a choice.

Oscar had a completely different experience when coming out to his mother. Even though it seemed as if his mom always knew that Oscar was gay, she never pushed him to confess his sexual identity. Whenever Oscar was asked the question about him having a partner his mom always approached it in a gender-neutral way. He considers himself quite lucky in his experience because he was able to bring his partner to his family's house, and his family went to visit his partner's family´s house. This is not a common event for gay and lesbian couples in Chile, especially not for mature gay men. As of now this is something that Christopher cannot even imagine happening in his family and in his familiar church, except that his partner joins him on services at ICM on Sundays or other events.

Among all the informants Oscar was the only one having this kind of testimony when coming out. Most of the informants never had a dialogue about sexual identity and relationships after coming out to their parents, or their circumstances do not allow them to tell their parents yet. They all had different reasons based on expectations and norms or other religious matters. Tomas for example grew up in a conservative, Catholic and right-wing household and for this reason he does not feel comfortable speaking to his parents about his sexual identity and life partners. In the past Tomas had a history of several long- and short-term relationships and partners who lived with him. However, it was always hidden from his parents. Tomas believed that his parents knew about his sexual identity, however they did not talk or ask him about the matter:

> […] they are a highly conservative, Catholic and extremely right-winged. For this reason, I will not tell them. (…) I have told them twenty thousand times that I will never do something wrong and that I will never say something harmful. I do not want to cause them this pain, it is pain for me too ("Tomas", PADIS).[33]

Tomas, who has decided not to tell his parents about himself because he does not want to cause them or himself any pain. He seemed quite confident and at peace with his decision. It would be painful for him to see his parents disappointed in him and he is not sure how many years they have left of life because they were quite old. It is Tomas´s wish that the last years with his parents are

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[33] […] son una familia muy conservadora, católica y de ultraderecha. Por este motivo no voy a contar. (…) Yo les diga veinte mil veces que no voy a hacer nada mal, entonces no lo van a entender, yo les diga [que] yo no diga nada mal. Yo no quiero causar ese dolor en ellos porque además para mi ser un dolor también ("Tomas", PADIS).

good and happy, therefore he does not want to tell them. This requires Tomas to wear a "mask" when being with his parents because there he is sort of ruled by the elite. Tomas told me that apart from his family, he is 100 percent open about his identity at work, as well as in other public spaces, and of course in PADIS. Instead, Tomas has created a setting with his parents as the public space and where the ruling elite is, while the hidden and private space is almost everywhere else. With his parent, he "acts" in a way that is expected of him by society. His parents live outside of Santiago which makes Santiago the location that is not monitored by the ruling culture, the capital became his refuge.

Marcela is probably the most engaged Catholic in her family, she told me. Her parents are religious in their own way, but not actively, and her brother is atheist. Marcela´s experience of coming out to her parents involved them suggesting that she should go see a therapist to cure her attraction towards women. She tried to talk about it with them a second time and they suggested the same option as the first time. Instead of rearranging their associations of what being gay, or lesbian is, they just wanted her to see a therapist and be cured from her attraction;

> [When I came out to my parents] they told me "okay, a therapist can cure the homosexuality" and I responded "I am not a disease" [because] in Chile [homosexuality] is still associated with being pedophile, and gay people in general are associated with being promiscuous and drug addicts […] For me it was a tough price [to pay]. Later I tried to return home to talk to them [my parents], and they told me to see a therapist [again] and I told them that it is not a disease, but okay. In the end we did not gather that often and I keep trying to show them that it is not something bad, I am the same ("Marcela", PADIS).[34]

Earlier when Marcela decided to tell her family that she was a lesbian, they did not want to talk about it. However now after some time it is still not easy to bring up the subject, still she challenges her parents by bringing it up anyways. Today all her family knows, and it was actually her father who communicated it to the rest of the family, which is interesting since he does not feel too comfortable talking about it with Marcela or others. Even if Marcela´s parents found it difficult to talk about, she still updates them about PADIS and what is happening in this Community:

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[34] Me dijeron, "bueno con psicólogo cura la homosexualidad" y yo "yo no sea una enfermedad" en chile existe mucho todavía se malas asocias con la pedofilia, se mala asocia con la gente homosexuales, promiscua, drogadicta […] fue un precio súper largo. Despúes yo pruebo volver hablar con ellos, me dijeron que va a psicólogo y yo dice que no es una enfermedad. Pero bueno. Al final tan poco la reunión teniendo yo también […] retratado de mostrar de que no es algo malo, soy igual ("Marcela", PADIS).

When I came out of the closet I only told my parents and my closest cousins, however my dad told [the rest of] my family on his side, I do not believe my mom has told anyone. […] Everyone knows, and it is a secret not everyone accepts it. We do not talk about it much, some family members do, others don't. My dad for example does not like to talk about it ("Marcela", PADIS).[35]

Christopher´s aunt joined his mother when he was cornered, because she could help him get cured of his homosexuality. Unfortunately, the thought that healing from homosexuality is possible is quite common in Chile. Parents of Marcela who suggested the same, and Matias´s mom as well suggested him to get help from a therapist to become "normal" when he came out to her. Carlos shared a horrible story from when he was eight-teen years old and fell in love for the first time. The parents of his crush found out that he was gay and sent him to a psychiatric hospital where he was given electro shock. At times Carlos still blames himself and reflect if their relationships and him being homosexual was the product of the parents deciding to give their son electro shock. After the electro shock his love at age eight-teen was never the same person.

6.2.2. Communicating on hidden [digital] platforms

Digital platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp are used as communicative instruments to find groups like PADIS, ICM and IELCH as well as the groups that are part of the secular LGBTQ community in Santiago. Many of those I interviewed searched online for Christian groups and Communities that specifically included Christians identifying as gay or lesbian. They used Facebook or Google, or they received the information through friends or otherwise. When Tomas first in a way invited me to attend a mass with PADIS he said, "I cannot openly invite you to the gathering, but I will ask if you can come"[36] ("Tomas", PADIS"). However, to find the group is the first step. If one wants to be accepted into the online Facebook group, you need a confirmation from the administrator or a private invitation from a friend who is already part of the group. At the

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[35] Cuando yo salió el closet yo solo lo hecho a mis papas, y bueno, a mis primos más cercanos, pero mi papa le dijo a mi familia, a su familia paterna y mama no creo contarlo. (...) Todo saben igual es como un secretadoses como que no es que todo lo acepten. No se hablan mucho no. Algunos tíos si otros no […] mi papa por ejemplo no le gusta mucho hablar el tema, pero a poco ("Marcela", PADIS).

[36] No te puedo invitar abiertamente a la reunión, pero le voy a preguntar si puede ir ("Tomas", PADIS).

same time, one cannot see the overview of members on Facebook, due to the protection of the privacy to the participants because there are several members that still live with their identity in clandestine due to their age or because of other reasons. In PADIS several members participating were between seventy-five and eighty years, and some are married with children and had grandchildren. This makes the situation more complex, and results in them attending PADIS in secret. After masses on Saturdays they return home to their families and into the roles of husbands and fathers;

> There are people at the age of 80 [that participate in PADIS] [and] if you are 80 years, they are [probably] not 100% "out of the closet". Therefore, we protect their privacy. PADIS […] has […] a private Facebook group […] only for [members], because there are people of older generations and people that have not "come out of the closet" yet […] [there are] married people, [that] have children or dependent of their work have a vision against homosexuality to not affect their work ("Tomas", PADIS).[37]

Having a secret group on Facebook is common. The amount and name of members of these groups would be hidden until an administrator of the group approved their request to join. Everyone who wants to join and write a post in the group has to be pre-approved for privacy reasons. On these pages the number of members were different from the amount that attended masses and services. When PADIS planned their masses, the time and place was not published until two days beforehand. The only Facebook groups I had access to was ICM. They had one public and one private group. PADIS and IELCH was from my impression more private and clandestine. I only received information through informants about masses two days before the actual event was taking place.

Marcela experienced learning about PADIS through a therapist that recommended her to read an interview in Paula Magazine about the Community. Through her therapist she also received the information about where the masses and events were held. This specific article has been crucial in making PADIS known to the Chilean LGBTQ population. Yet, it has not reached everyone.

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[37] Pero hay gente que tiene 80 años, y si tiene 80 años ellos no han salido al 100% del closet. Entonces guardarla la privacidad de ellos. PADIS (…) tiene (…) por ejemplo un Facebook privado, que solamente para, porque hay gente muy mayor o gente que aún no salido el closet (…) gente casada, [que] tienen hijos, o dependientes laborales de una visión en contra de la homosexualidad muy fuerte que no podía esclusa afectar su trabajo ("Tomas", PADIS).

Carlos explained to me that even if the groups are secret or hidden online, they still hang up posters about *Grupo de La Diversidad* in the congregation, where IELCH has their events. In addition, they publicly announce during services that events with their Community are open to everyone regardless if one is gay or straight. Still, Rafaela had attended IELCH once, while Isabel has never been there because she did not feel invited. ICM was the easiest *pastoral* to find online because they had one public and one private Facebook group IELCH and PADIS did not exist online by search tool. Therefore, this makes it difficult to find and more difficult if you do not know anyone who already attends these Communities;

> If there existed churches that were inclusive [of LGBTQ-people], then I would go. But we do not know any [of these churches or/and communities] ("Romina").[38]

PADIS, IELCH and ICM use various digital platforms, some more hidden than others, to privately communicate with their members. Lesbian women use digital platforms to organize meet ups. Lesbian women in Santiago lack of places like bars and café´s to gather together. In contrast, gay men have many options like alternative bars. These bars are welcoming to LGBTQ-people, but mostly focus on gay men, rather than lesbian women. While there were several clubs for gay men to meet, there were none exclusively for lesbian women. Spaces for queer women are somewhat reduced or hidden. Romina and Paulina two girlfriends that I met through an app for LGBTQ-women told me that the only way to communicate for queer women was through apps or social media. Through apps and chats on WhatsApp, they planned and scheduled events for queer women to gather. The interesting matter about this, is was that whenever you are around in Santiago and in most LGBTQ community, or events, the queer women are not well represented. However, when signing in to social media platforms for lesbian women, it expanded to a different and more visible world where suddenly they were communicating and very much present.

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[38] Hand written notes in English from the time of the interview due to difficulties with recoding because of location.

6.2.3. Where are the Lesbians?

In the previous section I have given an overview of how PADIS, IELCH and ICM communicate with their members. Furthermore, as earlier introduced women are not very well represented (see chapter 6.2.2.), neither in the communities represented here nor out in the public street. Lesbian women are found on apps like Tinder, WhatsApp and *Guapa*. Along with that there are no bars or locations that are only for lesbian women to gather. When asking questions about the *machista* culture I wanted to know the difficulties with being lesbian and gay, and if this somehow mirrored the minimal representation of women in these Christian Communities of sexual diversity. Carlos believed that the reason why women are not noticeably represented in the groups is a consequence of power, the relation of power and who has the power. The power structure that is a result of *machismo.* Femininity is still viewed as something weaker than masculinity and that is believed to be in relation to the *machismo* culture that still affects Chile;

> [Women, lesbian and bisexual women] (…) seek for a proper circle where men do not have access, nor gay men, because they as well are men. They [the women] do not have a lot of access nor have much power, they do not have influence with power in these relations ("Carlos", IELCH).[39]

Rafaela reflected that lesbians are under-represented in these Communities because the subject of lesbian women does not actually exist, as if it is not important. We have already seen earlier that the subject about homosexuality in general is one subject that is not discussed, however, awareness and discussion about lesbian women is not considered as important in the community. Tomas and Carlos had other perspectives on where the lesbian women were "hiding". They had been told by lesbian friends that women are more passionate, romantic and where therefore more likely to be in long term relationships. Therefore, they might not need a community like PADIS, IELCH and ICM in the same sense that men do. Tomas explained to me that one of the reasons that lesbian women are less visible is because they are in more long-lasting relationships, and that those women that participate in PADIS are single. Is the safe-space of lesbian women then in the relationship, and if so, why is it not the same when men are in long lasting relationships?

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[39] (…) Se buscan su propio circulo donde el hombre no acceda y niel gay acceda porque también es hombre. No acceda tanto y no tenga tanto poder, uno no influya con poder estas relaciones ("Carlos", IELCH).

