

Summer 7-31-2017

Reproducing the Ghanaian/African Subject: Ideological Tensions and Queer Subjectivities in Postcolonial Ghana

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**(RE) PRODUCING THE GHANAIAN/AFRICAN QUEER SUBJECT: IDEOLOGICAL
TENSIONS AND QUEER SUBJECTIVITIES IN POST-COLONIAL GHANA**

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Communication**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July 2017

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all the queer men and women in Africa who continue to experience state-sanctioned violence and limited access to health resources because of their sexuality.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby acknowledge Dr. Mary Jane Collier, my academic advisor and dissertation chair for the immense support and guidance through my years as a PhD student. When I approached you to be my academic advisor, and spoke to you about my academic and career plans, you encouraged me and provided the pathways for my success. You have supported my research interests since I moved to University of New Mexico. I am sincerely grateful for the constant encouragement that Dr. Collier gave me, especially when the work at times were overwhelming and it seemed deadlines could not be met. Medaase!

I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to my dissertation committee members: Dr. Shinsuke Eguchi, Dr. Myra Washington and Dr. Alyosha Goldstein who guided me from the comprehensive exam to the completion of the dissertation. I benefitted immensely from Dr. Eguchi's insightful theoretical contributions particularly in sharpening my understanding of queer intercultural communication. To Dr. Washington, thank you very much for continuously showing me my blind spots and refining my application of intersectionality. I am so grateful Dr. Goldstein stepped in when a previous committee member had to vacate their position. Your knowledge of postcolonialism and neoliberalism was crucial in helping me untangle many intersections of queer discrimination in Ghana.

To everyone in the Communication and Journalism Department, the Global Education Office, and the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association, your support and influence were invaluable to me.

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ABSTRACT

Same-Sex sexual relationship continues to be a criminal offence in Ghana under the carnal knowledge clause instituted by the British during colonization. Although the law does not specifically mention same-sex sexual relations, carnal knowledge criminalizes all forms of non-heterosexual sexual activities. The criminalization of same-sex sexual relations has sparked an intense debate about African subjectivity. On the one hand, many African nationalists and most Christian organizations argue that same-sex sexual relations is unAfrican; this enables them to both subjugate queers while not having to defend their views more explicitly. Others (typically academics) have explored the existence of diverse sexual behaviors over many generations in many African countries, which were not necessarily condoned, but did not have dire social consequences (Murray, & Roscoe, 1997). Therefore, using critical discourse analysis as theory and method, this dissertation examines how the queer Ghanaian subject is constituted through discourse.

This research was informed by theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of post-colonial theory, queer of color critique and queer intercultural communication. Consistent with the critical perspective that informed this project, I utilized Fairclough's critical discourse analysis to bring out ideological tensions framing the discussions of same-sex relations and LGBT visibility

politics. Online news media texts and interviews with NGOs and queer Ghanaian men were chosen to show the contrasting views and tensions which constitute discourses about queer men in Ghana.

Findings from the study showed that much has not changed for queer Ghanaian men with the end of British colonialism. From the above explanation, it is evident that independence did not mark the end of social relations and practices informed by colonialism. The continual references to social, political, medical, and legal institutions inherited at independence to violently deny queer Africans access to state resources show the importance of illuminating sexuality as a relevant aspect of postcolonial theory. Ideologies such as heteronormativity are implicated in discourses positioning queer men as against the norm. In this context, relations between queer men and social institutions such as religion and the criminal justice system reproduce power relations subjugating same-sex sexual relations as abnormal and heterosexuality as the norm. It also became evident that relationships established between the colonizer and colonized, to “civilize” and “modernize” the other, have been sustained through broader discourses of globalization and human rights.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem statement