All my lesbian friends are in relationships, [and] the relationships they have are long lasting. In the mentality of men, it is not like that at all, the man is like, or the mentality of homosexuals [male] is hurried, more as an animal to say it in a way (…) I believe that is the reason there are less women in PADIS, the women that attend PADIS are single ("Tomas", PADIS).[40]

Every year in Chile the organization VisiBLES (Visible) hosts the Lesbian Day of Visibility. On this day queer women occupy the streets of Santiago and march to show that they are there and that they are visible. Marcela answered that the lesbian and gay communities and their visibility of each are different. Additionally, the assumption that lesbian women are more masculine and less feminine can result in people not believing that you are gay:

I thought they [her parents] were going to have a different mentality when I told them they were in shock, they could not believe it [because] they had the impression that lesbians had short hair and quite masculine, but I am not like that at all. I love dresses, high heels and purses ("Marcela", PADIS).[41]

According to Oscar, there are ten to fifteen lesbian women participating in PADIS on regular basis more or less. Through PADIS Marcela has gained a lot of gay male friends who she parties with on the weekends. She does not mind that she is the only lesbian in a crowd of gay men dancing on gay bars for men. Marcela is a lesbian out in public and a part of the gay men community.

Marcela, and other informants reflected that it had to do with *machismo*, that the male is the representative and the one to show power in the society. The opposite of *machismo* is *marianismo* and also characterizes the expectations of how women should behave;

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[40] Todas mis amigas lesbianas están en pareja, las relaciones de ellas son larguísimas, dura mucho tiempo, en la psicología del hombre no, por tanto, el hombre es como, o en la psicología homosexual es como un poco abrutado, mas animal por decirlo por una forma (…) creo que por eso las mujeres son menos en PADIS, las mujeres que hay en PADIS están solas ("Tomas", PADIS).

[41] Porque mis papas son jóvenes, yo pensé que tenían otra mentalidad, cuando le he conté estaban en shock, no lo pudían creer, además, tenían la percepción de que ser lesbiana es tener el pelo corto, y eso, mucho más masculina, pero yo para nada, me encanta los vestidos, los tacones, y la cartera ("Marcela", PADIS).

"Everyone wants to be Maria [Virgin Mary]" It is the only way women can have a space [for sexuality] is when engaged, "women do not have a sexuality, they do not think about their sexuality, and they do not live in their sexuality" because that signifies devotion ("Isabela", IELCH).[42]

I believe it is very strong, right! The concept of this "ismo" (…) Maria is the holy mother, domestic, silent, I believe both [*marianismo* and *machismo]* are fairly strong in Latin America ("Rafaela", IELCH).[43]

The notion that women are non-sexual beings is described in the concept of *marianismo*. What is expected of women is different from that of men. Rafaela reflects during our interview that there are probably more lesbian women, than of gay men, living in straight marriages also because they think more about the children. Rafaela and Isabel whom I had in a combined interview with both agreed that the expectations of being a woman are fairly strong in the Chilean society today. Rafaela was the first one to mention *marianismo* in my question about *machismo* and if this in a way affected the representation of lesbians in PADIS, IELCH and ICM.

Isabel mentioned that women are rarely given space to discuss and to give opinions which can have consequences perhaps especially in the "lesbian world" and therefore the lesbian community is more silenced. Carlos reflected that the IELCH Community is made of 25 percent of lesbian women while the rest is men. He explained that it is difficult for lesbian women to attend a group like IELCH because the lesbian world is such a mystery as Carlos, Tomas, Rafaela and Isabela have claimed several times during the interviews. Carlos explained that he wishes to worker harder to include lesbian women in IELCH, yet it is difficult because of the social inequality in Chile. One aspects he thinks is important regarding the inclusion of lesbians, is educating the men and raising awareness about lesbians and that they are there too:

[…] I want us to educate the men more, because in the case of man vs. woman it is still a social inequality in Chile. So, I believe the inclusion of women in this group [IELCH] is very important, however that is still a dream ("Carlos", IELCH).[44]

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[42] "Y toda quiere ser María". En la única forma de que puede tener un espacio mujeres deberían como entregadas, la mujer que no tiene sexualidad, que no piensan en la sexualidad, y que no viven en la sexualidad ("Isabela", IELCH).

[43] ¡Yo creo que ese es muy fuerte no! La concepción y este "ismo" trabaja muy bien no, la jefa es como "la mujer puta" no o la Maria, la mujer madre santa, domestico, callada, creo que es dos en América latina que son muy fuerte ("Rafaela", IELCH).

[44] […] me gustaría que nos educara más a los hombres, por qué la cosa hombre vs mujer sigue siendo una desigualdad social en Chile. Entonces creo muy importante la inclusión de las mujeres en este grupo, pero todavía sueno ("Carlos", IELCH).

I asked Marcela if the reason for the lack of visible queer lesbians and why they do not join groups like PADIS, IELCH and ICM has something to do with fear- fear of not being who society expects you to be. Violence against women has been an issue in Chile throughout many years. Marcela reflected that there is fear because of it and that is also the reason why lesbian women also live in fear of "stepping out" of secrecy;

> I believe there exists fear because similar to the case of Zamudio there exists a great deal of fear. You have to be careful […] A lot of women are afraid because of the violence that exists against women, and especially the mentality many lesbians experience is that "something will happen to you" ("Marcela", PADIS).[45]

When Marcela refers to the case of Zamudio, it is regarding a gay teenager that was killed by neo-Nazis in 2012 that resulted in Chile legislating its first antidiscrimination law. Since violence against women is seen as an issue in Chile it is no wonder why lesbian women walk around in fear that something will happen to them. Rafaela and Isabela were also very concerned about how violence against women is viewed as normal. Perhaps lesbians are more hidden from the secular LGBTQ community because of fear of violence or because of violence. As Marcela said, lesbian women especially hold a mindset that they are always "on guard" that something might happen.

From what the informants are saying it is not a fair number of women in these Communities and lack of places for lesbians to gather, by this it is almost as if Santiago becomes the public and the world the lesbians are in are the private one. Paulina told me she moved from Lima, Peru to Santiago to get the chance to be open and live out her sexuality. She was afraid of being openly lesbian in Peru because of homophobia. Only Paulina´s sister knows the real reason why she moved to Santiago while her parents thought it was because of work.

From this section about where the lesbians are, we see that there is more "off stage" from the already established "off stage" in PADIS, IELCH and ICM. If we bring in Scotts hidden transcripts, we can see that there is a marginalized group unmonitored from the ruling elite of the heteronormative society, yet it does not stop there. Within this group there exists a ruling elite

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[45] Yo creo que existe temor porque en el mismo caso de Zamudio existe mucho temor. Hay que cuidarse (…) muchas mujeres tienen miedo porque la violencia […] para la mujer y además a las lesbianas existe mucho más a menta que "te va a pasar algo" ("Marcela", PADIS).

which is the gay men and a marginalized group which is the lesbian women. Further in into the next part of this Chapter I will present data on the reproduction of heteronormativity that is also related to this part of the research.

6.3. "Within Homosexuality There is also Diversity"[46]

Within homosexuality there is also diversity, and within diversity there is also discrimination. I asked the informants how the discrimination and prejudices is towards them as religious people and vice versa. In first part, I will describe the discrimination experienced in the general LGBTQ community. The second part will concentrate on *Orgullo* Gay and why the participants might not attend this event. The third and final section will focus on the reproduction of heteronormativity. The two last sections especially will be in relation to Joshi´s theoretical framework regarding Respectable Queerness and illustrate it in light of my findings, and how it creates a distinction between the "good" and the "bad" queer and between those who does not reach the criteria of the public norm (Joshi, 2012, p. 419).

6.3.1. Discrimination Within Diversity

> Furthermore, there is a great deal of discrimination within our community [and] this is a weakness of the population of sexual diversity; masculine gay men discriminate against feminine gay men, feminine lesbians discriminate against masculine lesbians, gays and lesbians discriminate against transsexuals, and this will continue to happen, it is an unfortunate and dramatic situation (MOVILH).[47]

MOVILH explained during the interview that the discrimination within their own community is a weakness of the LGBTQ-population. Even though they are considered to be part of the same community, there are still differences in the details that make them discriminate against each other.

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[46] [...] adentro la homosexualidad hay mucha diversidad ("Marcela", PADIS).

[47] Además, hay mucha discriminación entre nosotros mismos, esa es una debilidad de la población de la diversidad sexual, gays masculinos que discriminan a gay femeninos, lesbianas que discriminan a la lesbianas masculinas, gay y lesbianas que discriminan a transexuales, eso sigue pasando y es una situación lamentable y dramática (MOVILH).

Being gay in a Catholic conservative society like Chile in addition to being religious in the secular LGBTQ community creates a double challenge. Not only explaining your identity to people however, but also explaining your faith. "Why are you gay, how did you become like this?" and "why are you Catholic?" were examples of questions they would be asked when the informants were public about their identity and their religious faith. You constantly have to be on guard. Christopher as we now understand had not embraced or been honest about his sexuality until this recent year. Christopher had been fairly cautious about people finding out about his sexuality, but he had also been cautious about telling his previous boyfriends about him being Christian and frequently attending Church services. This is something he now does with his current partner because he feels like his partner is more understanding and less judgemental towards religion:

> […] In other relationships that I have had [from this one], I was rethinking [telling my partners that I was going to Church] I was quite [cautious] about my Christian faith. Now however, I ask, "I am going to Church, do you want to accompany me? and he joins me ("Christopher" ICM).[48]

With earlier partners Christopher had mentioned that he attends church regularly and his partners have reacted like "what? you go to church, why?". They have been really surprised. Marcela implied that there are prejudices towards queer persons that are Christian, yet she rarely engages in conversations about it because then she knows she cannot stop herself from talking. What Marcela and several other informants confessed was that they will be judged based on their religion and that they are active in a religious community. Instead of asking one *why* you are a part of one community, they will first question one about their faith:

> One day we will be included in one LGBT-community, and there will not be any problems and they […] will not question us [about religion]. […] if you are gay and Catholic they question you first for being Catholic […] ("Marcela", PADIS).[49]

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[48] Que no es muy común en la comunidad la gente gay porque la gente gay es súper atea. Entonces a decir a mi pareja que voy a la iglesia, por ejemplo – antes para mi repensado con todos los pololos que tuve (…) vivía mi cristianismo súper, pero ahora no, ahora lo digo ¿voy a la iglesia, me quiera acompañar? incluso lo llegado ("Christopher", ICM).

[49] En un día vamos a estar adentro de un grupo LGBT y no hay problema y no le diga nada, no cuestionen, antes de un grupo LGBT y eres homosexual y católico, cuestiona primero por ser Católico. Entonces ya es un tema ("Marcela", PADIS).

> […] they question you a lot because you are Catholic and defend something that is supposedly not in our favor ("Marcela", PADIS).[50]

And the reason why they question a person that is gay and Catholic about their faith is because there are difficulties understanding how one can be Catholic and a part of something that does not support the LGBTQ community as Marcela told me during the interview. Similarly, Carlos mentioned the same thing when he was talking about IELCH participating in *Orgullo* Gay (Gay pride) which will be presented in the next section of this chapter.

The reason why the informants and other religious gays and lesbian receive these questions, could be because others in the community cannot understand how the informants or other LGBTQ-people chose to follow a religious direction, that in many cases has spoken against or have discriminated and hindered their rights. These judgments and prejudice are based on the impression of the church being an institution that is actively opposing LGBTQ rights, love and practices. During the interviews I had to ask if the judgement or prejudice the informant felt they had from the secular LGBTQ community was mutual. Mutual in the sense that the prejudice or judgement was vice versa. I received mixed answers. Some said no, that the majority of the prejudices came from the secular LGBTQ community and not the other way around. However, some had the opinion that the prejudice is also vice versa. Tomas told me that even though he is gay he has a lot of critics towards *el mundo gay* (the gay world) because one characteristic that is absent in this community is consistency. Nonetheless, Tomas also told me that his first encounter with the gay world was marvellous and liberating, as well as it was artificial. One of the reasons why Tomas did not identify with the gay world is because they have the conception of promiscuity that he is against;

> The gay world is misleading, it is like a fantasy, artificial and everything is beautiful. It is something without consistency and I think I discovered that "if I am going into this world without consistency I will gain nothing in life". I know this world as well, but I do not like it ("Tomas", PADIS).[51]

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[50][…] te cuestiona mucho por ser católico y defender algo supuestamente también nosotros no ha taca ("Marcela", PADIS).

[51] El mundo gay ilusorio, como se ve una fantasía, artificial, bonito todo. Es algo sin consistencia y creo que yo descubrí eso que ese mundo, "si me voy por este mundo sin consistencia no voy a ganar nada en la vida". Conoce este mundo también, pero no me gusta ("Tomas", PADIS).

Christopher reflected that the reason why the secular LGBTQ community have prejudices towards queer Christians or believers is because they believe Christianity tries to move values that the mainstream community do not want to be included in e.g., the notion about monogamy. Christopher explained that it is quite difficult, because on one side one is considered part of the community while on the other side one has a different mindset and therefore stand out. All of the informants participating agreed that within the world of homosexuality and sexual diversity there exists a great deal of discrimination:

> […] it is hard because there exists discrimination within the [LGBTQ] community, a great deal, look! Religion is one thing, but they discriminate against you for everything; where you are from, what you work with, [and] where you studied. The gay world is extremely discriminative ("Christopher", ICM).[52]

The matter of marriage equality is on Chile´s agenda for the year 2018. Many will be watching with keen interest to see if the Government of Chile, and the newly elected president will be in favor of legalizing it rather sooner than later. PADIS, IELCH and ICM were in favor of marriage equality. Often ICM posts photos in solidarity of legalizing same-sex marriage on their Instagram and Facebook-accounts. However, even though they are in favor of it, the subject of same-sex marriage has been a topic up for discussion among a few of the members. Matias responded to a question regarding if he feels like a part of the secular LGBTQ community and he said that he feels a part of it because he is a part of it. However, Matias does not go clubbing, he does not live in the hip areas such as Providencia in Santiago. Matias told me that the gay men that are a part of the secular LGBTQ community do not live a profound life filled with purpose, and that there exists a kind of social climbing. After giving his thoughts about gay stereotypes, Matias confessed;

> (…) a more discussed topic is the matter of marriage equality with "Ferdinand", one opinion I did not consider much earlier, as I do right now is that we are fighting for the legalization of marriage equality, but I know that

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[52] […] es duro porque existe discriminación dentro de la comunidad, tanto mira; y la religión ser una, pero te discriminan por todo; de dónde vienes, que trabajo tienes, donde estudiaste. El mundo gay es súper discriminado ("Christopher", ICM).

people that are gay do not know how to have a relationship inside it [the marriage] or how to have a long-lasting relationship ("Matias", ICM).[53]

Considering the different reflections towards the secular LGBTQ community, as well as the prejudice the Christian lesbian women and gay men interviewed in this research faced based on faith, further questions regarding Gay Pride had to be asked. *Orgullo* Gay in Santiago is what is the topic of the next section.

6.3.2. Orgullo Gay

> We believe that the LGBT [people] that have a religion and are fighting for their right to believe, should fight for change in their church, and we believe that they have limited themselves to practice their religion rather than actually fight for their rights as LGBT and as believers (MOVILH).[54]

During my interviews I asked the informants what they think about *Orgullo* Gay and if they would attend events with the secular community for LGBTQ rights. The Pride Celebration is a celebration where sexual diversity is celebrated, and people have their right to be their true selves. The atmosphere is happy and "colorful". Amongst the informants, there was a mix between those who would attend, and those who would not attend this event. They each had their own thoughts about the parade, and many did not want to be identified or associated with the community that the march or parade represented. I received the same answers "It is a show", "it does not have any purpose" to my question on several occasions. At the same time, they saw the necessity of having Pride but only if there was a visible purpose behind it and not the show that they express as it is today. While conducting my research in Santiago, the organization MOVILH hosted Santiago *Parade* supporting the project of marriage equality and equal rights when it comes to the gender law. I attended this march and while waiting for it to begin I saw people dressed in costumes, drag-queens,

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[53] (...) lo más discutido con el tema de matrimonio igualitario con Ferdinand, de una reflexión que en algún momento yo no la sentía tan así, ahora así: que estamos luchando por una ley de matrimonio igualitario, pero lo supe las personas que son homosexuales no se saben relacionar entre ella, y tener relaciones como duraderas ("Matias", ICM).

[54] Creemos que los grupos LGBT que tiene una religión y que luchan por su creencia, deberían luchar en su iglesia por el cambio y creemos que se han limitado a vivir su religión antes que luchar por sus derechos como LGBT y ser creyente (MOVILH).

shirtless men and women, people drinking, dancing and banners all over. There was a party mood. Presidential candidates showed up to talk about how they would change laws if they won the elections. Including of Chile´s well known feminists also attended.

To raise awareness about the possibility of an accepting church and Christian communities, ICM, PADIS and IELCH had all attended this year´s and previous years *Orgullo* Gay and other marches and parades for LGBTQ rights and visibility. Only one group attended in the parade in favor of marriage equality and a new gender law. However, all groups had sent out invitations to their members prior to the parade. Still the number of people attending from IELCH, ICM and PADIS was quite low. I met IELCH in the march, they walked together with a big banner saying, "Jesus does not discriminate". While talking with them people took pictures and applauded them. Yet, marching as a Pastoral is challenging and not always greeted with a welcome;

> We join the march with this sign [Jesus don't discriminate], and some groups take photos, some look at us with trust (…) [and] there are some groups, because of their experience, or their negative experience with the Church, don't want anything to do with the Church and think that all Churches are similar: no [Church or Christians] serve nor will actually fight for their right ("Carlos", IELCH).[55]

One of Honneth´s three modes of recognition is self-respect that come from recognition as a citizen and that you have laws accorded to you (Anderson, 1996 p. xi). Tomas told me that he did not need to walk in the street holding a poster stating "I am gay" nor a sign saying "I am Catholic" for people to respect his identity as gay or as catholic. Tomas meant this principle applied to PADIS as a religious community as well; PADIS do not have to attend the march to show people that Catholics can be in favor of gay rights. It is not the rights that PADIS should have interests in, it is about spirituality and faith in a religious community. For Tomas a poster was not important for his identity nor his religious affiliation;

> I don't need to walk in the street with a poster that says "I am gay" to make people respect me, just as if I don't need a poster saying "I am Catholic" to make people respect me as a catholic. Therefore, I find it

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[55] Nosotros iremos a la marcha con ese letrero, por algunos grupos saca fotos, no felicitan, pero también hay grupos que nos miran con confianza (…) hay grupos que, por su experiencia y su mala experiencia con la iglesia, no quieren saben nada de la iglesia y piensa que todas las iglesias son iguales y ninguna sirve, ninguna va a luchar realmente por su derecho por lo tanto ("Carlos", IELCH").

ridiculous that [PADIS] the pastoral participates in a gay parade to state that we are a gay pastoral (…) A pastoral doesn't need to promote themselves. I do not need a law or to fight for a law, so I can be recognized as a believer ("Tomas", PADIS).[56]

Marcela in contrast to Tomas did enjoy *Orgullo* Gay and she was always carrying a banner that said something inclusive about homosexuality and religion. She was also one of the (after my impression) that actually enjoyed the secular LGBTQ community, as I have mentioned earlier, she went out dancing and she had a lot of gay male friends that she hung out with. She was also the contact person I had when receiving the information if PADIS will join the Santiago Parade that was held while I was in the field. Maybe Marcela is more open to the secular LGBTQ community due to the limited spaces regarded to lesbians, considering she is already in a group where the majority are gay men.

The issue about *Orgullo* Gay is perhaps in which Joshi´s theoretical framework of Respectable Queerness is at its most visible. For Christopher it was more about his Christian values that he did not attend the *Orgullo* Gay. He did not feel a part of the secular LGBTQ community because of what the mainstream community represented. The thoughts and impressions about the Gay community of Santiago were not new, several of the informants agreed on this. They did not want to be with the community where the general impression by Chileans is that everyone in the gay community has slept with each other, changed partners and used drugs, therefore they don't join in the parade or march either;

> I have a strong Christian principle, you know (…) Therefore MOVILH and all those organizations promote a lifestyle that I don't like. I believe in monogamy, I believe in the stability of the couple, this type of view (…) because MOVILH for example, I am not against partying, but to host a party in the city centre that is pure sex? (…) Because of that I feel aside [in the LGBTQ community] ("Christopher", ICM).[57]

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[56] Yo no necesito andar en la calle con un cartel que diga "soy gay", para hacer me respetar. Tal cual no necesito andar en la calle con un cartel que diga "soy católico" para hacer una respetar que soy católico. Por tanto, encuentro como ridículo que la pastoral vaya a participar en una marcha homosexual diciendo, así como "somos la pastoral homosexual" (…) Y una pastoral no debería promocionarse. Yo no necesito ser una ley o necesito luchar por una ley, para que a mí me pueden reconocer como creyente ("Tomas" PADIS).

[57] "¿Yo tengo mi principio cristiano súper mercado, ¿cachaí? Entonces, MOVILH y todas estas organizaciones promueve un estilo de vida que quizás no me agrada. Yo creo en la monogamia, yo creo en la estabilidad y de pareja y quizá este tipo de visión (…)

Oscar had answers similar to Christopher´s, except Oscar said that he did not wanted to care about the *Orgullo* Gay because of his more conservative opinions (in addition to his age and because he seeks a more spiritual place and community). Oscar has similarly strong Christian principles to Christopher and all his relationships have lasted between four to ten years. When Oscar starts a new relationship he always asks himself "this will last?". While the common thoughts about the men in the secular gay community are usually promiscuity and no long-term relationships.

> It does not appeal to me [the *Orgullo* Gay]. I focus more on the spiritual in a pastoral (…) I believe that the *Orgullo* Gay does nothing in our favor. Perhaps it is my more conservative view or my age (…) [They] [people in the parade] are men in disguise, a parody of homosexuals. I don't like it. I see it as a carnival not as something more serious or profound ("Oscar", PADIS).[58]

Rafaela explained that this is a discourse because the LGBTQ community want laws and want to be taken seriously by the state, yet they make the parade and demonstrations as a show and a carnival in a way that reproduces what society is already thinking, therefore the effects can be varied:

> Here we have a discourse, right? Because in the end we are reproducing what the society does, what society thinks ("Rafaela", IELCH).[59]

Some of the informants did not want to feel associated with the secular LGBTQ community because they were afraid or did not want people thinking they are like that as well; promiscuous, not monogamous, snobby. Because of this motive some informants and several members of PADIS, IELCH and ICM did not want to attend *Orgullo*. They were already skeptical as to how

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Por que el MOVILH, por ejemplo, no estoy en contra de la fiesta. ¿Pero hace una fiesta en el centro de la ciudad que es puro sexo? (…) Por eso estoy poco aparte" ("Christopher", ICM).

[58] Es que no me llama la atención (…) Yo lo veo más por el lado espiritual de pastoral (…) La marcha Orgullo Gay no me llama la atención, yo creo que no hace un flaco favor. Tal vez es mi visión más conservadora, por mis años. (…) hombres disfrazados en forma caricatura de homosexuales, no me gusta. (…) yo lo veo como un carnaval, no como una cosa más seria, más profunda ("Oscar", PADIS).

[59] ¿Tengamos un discurso no? Porque al final estamos reproduciendo lo que la sociedad repite, lo que la sociedad piensa ("Rafaela", IELCH).

their loved ones, family and friends would react and think when and if they "came out". Perhaps especially for gay men where expectations regarding masculinity are taught strictly. Tomas told me that he would not join any event (except PADIS) for gay men and women because he believes they fight for nonsense.

Even if members of these Communities did not want to associate themselves with pride or the secular LGBTQ community, ICM and IELCH had different events taking place on particular days such as Valentine's Day or during the gay parade itself; Matias and other priests from ICM take to the streets to give their blessing to same sex couples. IELCH also gives blessings to same sex couples, however not during these events, but by booking priests. If you want to receive blessings in the congregation one has to be a member, otherwise the priests from Iglesia Evangelica Luterana can travel where it is requested.

6.3.3. Reproduction of Heteronormativity

This part will focus on the reproduction of heteronormativity. Note that this will not be taken as one of the main topics in the discussion. I have decided to include it in this Chapter because it is an important aspect and perhaps can be of use in future studies.