Same-sex sexual relations continues to be a criminal offense in Ghana under the carnal knowledge clause instituted by the British during colonization. Although the law does not specifically mention same-sex sexual relations, the carnal knowledge clause criminalizes all forms of non-heterosexual sexual activities. The criminalization of same-sex sexual relations has sparked intense debates about African subjectivity. On the one hand, African nationalists and most Christian organizations argue that same-sex sexual desires and relations is Un-African; this enables them to both subjugate queers while not having to defend their views more explicitly. Others (typically academics) have explored the existence of diverse sexual behaviors, over many generations in many African countries that were not necessarily condoned, but did not have dire social consequences (Amory, 1998; Epprecht, 2008, 2013; Gaudio 1998, 2009; Murray & Roscoe, 1998; Tamale, 2011). Historically, many people in Africa incorporated different sexual behaviors in their communities. However, colonization created disconnections between these subjectivities and colonial ideals and labeled the multiple and complex sexual behaviors as criminal (Epprecht, 2008).

Currently, the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations in sub-Saharan Africa is sustained through a convergence of colonial legacies, transnational flow of queer politics from the West and other African countries, U.S Evangelicals' anti-gay rhetoric, traditional and Christian religious beliefs in Ghana, and diverse localized understanding of sexuality. Criminalization is the legal foundation through which sexuality-based discrimination is constituted and normalized. Nonetheless, it is not just the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations that should be of much concern to community engagement activists and scholars who

engage in social justice work in the African context. Also, we should study how social structures, such as African patriarchy and heteronormativity expressed through social norms, customs, and traditions, legitimize the continual discrimination of sexual minorities. For instance, South Africa incorporated sexual orientation as a protected class in 1998, yet there are still cases of gang rape of lesbians, known as "corrective rape" (Epprecht, 2013). Although rape is a criminal offense in South Africa, "corrective rape" is sustained by an ideology that queer African women need more sex with African heterosexual men for them to become heterosexual again. Thus, research on queer discrimination in the African context should go beyond the legality of same-sex sexual relations to concentrate on how structural agents produce discourses that criminalize queers for particular actions. Equally relevant is an attention to the interconnectedness of ideologies, discourses, representations, subject positions and subjectivities that frame social relations in the African context.

There is no mention of queers as a protected class in legal, political or religious institutional discourses, let alone public media in Ghana. This is especially problematic in public discourses such as online newspaper reports about violence against queer men, health disparities, and human rights violations. Though Ghana hardly convicts anyone for being queer unless in cases of rape or pedophilia, the lack of protection is still an issue. The Ghana government does not propose bills that will humanize queer people. Similarly, they will not change the existing colonial law that criminalizes non-heterosexual sexual activity. Consequently, the social practices that sustain discrimination against queer Ghanaians are left unquestioned.

Violence against queer men such as mob action, blackmail, and discrimination at the workplace have become part of queer subjectivities in Ghana. Angry mobs can emerge in few minutes when one is suspected to be queer due to how he dresses or how he walks. Men who are

perceived to be effeminate are usually targets of such mob violence. Queer men are also vulnerable to blackmail from gay imposters online, friends and sometimes other queer men. Queer men who use gay meet-up sites such as Grinder, Tinder and social networking sites such as Facebook have become targets of blackmail from individuals who pose as gay online. Gay imposters chat with gay men and then plan to meet with them in places where they can be robbed of their cell phones, money, clothes and shoes. A final form of violence that queer men experience is workplace discrimination. Some queer men are terminated from their jobs without adequate explanation when rumors about their queerness surface. Moreover, some queer men are not offered jobs because of the stigma around same-sex sexual relations in Ghana. These forms of societal sanctioned violence are sustained through social norms, which normalize queer discrimination.

Besides violence against queer men, government agencies overlook queer people in their health campaigns and poverty alleviation programs. Epprecht (2013) asserted that funds granted by the World Bank to African countries as subsidies to promote awareness of HIV leave out men who sleep with other men (MSM). This poses an immense health risk to queer people in Ghana as their access to health resources are outside of their reach. Some queer men are also embarrassed and humiliated in public hospitals and health centers when they visit for minor health issues. Queer sex is blamed for any illness queer men may have, and they are criticized for making wrong choices about their sexuality. Some doctors and nurses preach to queer men while treating them. They instruct them to desist from being queer and accept Jesus Christ. Consequently, some queer men will not visit health centers or clinics until their illnesses are in the worst stage.

Aside from government institutions, religious groups preach through Biblical rhetoric of

Sodom and Gomorrah that same-sex sexual relations are a sin and an abomination to God. These preachers, including very prominent, well-educated Evangelists such as Mensa Otabil (whose church also owns a university and a business consulting firm), have immense political power in Ghana. Another source of major religious resistance against the decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana is from the Catholic Church. Archbishop Palmer-Buckle, the head of the Catholic Missions in Ghana, has stated that homosexuality will decimate "African culture" and should not be decriminalized.

Discourse from other African countries and the West also influence the ideological tensions around same-sex sexual relations in Ghana. Countries such as Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal, and Uganda have created laws that criminalize same-sex sexual relations and queer politics. Nigeria's anti-homosexuality law authorizes the police to arrest anyone who creates an organization for queer politics. The governments of these countries argue that same-sex sexual relations is from the West and not part of "African cultural values" (Boyd, 2013; Epprecht, 2008, 2013; Okech, 2013; Osome, 2013). Queer politics from Western churches also contributes to the discussion of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana. For instance, U.S. Evangelical pastors have sponsored many churches in Ghana to oppose the decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations. In opposition to this religious rhetoric, USAID, the Canadian Development Agency, and the governments in the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom, have publicly shown their objections to the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations by publically advocating for the global recognition of LGBT rights and also providing financial support to local NGOs who work with queer men in Ghana. However, their support has come with a price for queer people as well; LGBT rights is labeled foreign and only supported by Western countries.

The support of GLBTQI rights by the West is illustrated in the wildly circulated Hilary Clinton comment that “gay rights are human rights” and should be respected by countries that receive U.S funds (Chavez, 2013a). In an interview with BBC, the Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair said that he believes countries that rely on the U.K for aid should be held accountable to U. K’s human right standards (Ndashe, 2013). These comments have been interpreted in Ghana as a form of neo-colonial imposition on African countries from the West.

Popular discourse also frames the discussions on same-sex sexual relations in Ghana, for example, in newspaper reports about queer Ghanaians (Tettey, 2016). Between July 2014 and July 2016, there were more than 22 reports relating to same-sex sexual relations in Ghanaian newspapers. Some of the reports were about students being expelled from high school for engaging in sodomy or beaten by a mob for being too "close" to each other. Others reported the "gay bashing" of a popular music producer, Albert Appiah. *Citifmonline.com* reported that the Ghana Christian Council, an influential religious organization in Ghana, created a training program to help pastors counsel queer people to become heterosexual. This is an alternative to taking them through exorcism, whereby queer men are tied to trees and sometimes left unclothed for days. Another report by the *Daily Graphic* stated that the Ghana Police Service announced that they would arrest anyone who takes the law into their own hands and tries to beat up anyone who they suspect to be queer because the practice is fairly common. *Myjoyonline.com* reported that a “gay” South African died of anal cancer, insinuating that the musician died because he had anal sex with men. The *Ghanaian Times* also reported a story of a "gay" doctor who "sodomized" a boy. All these reports interpolate queer people into specific subject positions, which structure hierarchical relations between groups and reflect discrimination. These subject

positions constrain and enable access to resources, protections of human rights and opportunities for social mobility.

Non-governmental agencies have become the bridge between important health resources from international agencies and queer men. The NGOs in this study provide health services to queer men and also support behavioral change training programs to help queer men avoid violence. Although NGOs have become an important link between health resources and queer men, they also position themselves as saviors in relation to queer men. This creates a paternalistic relationship between the NGOs and queer men. Representatives of the NGOs in this study talked generally about human rights as an important part of their work. However, they did not explain how it directly relates to their work with queer men. “Human rights” is talked about as knowledge about fundamental rights for all individuals; knowledge is then constructed as the means to enable queer men avoid violence and have access to health care.