In relation to questions regarding gender differences and if *machismo* had an impact on the gay and lesbian life in Chile, an interesting observation in relation to discrimination was that within the gay and lesbian community (not specifically in PADIS, IELCH and ICM) there were a common prejudice of the feminine, either in relation to gay "feminine" men, or in relation to how women is viewed. As illustrated Tomas mentioned that relationships between lesbian women is more passionate and long-lasting, while men are more caught by desire and therefore not having the same long-term and passionate relationships (see chapter 6.2.3). This is something Tomas have been told by his lesbian friends and not something he has created the image of himself. The spokesman of MOVILH that I interviewed he told me this:

> Article §365 in Chile´s Penal Code establish that the age of a gay person and the age of sexual consent is 18 years, and the age for a heterosexual person is 14 years. (…) This law has yet to be changed. This law only applies to homosexual men and not lesbian women, because what is important and effect the *machistas* is the

penetration with penis, if there is no penetration with penis it is not a crime. It is a law that is used to discriminate and we [MOVILH] demand it to be repealed (MOVILH).[60]

The Penal Code §365 is already considered to be one of the most discriminative in Chile´s Penal Codes, because it distinguishes between age of sexual consent between persons of the same and opposite sex. What MOVILH explained with this quote is the influence of the *machista* culture in what is considered sexual. The concept of penetration with penis excludes sexual encounters between two women. The heteronormativity is outside as well as inside the community of sexual diversity, with different perspectives on how relatable the definition of *machismo* is in Chilean society today. These groups are focused on the inclusion of Christians identifying as LGBTQ, still there was a lack of women attending these groups, and trans people even more so. Where were they? The reproduction of heteronormativity caught my attention, so I had to ask the informants for further information. No one had the exact answer to why there were less women or trans people in these communities. Mostly because this world is more private and secretive in Chile. There is less information about the lesbian community and they are more challenging to reach out to. The reason for this might be the expectations of what and who the ideal women are because of *marianismo,* as we have seen from what have been said earlier in this Chapter by the informants. A similar thought with the reduced number of transgendered people participating in these groups. ICM was the only Church that had a member that was trans, other than that, it was not very common. Tomas e.g. told me that he believed the *machista* culture in Chile belonged to the older generation of his parents and that it will be completely gone in the Chilean culture with the generation coming of age now. The only place Tomas claimed *machismo* still had a strong presence was in rural areas of the country. Oscar on the other hand believed that *machismo* was and is still fairly robust in the Chilean society as well as within the gay community and believes it will be difficult to eliminate.

Feminine lesbian women were not taken seriously about their sexuality because lesbians were only viewed as masculine women. What is interesting with this aspect as well, is that no one

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[60] En Chile hay un artículo, el 365 del código penal que establece que la edad de una persona gay, edad de consentimiento sexual es de 18 años, y la de una persona heterosexual es de 14 años. (...) Todavía esta norma no se deroga. Esta norma solo aplica a homosexuales y no a las lesbianas, porque lo que importa para efectos legales machistas es la penetración con pene, si no hay penetración con pene no es delito. Es una norma que se usa para discriminar y que nosotros pedimos que se derogue.

mentioned transgendered female-to-male, the informants only spoke about male-to-female transgendered. When Marcela came out to her parents they did not believe her at first because she is a fairly feminine woman;

> The society is very labelled here in Chile, I do not know if it is similar in all of Latin America, however it is labelled like for example that lesbians are more masculine, as they say. You always have to see a more masculine [woman] with a feminine [woman] or both have to be masculine […] additionally [people believe] if you are a lesbian it is because you had a bad experience with a man, or things like that. All the boyfriends I had were good, the majority were nice, normal ("Marcela", PADIS).[61]

Carlos told me that there are still different views on gay men that take the active role during sexual activities and those who do not. The one that penetrates is viewed as stronger and more masculine than the one who takes the passive role during sexual intercourse. However, Carlos was the only informant that answered with this perspective when I asked him about the reproduction of heteronormative thoughts and norms. Still, all men and women, gay or straight that I interviewed said the association to femininity was the most difficult subject in the society when it comes to *machismo* and how the sexes/genders are viewed. Furthermore, Carlos told me that there exists a great deal of discrimination towards trans people. This is especially regarding men that cross-dress or transition to become female. The prejudice is common among gay masculine men in Chile, whereby is it asked, "why would a man dress in womenswear and behave as women, when being a man is better than being a woman?"

> (…) I am very interested in matters relating to gender within sexual diversity, for example for men it is very repulsive, and they discriminate trans people a lot because they see a woman […] so the gay *machista* say "no", because to be a man is better than being a woman ("Carlos", IELCH).[62]

Further into the interview Carlos told me;

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[61] La sociedad tiene marcado acá en Chile, no sé en todo Latino América, pero tiene marcado que las lesbianas son más masculinas, como se dice. Siempre tiene que ver una más masculina y la otra más femenina y dos masculinas y eso y también tiene marcado acá que tú eres lesbiana porque tu tuviste una mal experiencia con un hombre, o cosas así […] yo todos los pololos que tenido bueno, la mayoría fueron súper bueno, sea nórmale, no nada («Marcela», PADIS).

[62] (...) me interesa mucho a mi […] el tema de género en la diversidad sexual, por ejemplo, para los hombres es muy ofensivo y discrimina mucho los travestis por que se vistan una mujer, por qué descienden. entonces el gay machista dice no pude, que ser hombre mejor de ser mujer. ("Carlos", IELCH).

I believe it lacks information about the dynamics of gender […] there exists a lot of jokes about flamboyant gay men, we call them *"la loca"* [the crazy]. A *loca* is one very feminine [gay man], who has a lot of gestures like women, who moves their hips a lot. So, the heteronormativity as if being heterosexual is the superior norm. [But] there does not exist a superior way on how to be gay! ("Carlos", IELCH).[63]

In what Carlos told me about gay *machista* men being offended by gay men that are more feminine strengthens Joshi´s theoretical framework that some gays are "better" than other. The *machista* gay man will have the upper hand in the gay community in Chile. They are the ruling and in relation to the respectable queer (Joshi 2012) they have the power structures of the heteronormative hegemony behind their judgement. The gay masculine man is still in this way sustaining the acceptable mundane behavior after the social norm that are considered respectable (Joshi, 2012, pp. 419, 460). Carlos believe the men he was referring to saw being gay *machista* as the superior.

6.4. Summary of Findings

In this Chapter, I have presented the findings and observation from the data collected in Santiago. The first part mostly focuses on how the informants have manage to unite and recognize their Christian and their sexual identity. I have emphasized the effects and experiences with their identity and life they had before and after discovering these three Communities. Additionally, I covered diversity of gays and lesbians who belong to different Christian denominations attending these Christian Communities of sexual diversity, as well as the challenge of permanency in attending members.

I have presented the difficulties informants experienced when coming out and being open, including where they have chosen to be open and where they have remained private with their identity. Because of the private versus public space I had to include the part where I illustrated the

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[63] Yo creo que falta informacion acerca de dinamicas del genero […] En Chile también existe mucho ridiculicen del gay muy afeminado, le llamo la loca. Una loca es una afeminada, mucho gesto de mujer que mueve mucha la cadera y los gays serien mucho de ellos. Entonces esta *heteronomatividad* si como lo hetero de repente se instalado de una norma mejor. No hay una forma mejor de ser gay ("Carlos", IELCH).

lack of lesbian representation in the different groups, which can be a result of that group being even more secret than other gay communities.

Reaching the end of this Chapter I have presented data that show the discrimination the gay and lesbian Christians receive from the secular LGBTQ community, but also how some of the informants' distance themselves from the secular community. Christian principles do not go hand in hand with the general community because of differences in purposes.

In the following Chapter of the discussion, I will focus on the parts involving recognition, identity and community, private and public space and what consequences might follow one´s religious identity in relation to the secular LGBTQ community.

7. Discussion

In this Chapter I will discuss the main aspects that emerged in my findings presented in Chapter 6. My principal research question was:

> In what ways does being part of a Christian community of sexual diversity affect religious and sexual identity for gays and lesbians in Santiago, Chile?

Chapter 6 emphasized both positive and difficult aspects of living a religious gay life in Santiago. Informants participating in this study have met struggles from within and outside their familiar and religious settings and communities. Many of them left their former church after coming out, and for many years they were not active in any other religious communities or churches. When they discovered PADIS, IELCH and ICM and after frequently attending services and masses there, they experienced a growing amount of acceptance of their religious and sexual self. However, with growth of one´s identity, other challenges and perspectives emerges.

In this chapter I will aim to discuss essential topics that have emerged from the findings of my fieldwork. The first involves recognition in within identity, faith and community. The second concerns the changing of private and public space, and the third is regarding the distance between identities within the sexual diversity.

7.1. The Struggle for Affirmation

As illustrated in Chapter 6, there is a battle between one´s identity and religion. Based on what informants participating in this study have expressed and experienced, the internal conflict of not being good enough and that they are not what God have created them to be.

In the two following sections I will discuss the reconciliation of two conflicting identities and how one reaches that stage. In section 7.1.1. I will emphasize the desire and struggle on achieving double recognition between sexual identity and religion.

In section 7.1.2. I will focus on the importance of having a community that accepts one for who they are and how this can generate personal growth from the beginning, during and in the end of the journey towards self-acceptance and independency. In both sections I will utilize Honneth, Taylor and Scott to illustrate the relation between the data collected and the theories that are used for this thesis.

7.1.1. Double Recognition

In the following section I will discuss the concept of recognition in relation to where the informants feel a sense of affirmation. The concept of double recognition illustrates the relationship between the importance of self-affirmation of having a gay and lesbian identity and simultaneously a Christian identity. Double recognition creates a relationship where both identities are no longer considered separate but rather converge. I wish to begin this part with the discussion on what double recognition is. Double recognition can either signify the yearning for achieving recognition and acceptance of self, while simultaneously feeling recognized by an LGBTQ community. Alternatively, double recognition could involve the affirmation of one´s sexual identity while simultaneously feeling recognized within one´s faith. i.e., self-acceptance is not enough to build self-confidence. The feeling of solidarity within a group is also important to the concept and experience of double recognition. Perhaps it is not that important for the informants to receive recognition from a secular LGBTQ community and at the same time receive it from the religious community of sexual diversity. They may have, prioritized and narrowed down where they wish to receive affirmation from.

When presenting the informants difficulties and experiences of accepting themselves as gay and lesbian in their Christian identity when they attended their former churches, resulting in them leaving their communities. The minority of the informants told me that they did not lose their personal faith in God and Jesus as their Savior, but rather their possibility of expressing their religion. The majority left their local church and stopped practicing their faith, the due to discrimination, lack of acceptance, and the feeling of guilt because their former church did not recognize their sexual identity. While living out their sexuality in secret and in constant shame, they always felt something else was missing and that was the affirmation from a Christian

community. They expressed that they longed for a place where they were recognized regardless of who they loved. My research shows that ICM, PADIS and IELCH can be a part of the informants` journey towards a more complete self-acceptance and achieving double recognition. Before that, merging those two identities was impossible to many. Charles Taylor (1991) explained a person` desire to be true to themselves in their authentic individuality (Taylor in Fielder & Ezzy, 2018, p. 61). The desire to be true to oneself without guilt and shame was a longing for the informants. For many religious, as well as non-religious LGBTQ-people, the feeling of what is considered morally right and wrong is often influenced by external factors has been and perhaps still is a strong presence in their lives. The external influences from the general society, the church community and their religious belief; this is three different factors that influences the moral accent of Christians that are homosexual. Due to this the feeling of guilt based on one´s same sex attractions might increase (Taylor, 1991, p. 26). Previously mentioned, the informants expressed the difficulty of unifying the two identities. Many therefore left their Christian identity that was expressed in being active in Church, however they kept their personal faith in God. Even though they might live out in correspondence with their homosexuality, they were not true and sincere to their Christian identity. This is what created the room for longing, they were still in a way dependent on communication of morals and recognition, not only from God, but from these Communities, as messengers to the affirmation in God (Taylor, 1991, p. 27). In this way, their path to full authenticity was though a shared spirituality with other members. When displacing their moral accent from the religious expectations of heteronormativity and following their own inner voice, they felt they could accept themselves. Recalling that several of the informants had hoped and prayed that they would change when they became aware of their same-sex attraction, because the societal expectations are to be heterosexual (see chapter 6.1.1.) Despite of that, these Communities in this study were great guides on how to listen and approve of one's inner voice and actions.

One way to achieve double recognition, as both a Christian and as a gay or lesbian, is to participate in masses and services. An *Active Participation* includes, physically using one`s body to reconcile yourself and God during the masses, in contrast a *passive participation*, when one cannot express their faith in practice. This can reconcile the two identities. Instead of using the word safe-space, Yvette Taylor (2016) developed the concept of "Spaces of reconciliation", the space where one is given space to reconcile within one´s identity. Taylor illustrates one "Space of reconciliation" in regard to actively engaging in worship during services. With the use of modern

styles of music that are mixed with more traditional music, so it mirrors the complexity of faith, age, music and sexuality. Queer youth are enabled through actively participating in something like the worship music team and take part *in* Christianity and to be a part of the Christian community (Taylor, 2016, p. 11). One could relate that aspect in relation to PADIS, ICM and IELCH, because they have created "Spaces of reconciliation", however music was not used in the same manner as Taylor uses it. Still I would consider participation in the holy communion in PADIS and ICM a space of reconciliation. These Communities invite members to join the priest holding the bread and wine and to say the blessing to each person in line. Anyone can take part in the holy communion. This was clearly expressed by Marcela when she emphasized during my interview with her (see chapter 6.1.1.), that she felt complete for the first time she received the holy communion in PADIS. This is a perfect example of an active participation that bring together the two identities, where one does not only receive, but can also participate in Christian rituals. By actively participating one can reclaim their right to be and believe.