In the context of these discourses, queers also must socially construct their own intersectional identifications every day in their social interactions. Navigating the macro level discourse and micro level discourses is important; therefore, my analysis must both include public discourses and private interview discourses about and from queers. In addition to examining how queer Ghanaian men are constituted in Ghanaian online newspaper discourses, it is also important to address the impact of these public discourses on micro-level practices and subjectivities. Of interest, also is how queer Ghanaian men construct their subjectivities in relation to these representations.

This dissertation specifically concentrates on queer men because the discourse of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana largely focuses on men. Tamale (2011) argued that the condemnation of same-sex sexual relations has largely been fixated on queer men because

African patriarchy relies on forced heteronormativity, which makes women become objects of men's desire and vehicles of reproduction. This is not to deny that queer women are still stigmatized and discriminated against within the discourse of queer criminalization in Ghana (Dankwa, 2009). However, the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations, the pervasive Christian demonizing of queer men, together with my own challenging experiences of the challenging context of Ghana are reasons for the focus on queer males in Ghana. Since the intersectional nature of subjectivities has not been explored, my dissertation focuses on Ghanaian queer males.

Although earlier post-colonial scholars from Africa explored the effects of colonization on the self-esteem and self-construction of the colonized, less emphasis has been placed on sexuality as part of African subjectivity. For example, research from Frantz Fanon (1967), Aime Cesaire (1955), Amilcar Cabral (1974) and Kwame Nkrumah (1965) related to heterosexuals African. Frantz Fanon, one of the earliest and most influential postcolonial theorists, saw same-sex sexual relations as a sign of psychological distress, exclusive to Western people and directly related to their "negrophobia" (Fanon, 1967). Contemporary research from African post-colonial scholars such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1994) falls into a similar trend of representing Africans as exclusively heterosexuals. African feminists and African post-colonial feminists such as Takyiwaa Manuh and Stephan Miescher (2007) who engage in research on gender in Africa, most often separate gender (a performance of one's masculinity and femininity) and sexuality, as if the two are exclusive of each other (Okech, 2013).

In Ghana, gender and sexuality are explicitly linked and most often when the public discourse includes the signifiers "homosexual" or "gay," the signifiers point to queer males. It is important to note that the nation-state's policing of gender is not outside the scrutiny of

sexuality. Tamale (2011) wrote that criminal legal systems in most African states attempt to regulate how, when and with whom citizens can have consensual sex. The outcome is the creation of laws that penalize alternate sexualities which do not conform to the dominant ideology of heterosexuality. This draws attention to the salience of sexual identity as an integral and major aspect of how queers in Ghana negotiate their Ghanaian/African identity within the historical context of colonialization, pervasive human rights rhetoric from the West, and diverse localized understandings of sexuality is a major theme.

This dissertation contributes to ongoing discussions about the complexity of sexuality, sexual and reproductive rights, and queer liberation in the African context (Dankwa, 2009; Ekine & Abbas, 2013; Epprecht, 2008, 2013; Guadio, 2009; Hoad, 2007; Osome, 2013; Tamale, 2007; Tettey, 2016). In their introduction to the *Queer African Reader*, Ekine and Abbas (2013) wrote that they wanted to show not only the resistance in the daily lives and struggles of Africa's queer community but to valorize the complexity of how queer liberation is framed in Africa and by Africans. Ekine and Abbas advise African queer scholars to situate queer liberation struggles within the contexts of broader African liberation and self-determination struggles from the perspective of the collective. Thus, this study takes a similar approach to examine queer liberation as already imbricated and situated within broader discourses of colonization, imperialism, and globalization.

This study takes a detour from earlier African queer researchers by showing how queer discrimination is constituted through discourse. Utilizing post-colonial theory, critical queer intercultural communication, and critical discourse analysis, this study shows the relationship between discourse, power, and ideologies. Power relations, history, and social construction mediate knowledge. Accordingly, institutions such as newspapers, hospitals, educational

institutions, and NGOs produce discourses about queer Ghanaian/African men that construct what is recognized about queer men in Ghana.