The informants presented in this study expressed that they had a great focus on God`s love for them. PADIS, IELCH and ICM focused on the teaching of God`s love, regardless of sexual orientation. The result of this is the feeling that informants receive when they go to a mass or service where they are valued in their identity as Christians simultaneously with being gay and lesbian. This can also result in the incomplete acceptance of oneself, because it was not enough to have the secular acceptance of sexual identity to achieve the double recognition, they also needed recognition from a religious community. Taylor (1990) combines the *Ethics of Authenticity* of gay and lesbian Christians yearning to be open about their sexual and gender identities, and not to live after the societal and religious expectations and norms that contradicts who they truly are. In this way, he argues that desire, integrity and morality are combined with demands that it is wrong to hide one`s true self, and that they have the moral responsibility to follow their true self (Taylor 1991 in Fielder & Ezzy, 2018, p. 17). Based on the experiences and what the informants have expressed, I can argue that the experience of liberation of one`s identity, has been crucial for them to feel a sense of complete recognition within self. If we recall the example of the tranquility Christopher experienced after he was forced to tell his mother he was gay, was liberating to him, subsequently he did not have to hide anymore, and ICM helped him with being strong and confidence in his identity and faith, also when that event occurred (see chapter 6.2.1.).

For Honneth (2012) recognition means the possibility to feel independent and experience inner freedom that creates self-realization as an individual (Honneth, 2012, p. 205). Charles Taylor and Axel Honneth share the perspective of recognition as an essential human need based on interpersonal relations with others, and the need for different modes of recognition. Without these three modes; self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem, one cannot achieve complete self-realization. Honneth views the experience of non-recognition as a grave form of social injustice, because this will hinder the personal growth of a one`s identity (Kompridis, 2007, p. 278). Professor Nancy Fraser (2003) in contrast to Honneth, argued that recognition might not stop injustice (Fraser & Honneth, 2003, in Kompridis, 2007, p. 278). Recognition alone cannot stop injustice, however based on my research I dear to argue that recognition from a Community can help one ignore the injustice one experience outside of that group. Additionally, recognition can guide one to reach a state of complete acceptance of one's authentic and independent self. Honneth`s three modes of recognition involve as we recall (see chapter 3.1.1.) self-confidence that is based on love, and self-esteem that is based on solidarity. Self-respect that is based on legal rights is not the first priority of the informants, however they rely on the love and solidarity to grow self-confidence and self-esteem and reach the double recognition.

Bronwyn Fielder and Douglas Ezzy (2017) map a step process that individuals go through from when they are faced with the anxiety between their homosexuality and their religious belief. The step-process was developed by Patricia Reeves (2011) and is based on a study of Christian gays and lesbians' experiences before reaching the stage of integration. This is a kind of identity transformation between the two otherwise conflicting worlds (Reeves 2011 in Fielder & Ezzy, 2017, p. 13). One of the stages encompasses the *initial response*, i.e. the internal conflict that occurs when one becomes aware of one's same-sex attraction. Within the initial response, the process includes the denial of same-sex attraction, secrecy and the hiding of one´s sexual identity, and lastly, a change of location or being less involved in the church. Changing location and the influences in one`s surroundings can help to resolve and reconcile with their internal conflict. By stopping their attendance in church or by relocating away from what is familiar, gay and lesbian Christians have time to reflect and get to know one´s identity. By separating themselves from the church and the community they grew up in, they were able to break away from the chains of strict religious behavior that contradicts with their same sex attraction. This does not only make room for reflection, but also allows for the new relationships, free from the influences of the past, and

one can listen to their inner feelings and judgments. Through the fieldwork Fielder and Ezzy conducted, they learned that the majority of their informants never felt leaving the church changed their faith in God nor did they believe that God abandoned them, even though they were struggling with the Bible and its doctrine. The biggest struggle was to integrate their sexual identity within their religious belief (Fielder & Ezzy, 2017, pp. 101-107). The findings from the fieldwork conducted by Fielder and Izzy confirms similar findings in my research. I argue based on my informants' experiences, that the change of locations, either by keeping one´s distance from religious communities or by changing church communities was necessary for personal development within their religious and sexual identity, including that they learned what they were missing and in need of a Christian Community that embraces sexual diversity. Stopping church attendance for a while to have some time and reflect about their situation was important in breaking the chains with some of the guilt from their religion. Perhaps, it was easier to grow in their identity as gay before growing in their identity as Christian to handle the challenges they had earlier experienced in religious communities. When they discovered a community that could grant them this double recognition, they were then able to return to both religious activities and practice the faith they kept within. Yet, when they discovered these Communities where they could practice their faith with others in mutual recognition as gays and Christians, self-esteem and confidence increased.

By being able to actively participate and being able to reflect on one` identity is illustrated here as ways to achieve complete self-acceptance. I have illustrated how the Christian Communities of sexual diversity affected religious and sexual identity for gays and lesbians by providing the bases for a double recognition of their identity. Both with self-acceptance and in their Christian faith and community.

7.1.2. Community and Recognition

Honneth (2012) views social communities as instruments to achieve recognition, and instruments that people depend on in regard to belonging to a group that recognizes them as beings. (Honneth, 2012, p. 206). My data shows that being able to attend and be a part of a Christian Community of sexual diversity, like PADIS, IELCH and ICM, have aided the informants in developing a positive relation-to-self. Participating in these groups was an essential instrument in their journey to achieve

self-confidence and self-esteem. Throughout Chapter 6 we have come to know these Communities as supports through the process of coming out, as well as for the opportunity they provide to return practicing their religiosity. These Communities create spaces to reconcile, either in worship, communion, or in small communities where people can share their exercises and increase knowledge about themselves and others in their identity and in their Christian faith. Introduced in Chapter 4, Professor Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle (2014) conducted a study regarding gay, lesbians and transgender Muslims emphasizing reconciliation between sexual orientation and Islam and how these support groups contribute to identity formation (Kugle, 2014, p. 2). In his conclusion of Kugle argues that the support groups involved had the intention of providing a safe-space for their members. In turn, this safe-space granted participants the freedom to become acquainted with their true selves, to increase their confidence, to be who they really are and to genuinely worship God (Kugle, 2014, p. 195):

> Identity formation is the key to worshipping God sincerely. One needs to know the self deeply in all its conditions, limitations and transcendental potential before one can really know God: and conversely, the spiritual quest to know and worship God is the means to gain the authentic knowledge of the self (Kugle, 2014, p. 195).

Kugle (2014) argues that one has to know oneself before it is possible to worship God in pure authenticity (Kugle, 2014, p. 195). This understanding, that you have to know yourself before you can genuinely love God, echoes what Tomas told me about the theme-week in PADIS, emphasizing reconciliation with self and God. Tomas learned, based on what he experienced and though PADIS the difficulty of reconciling with God when he cannot be at peace with himself. Reconciliation of identity and faith is crucial in the total acceptance of self. Kugle focused on gay, lesbian and transgender Muslims in his study, but with the same emphasis on uniting the religious and sexual identity within Islam, through community. The support groups he followed were similarly to the groups that I have observed in this research. They created space for praying and reflection. ICM, IELCH, PADIS were initially created to provide a space for Christians who identify as gay or lesbian to learn, get to know themselves, and worship God in honesty and with complete love. Being able to do all of this in togetherness has perhaps been a crucial detail in reaching "the end" of their process of coming out and embracing their faith and religious community.

It is fruitful to relate back to Honneth´s theory about the "I" in "WE" (2012). It shows that, when people do things together in group activity the mental distance between the participants in the activity fades. This creates an affective harmony and makes people feel as a part of a group (Honneth, 2012, p. 210). When Communities like IELCH or PADIS open their doors to heterosexual people that are curious to learn more about religion and sexual diversity, they too join in the same church-activities together with the other members. Doing something together causes the mental boundaries between groups to disappear. Suddenly, the differences in who they love is no longer important because they all believe in and worship the same God and join the same activities. The boundaries between their distinct Christian confessions disappeared as well with the worshipping and sharing of experiences with the group. What is illustrated in the findings is that these Communities are quite inclusive when it comes to make use of other Christian traditions in one service, as well as the diversity between its Christian members. There were people from other churches that was seeking the "I" in "WE" because they needed a Community. It did not matter if one was Mormon and the other one Catholic.

Even though these Communities are different from the mainstream Catholic Church and other denominations, several similar characteristics remained the same. ICM and PADIS held services like any other church, the only difference was the focus on the inclusion of sexual identity of the group's members, both in preaching and in teaching. Many people who attended PADIS, IELCH and ICM did not remain in their former churches because of discrimination or because of other negative experiences. The informants participating here never lost their personal faith in God in the first place. Rather they took distance from their local church community or continued to attend services while they were hiding their sexual identity or were afraid of coming out. Based on the informants experiences I can argue that these groups that created a space to feel as a part of the religious community again, without being told that they were living in sin or that they had to change their sexual identity has been liberating to them. This have also made them stronger in dealing with the recognition they do not receive other places, because to them, these Communities are the basis in where their search for affirmation within their religion lie.

Reflection and knowledge of self are crucial for personal growth, because as we know, knowledge is power. By using an educative approach IELCH as group of sexual diversity do not host services, but they host workshops, however their Church, *Iglesia Evangelica Luterana* have services (see chapter 5.3.). Carlos explained that the aim of IELCH is to provide a safe-space for

reflection and questions about Christianity and homosexuality. Based on what the informants have expressed in my research, having space and giving space to reflect and to share one´s opinions and experiences has been crucial in these Communities when seeking solidarity. I argue that the basic need of meeting others that confirmed their frustration and supported them in their situation was an essential factor in achieving the state of a more complete recognition, or the step towards coming out. The pursuing of groups where people have the similar status and backgrounds are important for people that are connecting their "I" in "WE" and continue maturing in their identity (Honneth, 2012, p. 214). The Communities seek to facilitate the experience of recognition from other whom are the same as them. Other lesbian and gay Christians that need to know that they are not alone. Scott (1990) asks the important question of why marginalized subcultures who have less social power than the ruling (dominant) culture have a more noteworthy level of conformity within their groups? Scott answers his own question with referring to that the marginalized often lived together in neighborhoods outside of the direct eye of the ruling elite, those who decide the norm and morality of the society (Scott, 1990, pp. 129-131). We can transform this when the Christian gays and lesbians are in Communities like PADIS, IELCH and ICM. They do not live together or are in the same neighborhood, still these Communities function as a place for them to be free and away from the norms that the ruling elite has on them. At least the norms regarding their same-sex attraction and their inclusion of worshipping God with an inclusive doctrine.

These religious groups of sexual diversity are locations that are similar to what Scott says of the location for hidden transcripts, that take place at taverns, pubs or other locations for people to gather (Scott, 1990, p.121). For the informants, gatherings in church has been essential in their journey to recognition. Here, they can talk freely with others on common ground and with shared experience of their struggles with harmonizing homosexuality and Christianity. They could have stayed within their local church communities, chosen to not live out their authentic selves. If they would have stayed in their former communities they would receive recognition of their Christian identity and faith, yet, they would not have felt complete in the community. Then the notion of double recognition would not have been achieved, because their true selves are hidden and does not "belong" in the setting of that group. The double recognition is missing, even in the shared group activities that create solidarity between members of the same group. Here there is a separation between Taylor´s Authentic (1991) self and Honneth´s concept of group recognition (2016). The individual might receive love from the other members, nonetheless he or she will never

feel a complete recognition, because the recognition received is only concerning the religious, and not the sexual identity. Similarly, Christopher expressed he was still struggling to comprehend some of his guilt, because of his sexual identity. Christopher is attending ICM and simultaneously participating in his Evangelical Church along with his family. In one community he can be himself, in the other he has to hide, and nobody knows about him. He is still a new attending member in ICM and will perhaps after some time come to a more reconciled self and let go of the feeling of guilt, because he has not yet finished his process or journey towards a complete self-acceptance. ICM offer Christopher what Honneth calls "redeeming respect" (Honneth, 2012, p. 206). Because he can come and be himself within that group and he feels acknowledged as gay and Christian for a moment.