Building an understanding of how queer Ghanaians/Africans are constituted through discourse also has implications for the study of agency. In addition to discourses, material conditions related to violence also form the everyday context which constrains and enables queer men to work, socialize and obtain health care. Agency is defined as the capacity for individuals to act within particular enabling and constraining factors (Collier, Lawless & Ringera, 2016). The interviewees narratives showed that their agency to seek health care and socialize freely with their coworkers, families and friends without violence were contextually contingent. Furthermore, intersectional locations such as class and educational status of the queer participants influenced their levels of enacted agency.

Goals of Study

To overview, the first objective of this study is to examine the subject positioning (s) of Ghanaian queer men in selected newspaper reports during the period of 2014 to 2016. I analyze newspaper reports about same-sex sexual relations from the *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, and *Daily Guide*, and three online newspapers: *Myjoyonline.com*, *Peacefmonline.com*, and *Citifmonline.com*. Second, I examine how representatives of three NGOs, Ghana Human Rights Organization (GHRO), Center for Citizen Rights (CFCO) and Ghana Aids Foundations (GAF) construct the Ghanaian “queer” subject. Third, I analyze how interview texts with queer Ghanaian men demonstrate their subjectivities and relations with others. I also attend to what the discourses accomplish related to contested subject positions, relations between subjects and institutions and ideological tensions that frame the queer Ghanaian subject.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL, CONTEXTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

My framework for examining the discursive construction of queer Ghanaian men is grounded within a critical intercultural communication perspective (Collier, 1998, 2009; Nakayama & Halualani, 2011) and informed by post-colonial studies (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Helen, 1995; Shome & Hegde, 2002; Parameswaran, 2008; Young, 2001) and queer of color criticism (Calafell & Moreman, 2010; Chavez, 2013; Eguchi, 2015; Eguchi & Asante, 2015; Yep, 2003; Fergusson, 2003; Johnson, 2001). I explore the relationship between discourse, power, and ideologies (Fairclough, 2010). Power relations, history, and social construction mediate knowledge (Van Dijk, 2008; Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Accordingly, institutions such as newspapers, hospitals, educational institutions and NGOs produce discourses about queer Ghanaian/African men that construct what is recognized about queer men in Ghana. The imbalanced mediation of knowledge about queer men in Ghana creates particular subject positions for queer men, which also frame their interactions and constrain levels of agency within institutions, organizations and social circumstances.

To overview, a critical perspective to intercultural communication research is vital to this research to examine how religion, heteronormativity, education, legality and economic status create and perpetuate “othering.” Research oriented with my critical perspective explores how power is produced and reproduced in different forms overtime through examining the positioning of queer subjects which enables violence and continued surveillance. This means that subject identities are shaped by their dynamic position within the context of power relations and dominant ideologies. Paying attention to the context of neocolonialism, economic and political structures, as well as institutional and organizational discourses is relevant to understand how

subject positions are constructed.

In addition to structurally produced subject positions, Collins (2000) argued researchers should study the experiences of those who can describe the consequences of their subjectivities. Furthermore, Collier (1998, 2005) asserted that research from an interpretive perspective is valuable in pinpointing subjectivities through analyzing participant accounts, narratives, performances, and public texts. This is relevant to my research project in order to understand the impact of national, regional, local discourse, media representations, and organizational politics and practices on group members' lived experience. Also, centering lived experience is fundamental to black feminist epistemology and queer of color criticism (Collins, 2000). Such forms of knowledge production challenge and disrupt the objectification of an African subjectivity (Steeves, 2012). Below, I explore the major theoretical constructs, framed by the critical-interpretive perspective, which are germane to my research.