These Communities are an instrument in guiding and supporting its participants through the journey or in the process. There are still people that come visit and then do not return. The lack of permanent attendance can illustrate several things, either that those who attend a mass once, feels complete and recognized and they got what they came for or those who attend once might already achieve total recognition before attending a community like PADIS, IELCH and ICM. Another factor could be fear of attending a community that is small and difficult to reach. This could be an obstacle for further attendance or perhaps it is because of pure curiosity they attend a mass not more than one time.

I have here discussed the importance of these communities as spaces of reflection and sharing of one´s experiences where together in community gay and lesbian Christians are able to create a sense of belonging and to achieve self-confidence. Following discussion of the feeling of recognition within a community, that creates solidarity with other members and space for reflection are elements of one`s journey in reaching self-acceptance of one´s religious and sexual identity.

7.2. Public versus Private

In the following part of this chapter I will discuss the concept of safe, private and public space. Based on illustrations of where the informants chose to be open, one can argue that there simultaneously are happening a redefinition of the notion of where one is safe and private, and where one has to wear a "mask". I will demonstrate this using Scotts` theory of Hidden Transcripts.

In section 7.2.1. I will discuss the redefinition of what is considered public and private and in section 7.2.2. I will emphasize the consequence of power-relations within marginalized groups that creates new hidden spaces, focusing on the lack of representation of lesbian in these communities.

7.2.1. Redefinitions of What is Public and Private Room

What is considered public and private space and spheres and where they are located is illustrated in Chapter 6 where I present the findings of how the informants told me about their relationships with their parents before and after coming out, spaces that are considered public and private might change from its initial definition. The home can suddenly be where the informants wear a "mask" to hide and behave as if they were straight and considered a public space. e.g. before the decriminalization of same-sex sexual activity in Argentina, it was specified in the constitution that "abnormal sexual activities that happened at home was not punishable by law" (Ben, 2010, p. 34).

If we recall, the ruling involves those in charge or are a part of what influences the society and norms, while the LGBTQ community is considered the marginalized and the one being dominated in this context (see chapter 3.2.1). The Communities were also considered private and safe, where they were unmonitored from the ruling church or congregation, and heteronormative expectations. The groups were hard to find, therefore a kind of approval to get accepted into the "inner circle" of Facebook was required. It is notable that when the members that are husbands with wives and children go out of the masses and life-groups with PADIS, their family is considered the public sphere to them. These men change between two worlds of private and public sphere. The ruling (dominant) being their wives, family and work, and the community is to them a secret world that they share with other gay men in different stages of openness. I use Scotts concept of changing worlds, where the one world is out of reach from the ruling, and the other world is monitored by them. This hidden world is what Scott call the "offstage" world of the marginalized (Scott, 1990, p.191). The one world that involves the safe Community they are gay men without "masks" seeking private spheres, while simultaneously living another life outside of that group. i.e., they are livig a double life. When they return home, it is as if they never went into the "other world" where they have the alternative identity. Marcela told me that they have an informal rule of not asking these men about their lives outside of the Community. At home they hide who they are,

while once every other Saturday they are following their authentic selves, however, with certain limits. They do not date anyone; they just attend to be who they are. If they develop love-relationships no one asks any questions, if anyone knows, they will keep it a secret due to the importance of privacy. Hence, the home and family may in the framework of this research be defined as a public space where one behaves in a social acceptable way and after the normative expectations. Here the public transcript of the ruling meets the hidden transcript of the marginalized (Scott, 1990, p. 13). When the informants moved to a different city or into their own flat, one can consider their flat their private space, and the home where their family lives the public. They hide or do not talk to their families about their personal life, either they the informants choose not to, or the family chooses for them. e.g., after coming out to one´s family they are considered the public and ruling, the only difference is, one´s sexual identity is no longer kept secret. Then it is established a kind of informal agreement or understanding that this is not a subject to be talked about if we recall to the experience of Marcela and Christopher (see chapter 6.2.1). Here, the parents are the dominant that chooses what is permitted as a subject to talk about at home and what is not, and when outside of the home, the "mask" that are "on" at the house are taken "off".

Grupo de Padres de PADIS (Group of fathers in PADIS) is also an instrument for merging gays and lesbians and the heterosexual world. The possibility that parents of gay sons and lesbian daughters attend together with them in PADIS to learn more about homosexuality and religion as Oscar told me, makes PADIS more balanced within the mainstream society. This is because it equalizes the two different worlds, so that the segregation does not increase. Oscar implied that *Padres de PADIS* is a blessing to the PADIS-community, because he thinks it is beautiful that the elder generation and parents wants to learn more about sexual diversity and religion (see Chapter 6.1.2.). The merging of the PADIS and *Padres de PADIS* change the public and private space and turns the concept of PADIS as something secret into the public space of the ruling; sexual diversity is suddenly the norm and the "ruling" marginalized. Normally in the presence of the public heteronormative culture they hide, but when "ruling" heteronormative group participate in PADS, the members do not have to wear a "mask" because they are not the marginalized anymore. *Padres de PADIS* learn the values, experience and behavior of the ones that normally are the one in hiding and follow the dominant society.

In this part I have discussed the redefinitions of what is considered private and public spaces based on the informants' experiences of where they are open and honest about their sexual identity.

I have also illustrated how the merging of the two "worlds" that are private, and public have reduced boundaries as well as created them, between its members of sexual diversity and people from the "outside" of the communities.

7.2.2. Gay Men "onstage" and Lesbians "offstage"?

There was quite a difference in the representation of lesbians, compared to gay men focusing on sexual diversity, the members were mostly gay men, and lesbians were always a minority in number. The notion of women being less represented in these Communities or in general is not a new phenomenon. When a group or community of sexual diversity is considered a private space for e.g. gay men, it is a risk of being considered a public space for another marginalized group, namely lesbian women and transgender men and women. Within a marginalized group there are existing power-relations or a hierarchy, wherein the private space is safe for some, but not for others. The ruling class are the gay men because they are both overrepresented in these Communities and because the prevalence of *machismo* is still affecting gender relations in general. This mirrors further the theory of Hidden Transcripts by Scott (1990): even though the same group shares the hidden transcripts or private space, it does not automatically mean it is a neutral power relation between the marginalized within that specific group. The settings where hidden transcripts emerge are a social product of the marginalized, and therefore also a result of power relations among the marginalized. (Scott, 1990, p. 119). Scott illustrates in his theory that the case of gender and women, highlights how separate the private and public spheres are. Specifically, women staying at home as private figures and men being bread winners in the public sphere (Scott, 1990, p. 22). What creates a difference between these two spheres is illustrated in this research, between gay men and lesbian women. Even though the marginalized group of lesbian women is represented in these Communities, the lesbian community is so secret it is difficult to reach. It is almost as if lesbian women are "unreachable", if you do not have the different apps or know exactly where they gather for events. The transcripts are not only private, they are hidden and mystical due to the difficulties of finding information about the lesbian community. Gay men might be the one "onstage" in Santiago, but "offstage" in the PADIS, IELCH and ICM, while women are "onstage" in the same groups, and "offstage" on digital platforms for lesbian women.

Men and women are wearing the "mask" of societal expectations and behavior in the public environment of Santiago. In the public environment, they do not dare to hold their partners hand scared of being harassed by other men, and instead pretend to act more similarly to a heterosexual man or woman. Because of the male-dominance regarding the number of members that are men in groups like PADIS, IELCH and other LGBTQ communities, it might feel strange and perhaps to some women, even threatening. The balance of importance in different matters can be decided and led, by gay men, which result in the creation of less space for women to be visible and heard. "They are not given a place to be heard" as Isabela told me. Carlos who claimed that lesbian women would want to have a space only for them, without the power and influence of men, illustrates in a way that women feel monitored by the men, as well as lack of autonomy in the safe-space. This can result in the choice of not going to PADIS, IELCH, ICM and other communities.

In this section I have discussed the redefinition of the private and safe-space and that it can change because within private spaces for gays and lesbians there are a different hierarchy of hidden transcripts. The constant change of private and public spaces can affect the visibility of the identity and behavior in these spheres.

7.3. Limits of Solidarity

Solidarity between the Christian and the secular gay are complex. Discrimination can be experienced based on religious belief or based on different values or prejudice. Informants in this study have experiences the skepticism from other gays and lesbians that are a part of the secular LGBTQ community, claiming that they are supporting something that does not support sexual diversity and rights. But it is vice versa. Similarly, the Christian gays and lesbians as expressed in this study, there are prejudices towards the secular LGBTQ community as well. By telling a person that is Christian that they support something that does not support the gay community, is similar by saying that the secular LGBTQ community does no good to the Christian gays and lesbians, because they create a negative image about the LGBTQ community and its members. In this section I will discuss the notion of Respectable Queerness and how this creates limits of solidarity between the communities and LGBTQ identity.

7.3.1. The Respectable Queers and *Orgullo* Gay

Respectable Queerness as introduced in section 3.3.1. involves the thought that one is morally superior than the other. This can be e.g., in relation to same-sex marriage. The same sex couples that wants to get married are following the heterosexual moral standards, that are considered more proper and correct. This notion creates a power structure within the sexual diversity (Joshi, 2012, pp. 459-460). In this research the Respectable Queer does not come in terms of marriage, but rather in terms of being the morally correct person or with the understanding of acting correctly. To the informants in this study the Christian principles and values are considered more respectable and right, than those of the secular LGBTQ community. This assumption could be in relation to the prejudice or stereotypical thinking of the mainstream. Christian moral principles do not go hand in hand with the parties of the secular LGBTQ community, are illustrated by the informants' experience of belonging in this study e.g., by not wanting to participate in *Orgullo* Gay or actively engage in activism. Scott (1990) argues in his theory of hidden transcripts that there are risks of being a private group like PADIS, IELCH and ICM, because they can become too private and isolated to reach for others outside of their community. If one group is too isolated and are only faced with the same shared values and visions, social perspectives of "us versus them" can emerge (Scott, 1990 p. 135). The notion of Respectable Queerness is shown in how the secular and religious LGBTQ community disagree of what kind of mobilization is important and how, including the morals and principles segregate them from having complete solidarity, due to the fact that members from both communities blame the "other" of weakening their identity or community in the society.

Generalizations based on differences between the religious and secular LGBTQ community is not a new phenomenon. Professor Sumerau (2014) illustrates from his study that Christians that identify as LGBTQ often adopt predominant Christian interpretations, as for example focusing on a committed relationship or choose to live in celibacy. By doing this the Christians that identify as LGBTQ distance themselves from the secular LGBTQ community (Sumerau, 2014, p. 3). This suggest that the secular LGBTQ community is the ruling elite with the use of Scott´s public transcripts, because they get defined as the "other", and practice long-term relationships, and if so, celibacy, is then considered a part of the hidden transcripts (Scott, 1990, p. 135). The perspectives of "us" and the "other" illustrates that there are different hierarchies of public and hidden transcripts within the marginalized groups, because they act differently among each other as well, perhaps in

a similarly to how they are using "masks" in the public presence of the heterosexual elite and society.

The notion of heteronormativity being reproduced in the gay communities was one of the observations not specifically related to the communities that I investigated, but in the general LGBTQ-community as a whole. When I emphasized the notion of this reproduction in section 6.3.3, I did it in relation to masculinity and femininity e.g., how men who embraces their masculinity looked down on other more "feminine" men. Being the Respectable Queer does not only have to be in relation of following culture and norms of heterosexual couples, but also include the behavior of being the more heterosexual in acting. e.g., by claiming one´s male pride and looking different on what is viewed as being more "correct" and "proper" man (Joshi, 2012, p. 419). A reflection that comes to mind is perhaps that femininity within masculinity and sexuality is more visible during *Orgullo* gay. The ones that does not want to be associated with the secular LGBTQ community, and the *Orgullo* event specifically, are the "respectable" the ones that keep the masculine pride, and more carefully hide the visibility of their queer identity. If we recall what Marcela said about the diversity within homosexuality, or Carlos´s comment that no one can claim to be the "better" or "superior" gay. The diversity in this sense are between the ones that choose to be (very) public and those who choose to be (very) private about their sexual identity. Respectable Queers aim to "live" after the heteronormative behavior, and therefore keep their sexual identity private (see chapter 3.3.1)

According to Joshi (2012) respectability can be understood as a coping mechanism for gays and lesbians, which imply that they maintain a public respectable social identity, and remain private with their sexual identity (Joshi, 2012, p. 448). There is absolutely nothing wrong with segregating one´s private and public life. But is this coping mechanism healthy if it is based in the fear of being misunderstood of not being the "good and proper" gay, to the general heteronormative community? It might perhaps be grounded in the reason to not "stand out" more than necessary, if they have had an oppressed feeling of being different, in earlier life.

It is important to note, that the "us" versus "other" that can be a consequence of the hidden transcripts, is not only in consideration to Christian gays and lesbians distancing themselves from the secular community. The secular LGBTQ community is also distancing themselves from Christian gays and lesbians saying that they stand for something that is against them and that they are "selling themselves" to the ruling heteronormative and religious elite (Joshi, 2012, p. 459).

They are often stigmatized in the secular LGBTQ communities because of their belief and practice (Sumerau, 2014, p. 4). Christopher expressed that were very cautious about talking with his partners about his faith, not daring to ask them if they want to accompany him to ICM. They do not understand why he continued to believe or attend church. This is also something that Carlos told me; the mix of reactions when IELCH is participating in *Orgullo* Gay or other LGBTQ-events (see chapter 6.3.2).

The impression that I am left with after talking with the informants and analyzing what the they told me, is the thought that their right to believe and to be part of their Christian religion is what matters the most to them. Their thoughts regarding the *Orgullo* Gay as an event without purpose and that it represents the gay community and its member's in a negative way is comprehensible because they do not want to be generalized with what other values and morals e.g. partying, behavior and the understanding that it is impossible for two men to be in a monogamous relationship (chapter 6.3.2). It is important to note that I am not making a generalization here but rather explain what the informants implied, and they considered to be "stereotypical" morals of the secular community. This is something that occurred from this research. A question worth answering is if these Christian Communities of sexual diversity affect their members participating in thinking about themselves as the "morally correct"? Do they become more morally conservative when attending these groups and embracing the Christian identity? This is especially in relevance to *Orgullo* Gay and the secular LGBTQ-community. Sumerau (2016) illustrated in his data that the non-religious, atheist "other" was seen as the morally untrustworthy and the poor representation of the LGBT community in general. Christopher implied as well that the secular LGBTQ community is often atheist, which also made him question his openness about his faith to his boyfriends and partners. Similar to Joshi (2012), Sumerau also explained a notion of the Respectable Queer, where the Christians identifying as LGBTQ in his research claim positive selves, while criticizing the morality of other groups. According to Sumerau this is a reproduction of social inequity and the marginalization of the non-religious; not just in the American context but also internationally (Sumerau, 2016, p. 1). Similarly, to the data collected in this study, Sumerau´s informants told him that the secular LGBTQ groups were responsible for giving the rest of the community and its members a bad name (Sumerau, 2016, p. 8). Respective informants in this study thought of the *Orgullo* Gay as purely sexual and a misleading understanding about the majority of the LGBTQ community. The title of Sumerau´s journal article is named "They Just Don´t Stand for Nothing"

(2016) is in accordance with Tomas´s and Oscars´s impression of *Orgullo* Gay and other gay events; that these events have no purpose and no consistency. If this reflection is something that arises after discovering and attending these Christian Communities of sexual diversity and groups, or not. Perhaps it could be in relation to their history of being afraid to live out their identity.

In light of the informants' expression of not wanting to be associated with the secular LGBTQ community, can perhaps reflect the fight and struggle they have already experienced in their faith, and religious communities. Having experienced the complex situation of not being recognized, one can imagine their perception that the secular LGBTQ community is making it difficult for the majority of the nation's citizens to accept gays and lesbians living and rights. If they feel as if the secular LGBTQ community is making it more difficult to maintain the respect the Christian gays and lesbians continue to strive for within their religious communities, it is coherent that taking that fight one more time in the mainstream society is not something that they would participate in.

In this section I have discussed the relations between the secular and the religious LGBTQ community and illustrated reduce the limits of solidarity. It is not about who, but about *how* and *where* these two, the religious and the secular LGBTQ communities choose to fight for their right to be, that creates limits in the solidarity between them. One fighting for their right of acceptance in the Chilean community with make-up, parties and parades and the other, fighting for their right to be and believe only within their religious communities.

7.3.2. Yes, to One Identity, No to Another

Discrimination and prejudice can be experienced within and among the members of the secular or the religious LGBTQ community. Within sexual diversity there will be even more diversity, and new power structures and discrimination will be unavoidable. People get judged, discriminated and not trusted because of who they are. Inside the subcultures (in these LGBTQ communities) they also have their own kind of patrolling which can result in differences creating the hierarchies of private and public space inside the marginalized subculture (Scott, 1990, p. 130). When they strive for years to be accepted and loved for who they are within their religion, does the struggle becomes so strong that one loses the identity of the general LGBTQ community? Based on my research I

can comprehend why it must be difficult embracing both the secular and the religious LGBTQ identity, because one might take too much space. To give a reminder of the concept of double recognition, perhaps *where* one experience recognition can potentially create the standard of what one´s identity contain? Those members of the three Christians communities that attend *Orgullo* Gay with a sign saying "Jesus does not discriminate" have experienced both negative and positive reactions towards their identity as Christian and as gay or lesbian. There are also people that choose not to attend because it is not considered important, referring to how the informants expressed that their faith is considered the most important to them. Another important aspect is, as the spokesman of MOVILH implied, that Christians identifying as gay and lesbian would fight for their right to believe within their church community, rather than fight for legal rights in addition to their right to believe (see chapter 6.3.2). Yet, do they have the same need to seek legal recognition as full citizens as their need of seeking recognition within their religious communities? In accordance to what some of the informants expressed and my interpretations, this is to some extent correct. Some are active in the mobilization of the right to marry, adopt and gender identity. Nonetheless, those who do not contribute to the mobilization, what message do they send? What separates the secular and the religious LGBTQ community and identity; is it primarily a difference in values and morals, or is it the difference in faith? Can the secular and the religious queer identity somehow converge and work together despite their different feelings towards religion and *Orgullo* gay?

Earlier discussed in section 7.1.1., Honneth´s statement that individuals need all three modes of recognition involving love, rights and solidarity in order to achieve complete self-realization. The second mode of recognition that involves legal recognition and the rights one is granted and one´s status as a full citizen, is not in total correspondence with the informants` battle for recognition (Honneth, 1996, p.109). Informants that participate in PADIS, IELCH and ICM that do not want to march in *Orgullo* Gay parade weakens that specific part of Honneth´s theory because they do not strive for legal recognition, but for love and solidarity within religious communities. Considering a few of the informants in this research did not focus on fighting for their right to be gay, they fought for their right to be a recognized gay believer within a religious community, e.g., Tomas` reconciliation with himself and with God was more important to him than fighting for his right to be recognized by the state or identity as a gay Christian citizen. For Tomas, PADIS is a spiritual place that should not have focus on legal rights, due to the fact that they are seeking the right to believe, but not legalization of a law. Tomas´s recognition is not granted by the

state, but rather though members of the Christian Communities where he is permitted to express his faith (see chapter 6.1.1). It seems as if it creates two new identities, where the conflict is no longer dwelling between sexual identity and faith, but it is now concerning which community or marginalized subgroup to belong to. Having the wish and goal to completely belong to your religion, can perhaps generate in letting go of the identity that "belongs" to the universal, or at least the secular LGBTQ community. The separation from the secular LGBTQ community and therefore the change of identity in the sense of where one belongs and wishes to belong increases. It is not only about the secular Community, it is perhaps more about the differences in values, and what is considered the culture in the community. My question here would be; but what are these values exactly?

In this study, even though the informants were out, and open, and self-accepting, sexual identity was still considered something very private. A few of the informants talked about their identity as if it did not matter to them about coming out or have the conversation about their life with their parents, long time colleagues or even some friends. This reflects Joshi´s (2012) separation of what one does in private and in public (Joshi, 2012, 446). To the informants in this study, their identity was very private to them, and even not something they would put attention to if not necessary. To be out and proud and attending events in the public eye is something that put too much attention and visibility on their sexual identity. In public, they do not show their *Queerness*, because their identity remains and belong in their private life and surroundings. As understand from the informants, it is not all about being visible, but rather the experience peace with their religious and sexual identity is the priority to many and perhaps it is a part of a survival instinct. One can think that not being open or semi-open to friends and family can be the result of fear, but it is also important to think that perhaps it is an approach of making it normal and the statement that it is not necessary to talk about it or show it to the public.

In this sections I have discussed the struggle of wanting to be respected as a gay Christian with the "correct" moral principles and how this risks the creation of two new contradictive identities, because Christian gays can think of the "other" as the community that ruins their struggle for acceptance within the general and the religious community.

8. Conclusion

One can have different opinions about the church and homosexuality, still, there is a group of people that strive to be *both* Christian and gay or lesbian. In this thesis I have tried to understand the experience of gay and lesbian Christians that actively engage in a Christian Community of sexual diversity. This research is a qualitative study where I have used methods as interviews, observations and participation to collect the data to answer the following research question and sub questions:

> In what ways does being part of a Christian Community of sexual diversity affect the religious and sexual identity of gays and lesbians in Santiago, Chile?

> 1. How do the communities contribute in the journey in achieving self-acceptance in their identity as gay and Christian?
> 2. In what way does having a Christian Community of sexual diversity create a private space, and what are the challenges?
> 3. How is the relation of solidarity between the Christian gays and lesbians and the secular LGBTQ community?

My findings illustrate the importance and the difficulties of being a part of a community like PADIS, IELCH and ICM. These groups have created a space for reflection and participation that enables the informant to return to actively engage in their faith and achieving double recognition of being gay or lesbian *and* Christian. Hence, the informants in this study, are all crediting their communities in teaching them how to accept and reach a state of complete peace with their religious and sexual identity. The way these groups have contributed in the journey is by creating a private space for reflection with others in similar situations. Yet, I have found that participants in these communities also seem to create certain limits to solidarity towards the secular LGBTQ community.

This study also shows that the informants faith in God did not fade away, but participation in their former church did, until the informants discovered a space where they felt

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welcome. Finding space not only for reflection and sharing of experiences, but also for being able to participate in these groups with other Christian gays and lesbians by one's side have been a crucial element in their journey towards self-acceptance. This research also shows that even though they are granted a safe-space, the informants are still forced to live a double life, because they are generally not open in all spaces. While they are open about their sexual identity within these Christian Communities of sexual diversity, everyone is not open outside of those walls and when they are home they put on a "mask" and hide their sexual identity.

Although these Communities are a place for people who are struggling with unifying their religious and sexual identity, this study illustrated that another conflict emerges; the difficulty of being a gay Christian and relate to the secular LGBTQ community. Because of different views on moral principles and behaviour, the solidarity between the participants in the religious and the secular communities is limited. Members of both communities claims that the "other side" is fighting for the less important and not for the majority of the people within sexual diversity.

In summing up, I argue that this study has shown in what ways a Christian Community that embraces sexual diversity as I have illustrated *is* important for two seemingly contradictive identities to unite and for the creation of ownership of one`s identity. Due to the fact that Chile still is a country where heteronormativity and the notion of *machismo* is strong, it is difficult to be the one that dear to stand out.

Communities like the ones in this research can function as a band aid solution until full acceptance within the mainstream Catholic, Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches, to name but a few. The informants participating in this study are content and express clearly their experience of personal growth and independency, including their recognition and reconciliation between their homosexual *and* Christian identity. This double recognition has been enabled by actively participating in a Christian Community of sexual diversity that have created a *safe-space* for reflection and teaching of how the religious and sexual identity may function together. Through this recognition they also build solidarity between other participants, knowing that one is not alone.

I argue that until the mainstream Christian communities can fully accept sexual diversity within their denominations, and even after that would be implemented, there is a *need* for groups like PADIS, IELCH and ICM for people on the edge of having to choose either their religious or their sexual identity.

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Attachments

Attachment 1: Interview Guide (Spanish)

Información personal

- ¿Quién es? Que estudias/trabajas? ¿Que son tus sueños?
- ¿Eres cristiano y también identifica como gay/lesbiana?
- ¿Creciste en una familia cristiana, entonces puedes decirme algo sobre crecer en una familia cristiana y el ambiente de dónde eres?
- ¿Cómo fue la experiencia de ser gay o lésbica en ese ambiente?
- ¿Cuándo saliste "el closet" y como fue esta experiencia? ¿Qué paso?
- ¿Cómo estas después saliste el closet a tu familia o tus amigos, hay diferencia?
- ¿Cómo dijiste a tus padres que eres gay y como reaccionaron?