Historical Background of Criminalization of Sexuality in Ghana

In order to examine the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations and how it is constituted in discourse, it is important to provide background information about criminalization of sexuality in Ghana. Ghana was the first country in Africa to gain independence from colonial rule in 1957. This means that Ghana was one of the few emerging countries that had the opportunity to decolonize their institutions and laws. Yet the carnal knowledge clause was kept and has been enforced throughout the country until now.

Article 105 of the Ghana Criminal Code states that "Whomever is guilty of unnatural carnal knowledge (a) of any person without his consent is guilty of first degree felony, or (b) of any person with his consent or of any animal, is guilty of a misdemeanor. This law lumps together bestiality with homosexuality and rape. According to Gupta and Long (2008) from the

Human Rights Watch wrote that more than 80 countries around the world that were once British colonies still criminalize consensual same sexual behaviors between adult men but seldom apply criminalization to consensual same sex behaviors between women. India was the first British colony to have an anti-sodomy law. The British law called Section 377, was introduced into the Indian penal code in 1860 and it became the foundation for criminalization of same-sex sexual relations in other British colonies (Gupta & Long, 2008).

Ghana's penal code considers consensual same-sex relations as a misdemeanor even though Ghana was a British colony. This is different from former British colony, India; the Indian penal code categorizes same-sex relations as a felony. The Ghanaian law derives from a draft code for Jamaica by liberal British Jurist R.S Wright. Friedland (1981) asserted that Wright's draft code was never applied in Jamaica, but was adopted as a model for anti-sodomy laws in Ghana. Colonialists believed that laws could inculcate European morality into the resistant masses. Part of this process was the need to police the sexual behaviors of the colonized and also the British citizens who were stationed in these colonies. Furthermore, Stoler (2010) argued that the regulation of intimacy was central to the maintenance of imperial power. She used case studies in Indonesia to explain that sexual arrangement and affective attachments played a critical role in structuring the differences between the ruler and ruled.

Although its enforcement is limited to serious offenses such as pedophilia and rape, same-sex sexual relations garners a lot of public attention in Ghana. O'Mara (2007) explained that extreme cases of poverty and unemployment in the 1970's and 1980's under successive military regimes resulted in a massive brain drain in Ghana. During this time, religious fundamentalism became popular which also contributed to the heightened sense of homophobia in Ghana specifically, and West Africa generally. Tettey (2016) claimed that Ghanaian media

taps into the "Cultural disdain for homosexuality; [media] frame and amplify discourses to reflect that disdain; thereby creating moral panic that generates a homophobic onslaught by moral entrepreneurs" (p.88). Furthermore, political leaders have taken advantage of these strong sentiments surrounding same-sex sexual relations to propose regulatory laws queer rights activists and Western governments.

Discourses Produced by Structural Agents about Queers

Competing Narratives

Two major distinct but interlinked narratives encompass the discussions against queer rights in the Ghanaian/African context. Proponents of the first claim that same-sex sexual relations is a foreign construction/behavior being forced on Africans by the West. Those arguing for the second treat continental Africa as a site of obsessive homophobia, thus needing further human development. The first argument stems from a mixture of religious fundamentalisms that insist on the strict literal interpretation of Biblical and Islamic texts and the use of arguments advancing Africa's cultural exceptionalism to deny the existence of same-sex sexual relations on the continent. In Ghana, Christian religious leaders, in particular, have voiced their opposition to same-sex sexual relations by aligning themselves with Ghanaian political leaders to position pro-queer initiatives by Western countries and NGOs as imperialist.

The second narrative of Africa's homophobia is rooted in colonial discourses of deviant and distinct African sexualities (Hoad, 2007). Furthermore, the contemporary neoliberal and global "GLBTQI" discourses of queer liberation and freedom are critiqued seek to universalize White Euro-American sexual norms and gender expressions (Ekine, 2013; Hoad, 2007; Massad, 2007; Manalanssan, 2003). The two interlinked arguments present specific challenges for African queer anti-colonialist politics. Queer men have to navigate the meta-narratives of

GLBTQI imperialism and religious intolerance on the one hand while simultaneously constructing their own identities against and along the global and local institutional discourses. The moral panic against same-sex sexual relations in Ghana and other African countries is sustained by structural and institutional discursive positioning of queer men.