Información sobre la iglesia y la vida religiosa

- ¿Cómo encontraste el grupo, y también fuiste/ o asistas a otras iglesias antes?
- ¿Cuándo encontraste a ese grupo de la diversidad, porque quedaste?
- ¿Cuándo asistió una iglesia donde no te bienvenida como cual, dejaste la iglesia y como afectado tu fe?
- ¿Estas involucrado en la iglesia cada semana o cada mes? ¿En los servicios o en un grupo estadio bíblico u otros eventos sociales?
- ¿Cómo estaba en las otras iglesias que fuiste? ¿Cuál son las diferencias?
- ¿Qué significa para usted de tener un espacio seguro donde puedes ser tal cual que lo hizo con tu fe?
- ¿Hay dialogo entre los grupos de la diversidad sexual que trabaja con las mismas cosas y visión de inclusión? ¿Si, dime más, o si no, por qué?
- ¿Que es lo más importante en tu fe y que significa para usted?
- Donde estarías en tu identidad de fe y sexualidad si no hubieras encontrado a un grupo como PADIS/IELCH/ICM?

- Piensa que es un gran desafío de ser Cristiano/Católico y también identifica como LGBT en Chile hoy en día?
    - ¿Y cómo es entre la iglesia?
- ¿Qué crees es la razón que falta lesbianas en estas comunidades? ¿Y crees que es en relación con el machismo?

Preguntas sobre Chile en general

- ¿Cómo es ser mujer lesbiana o hombre gay en Chile hoy en día, y cual son las diferencias?
- ¿Qué son las diferencias de ser mujer lesbiana que ser hombre gay en el ambiente LGBT en Chile?
- ¿Crees que la experiencia es diferente basado en la idea del género, como es tu experiencia?
- ¿Cómo es la idea del machismo en Chile hoy, en la cultura o entre la comunidad LGBT?
- ¿Qué piensa sobre el desarrollo de los derechos de LGBT en Chile o en Santiago?
- ¿Que son tus pensamientos sobre que la iglesia (católica, pentecostal o luterana) y su papel en el desarrollo de los derechos LGBT en Chile?
- ¿Te sientes bienvenida en la comunidad LGBT, o que son las diferencias de la comunidad LGBT general y los Comunidades cristianos de la diversidad sexual?

Personas que son cristiano y gay – y eligieron a dejar la iglesia

- ¿Porque elegiste a dejar la iglesia donde te asistió?
- ¿Si tu tenia mala experiencia dentro de la iglesia donde que asistió, que lo paso?
- ¿Cómo afectado tu fe cuando dejaste la iglesia?

Preguntas para los líderes de la Iglesia/groupo/comunidad

- ¿Qué significa esta iglesia para usted? ¿Y qué creas que significa para los miembros que asistirá este iglesia o grupo?
- ¿Que piensas son los razones que lesbianas y gays busca este tipo de comunidad, y queda o no queda aquí?
- ¿Que pensaste cuando elegiste de ser el líder de este Iglesia, ¿y por qué?
- ¿Cómo reaccionaron los miembros de la iglesia cuando tu saliste el "closet" a la congregación? Fue reacciones positivos o/y negativos?

- ¿Cómo fue la manera de ser públicamente una iglesia o grupo que apoyar a los cristianos gays y lesbianas y a los derechos LGBT?
- ¿Que son los desafíos de este Iglesia y el papel en la comunidad religiosa?
- ¿Cómo es con el apoyo o crítica por su forma de pensar y practicar la fe e inclusión de personas de la diversidad sexual?
- ¿Hay organizaciones que activamente trabajan por los derechos humanos de diversidad sexual: ¿AccionGay y MOVILH – como es con el dialogo entre las organizaciones y esa iglesia?
- ¿Cómo es ser parte de una iglesia que activamente trabaja para incluir personas de personas de la diversidad sexual? ¿Qué paso en el proceso de estar aquí donde es?

Ambiente gay
- ¿Cómo está la comunidad gay en Santiago en general?
- ¿Cómo es la relación entre la comunidad gay y la comunidad gay religiosa?
- ¿Cómo está o experiencia la discriminación y los prejuicios entre la comunidad gay porque eres religiosa?
- Crees que la los Cristianos gay y lésbicas tiene un concepto diferente sobre las personas de la comunidad gay en general, que es y por qué y que son tus experiencias?
- ¿Porque no o si, asistirás Orgullo gay u otros eventos de la comunidad gay y las organizaciones?

Sobre las organizaciones - MOVILH
- ¿Qué es MOVILH y dime algo sobre la historia de esta organización?
- ¿Qué tipo de eventos y actividades tiene y que es la enfoque ahora?
- ¿Dime algo sobre el desarrollo de los derechos humanos de la diversidad sexual en Chile?
- ¿Que son los factores positivos y los factores negativos por el desarrollo?
- ¿Qué derechos tienen las parejas de mismo sexo hoy en día en Chile?
- ¿Cómo trabajas activamente por la lucha de los derechos humanos de la diversidad sexual?
- ¿Dime algo sobre la Iglesia Católica y como es esta oposición de los derechos humanos específicamente de minorías sexual?

- Tiene contacto o dialogo con las comunidades religiosas como PADIS/ICM/IELCH? ¿Comunicarse con ellos, porque o por qué no?
- ¿Cómo trabajan juntamente para incluir a todas personas, secular y religiosa?

Attachment 2: Interview Guide (English)

Personas information:

- Who are you, what do you study/do/ and what are your dreams?

- Are you Christian/Catholic and identify as gay or lesbian?

- Did you grow up in a Christian family, if so can you tell me about growing up in a religious family and the environment where you are from?

- How did you experience being gay/lesbian in this environment?

- When did you "come out of the closet" and how did you experience that? What happened?

- How did you tell your parents?

- How have you been after you came out with your family and friends, are there anything different?

Information about the Church and religious life

- How did you discover PADIS/IELCH/ICM and have you been participating in other churches earlier?

- Why did you leave the other church or why did you choose to stay?

- When you attended a church where you did not feel welcomed as you are, did this affect your faith in any way?

- How frequently do you attend PADIS/IELCH/ICM?

- How have attended PADIS/IELCH/ICM helped you grow and stay secure in your identity?

- What does it mean to you to have a space like this group? Why is it important?

- What is the most important part about your faith?

- Where would you have been if you did not discover PADIS/IELCH/ICM in your faith and identity?

- What do you believe are the biggest challenges of being a gay Christian or Catholic in Chile today? – and how is it within the church?

- Do you believe the aspects of machismo have something to do with the less representation of lesbians in these community?

General question about Chile

- How is it being a lesbian women or gay man in Chile today?

- How does lesbians and gays experience Chile and the LGBTQ community differently from each other?

- Do you feel that the experience is based on the notion of gender differences, what is your experience (of being lesbian in a community dominated by gay men?)

- How is the notion of machismo today, in the culture or how is it present within the LGBTQ community as well?

- What are you think about the development of LGBTQ rights in Chile or in Santiago?

- What are your thoughts regarding the mainstream religious communities (Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal) and which role they have played in the development of LGBTQ rights in Chile?

- Do you feel welcomed in the (mainstream) LGBTQ community, and what are the differences between the general gay community or the Christian Communities of sexual diversity?

Persons that are Christian but chose to leave the church

- Why did you choose to leave the church you attended?

- If it was because of a negative experience in your former church, what happened?

- How did it affect your when you stopped attending in church?

Questions to the leaders/priests of the church/group/community

- What does this mean to you and what do you think it mean to the members attending this church or group?

- What do you think are the reasons why people leave/stay here and seek this community?

- What did you think when you decided to become a leader/priest of this church or group, and why?

- How did the members of the church react when you came out as gay? Have there been both positive and negative?

- How did this church/group arrive at the point where you publicly declared that this church support Christian gays and lesbians and are in favor LGBTQ rights?

- What do you are the challenges of this church/group, especially within the religious communities?

- How do you experience support or critics towards your opinions and actions of faith as a church when it comes to inclusion of people of sexual diversity?

- There are organizations that actively work in favor LGBTQ rights (AcciongGay, MOVILH etc.) – how is the dialogue between these organizations and this church?

- How do you experience being a part of a church/group community that that actively work with the inclusion of people of sexual diversity? Tell me about the process of how this church/community became what is today?

About Secular LGBTQ Community

- How is the mainstream LGBTQ community in Santiago?

- How is the relation between the religious and the secular LGBTQ community?

- How is or is the discrimination and prejudice experienced within the secular LGBTQ community because you are religious?

- Do you believe Christian gays and lesbians have a different concept about the LGBTQ community in general? What are these and why? – what is your experience?

- Why do you or do you not attend events like *Orgullo* gay and other activeties by the LGBTQ communities?

About the organization - MOVILH

- What is MOVILH and can you tell me about the history of the organization?

- What kind of events and activities do you host, and what are the main focus right now?

- Tell about the development of the development of human rights for people of sexual diversity in Chile?

- What re the positive and the negative factors of the development?

- What right does partner of the same sex have in Chile, today?

- How do you engage in activism and the promotion of LGBTQ rights?

- Tell me about the Catholic Church and their opposition of the human rights regarding sexual diversity?

- If you know anything about PADIS, IELCH and ICM do you in dialogue with them or other religious communities? Why or why not?
- How do you work together to include religious people in the secular LGBTQ community?

Attachment 3: Document of Confidentiality (Spanish)

Información sobre participación en este Proyecto

"Los Cristianos *Queer:* Explorar Iglesias como un espacio seguro por las personas cristianas que identifican como LGBT"

El Fondo del proyecto

En Chile, la Iglesia Católica está en opción de los derechos LGBT. Pero hay otras Iglesias con otras doctrinas que son más inclusivas. A través de este proyecto me deseo a investigar que significa por personas que son Cristianas e identifica como LGBT (Lesbiana, gay, bisexual y trans) a tener un espacio dentro de una iglesia que está en favor de los derechos LGBT. Quiero saber cómo ser una Iglesia abierta y que la significa por la comunidad cristianas *Queer.*

Este proyecto es parte de mi tesis en el estudio Maestría Religion, Society and Global Issues en Norwegian School of Theology en Noruega, de estudiante _____.

¿Por qué esta elegido para participar?

Que busco a este proyecto es personas que son gay/lesbianas que identifica como LGBT, pero también personas que no identifica como LGBT, pero concretamente Cristianos que participan en una iglesia que está abierta y está incluyendo personas LGBT y en favor de la diversidad sexual. También quiero a hablar con líderes de la iglesia para recibir más información de cómo es ser una iglesia inclusiva. Entonces, tu eres elegido por este proyecto, ¡si tú quieres a participar!

¿Qué significa a participar en esta investigación?

Las principales características del estudio se basan en la recopilación de datos que requiere la participación como entrevistas y observaciones. Las preguntas abordarán teología, derechos de LGBT, experiencias, historias, antecedentes y ser Cristianos y también gay. Los datos se grabarán en forma de grabaciones de audio. Normalmente tengo algunas preguntas preparadas al comienzo de la entrevista, luego estarán más estructuradas / semiestructuradas y más abiertas a tipo de información que el informante mismo también ve es información importante en relación con este tema y la investigación.

¿Qué pasa con la información sobre usted?

Toda la información personal será trata confidencialmente. Toda la información es solo la estudiante (yo) que dirige el proyecto que tiene acceso a la información personal y se almacenará en dispositivos externos, como un dispositivo o una nube. El supervisor puede leer los nombres ficticios que están siendo sustituidos por los reales, además de las citas y experiencias mostrada en la tesis, el participante no será reconocido en la publicación.

El proyecto y la tesis final finalizarán después del 15 de mayo de 2018 y después esa fecha los datos personales no se vuelvan a utilizar, a menos que se complete un nuevo proyecto en una fecha posterior, donde sea posible contactar a los mismos informantes. Los datos, como la grabación de audio, se almacenarán en un disco externo y solo estarán disponibles para la investigadora.

Participación voluntaria

Es opcional participar en el estudio y usted puede retirar su consentimiento en cualquier momento sin dar ninguna razón. Si se retira, toda la información sobre usted será anónima.

Si desea asistir o tiene preguntas sobre el estudio, comuníquese con la:

investigadora_____ correo electrónico: _____

El estudio ha sido reportado al Personal Ombud for Research, NSD - Centro Noruego para Datos de Investigación AS.

Consentimiento a la participación en el estudio:

Yo recibía la información sobre esta investigación y quiero participar:

Nombre:

(Signatura de participante, Fecha)

Nombre:

(Signatura de investigadora, Fecha)