Structural agents such as religious and political leaders, governments in Western countries and NGOs drive the regulation and the construction of discursive boundaries between social groups and/or distortion of society and its members/groups. In Ghana, religious leaders are the most outspoken group against queer rights. They have positioned queers as pathological, unhealthy, devils, demons and reasons for Gods cursing of humanity. Same-sex sexual relations is also positioned as unAfrican while simultaneously positioning Christianity as inherently African., The use of Biblical texts as reasoning for queer discrimination means that religious leaders do not have to explicitly explain their anti-gay views to the general public. In this vein, dissenting opinions are subordinated and criticized as siding with the devil. Religious leaders' express their anti-queer beliefs during sermons in churches and mosques; nevertheless, their statements about same-sex sexual relations are reported by online newspapers and radio stations without interrogation. Hence, religious leaders' opinions about same-sex sexual relations are universalized as public views and sentiments about same-sex sexual relations. Accordingly, politicians use the public disdain for same-sex sexual relations to win political points by showing their political ideologies as severely anti-queer.

Ghanaian presidents, political leaders, police officers and government official statements and comments about same-sex sexual relations also factor into the structural and institutional voices demonizing same-sex sexual relations. Former Ghanaian Presidents publically emphasized that same-sex sexual relations is a crime in Ghana, when newspaper reports emerged

that Ghana might be decriminalizing “homosexuality” due to pressure from international organizations for more protective measures and policies to be implemented to protect queer men and health workers. In 2014, an officer from the Office of Human Rights and Administrative Justice was quoted saying that her office will seek protection for queer men if they come to the office. However, she also said she cannot advocate for the decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations because it is against Ghanaian culture (*Myjoyonline.com*, August 12, 2014). Her positioning of same-sex sexual relations as against Ghanaian culture shows how some institutions set up to protect sexual minorities already position same-sex sexual relations as unGhanaian and unAfrican. As a result, police officers do not pursue cases involving violence against queers. The lack of protection from police officers and government entities position same-sex sexual relations as outside the circuits of state protection. Against constraining government resources and anti-queer religious rhetoric, is the continual resilience of queers, activists, and NGOs across the continent.

The globalization of GLBTQI identity politics can be seen as predominantly White, northern-based NGOs and activists seek to approach queer decriminalization in Africa through an activism of “shared gayness” (Massad, 2008) unconnected to local and global histories. Over the past ten years, many GLBTQI Africans have emerged from their unseen closets to visible areas of public life to seek active and assertive engagement with queers, civic society, state officials and Western NGOs. Alongside such increasing visibility and accompanying activism is the growing presence and intervention of global institutions and organizations who are seeking to rescue queer Africans from Africa’s “inherent homophobia.” Therefore, particular practices to resist queer discrimination and Africa’s homophobia are encouraged through the NGOs. For instance, queer men in Ghana are encouraged to empower themselves through knowledge about

their human rights and also by employing specific heteronormative gender performances. This form of empowerment assumes a fully agentic individual and obscures the diversity and contextually specificity of queer African identity construction and negotiation, which are shaped by multiple factors such as nationalism, globalization, indigenous popular cultures, and diasporic connections.

The multiple and contested subject positioning of same-sex sexual relations are evident in public discourses such as online newspaper portals. In Ghana, online newspaper reports are easily obtained and shared. Online newspaper discourses about same-sex sexual relations are more widespread than physical copies of newspapers. Consequently, the conceptual disagreements associated with same-sex sexual relations and citizenship play out in online newspaper reports. Richardson (2007) wrote that Journalism “exists to enable citizens to better understand their lives and their position(s)” (p.7). The positioning of queer men by structures and institutions such as religion politics and international aid create conditions to enable violence, queer discrimination at public hospitals, classism, and homonormativity. Thus, the relationship between subject positioning by structural agents and queer subjectivities has impact on levels of agency of queers.

It is important to examine the productions of specific discourses by structural agents and how they affect queer identity processes and agency. How the subject positions of same-sex sexual relations constrain and enable the identity construction and enactment of specific subjectivities must be understood. For instance, the positioning of same-sex sexual relations as devils and demons by religious leaders and its subsequent reporting by online newspapers have created conditions where the increasing violence against queer men and humiliation of queer men in public hospitals are legitimized. Blackmail, mob action and workplace discrimination

show the ideological effects and outcomes of structural agents' positioning of queers. The potential for violence and embarrassment at hospitals also constrain and enable specific queer subjectivities based on educational status, gender performance and class. The processes of production and consumption of discourses and narratives around same-sex sexual relations is warranted to explore how subject positions relate to subjectivities and how contextual factors and discourses enable and constrain queers' abilities to obtain resources maintain security and utilize health care.

Discourses are always socially situated and relate systematically to contextual factors (Fairclough, 2010). Emphasizing online newspaper text production and how receivers of texts also apply available discourses and genres in the consumption and interpretation of the texts show the dialectical relationship between structural production subject positions and individual subjectivities. An analysis of production and consumption shows how discourses are institutionally anchored. For example, online newspaper reports provide the outlet for discourses about same-sex sexual relations from religious leaders to be disseminated to a wider audience who might be anti-gay or pro-gay. Due to the popularity of stories about same-sex sexual relations and the small-scale budget of online newspapers, stories about same-sex sexual relations become ways to attract more consumers to their websites. Subsequently, discourses from religious leaders become institutionalized ways of speaking about queer rights in Ghana which then reflects in the language of other genres of journalism reports about same-sex sexual relations and queer politics. Therefore, analyzing production and consumption of online newspaper texts show how competing discourses of same-sex sexual relations become part of the social order.

Theoretical Approaches

Queer African Studies

One of the main goals of the rapidly growing field of queer African studies is to resist the perpetuation of colonial reification of “African” as a homogenous entity. Research from scholars such as Epprecht (2008), Murray and Roscoe (1999), Gaudio, (2007), and edited collections from Ekine and Abbas (2013) and Tamale (2011) have produced numerous research studies which explore the intersection between African and queer. The various studies have produced knowledge about the rising homophobia, increase in physical violence, health disparities, religious fundamentalism, the influence of U.S far right evangelical theology in African reproductive and sexual rights policies, and the effects of statements from governments in Western countries and international organizations such as the UN to African counties. Other research has also explored the growing resilience of queer men and women against discourses which demonize same-sex sexual relations. For instance, research from Goltz, Zingsheim, Mastin and Murphy (2016) explored how queer individuals in Kenya discursively negotiate their sexual and gender identities using specific glocalised naming practices. The various kinds of research in Queer African Studies utilize several disciplinary and theoretical orientations ranging from legal studies, development studies, health studies and communication studies. Together, the various interdisciplinary approaches seek to de-homogenize African sexuality.

This study contributes to the academic discussions on queer liberation in Africa by exploring how queer discrimination in Ghana is discursively mediated. Discourses from religious leaders, politicians and online newspaper reports about same-sex sexual relations reproduce what the audience are presented with as truths about queer men. Thus, any talk about queer rights

ignites a moral panic about a failing nostalgic African culture. Ekine (2013) wrote that the moral panic against homosexuality across the continent is systemic and indicative of an instrumentalized, well-organized campaign "which exposes the relationship between religious and cultural fundamentalisms asserted through vigorous political nationalist agendas" (p.79). Although Ekine is pointing to how discourses and ideologies sustain the public understanding of queer discrimination and re-criminalization, less emphasis is placed on the relationship between discourses and ideologies, and queer discrimination in Africa.

The positioning of queer rights as against African cultural values is sustained by a variety of competing discourses and ideologies which points to a homogenous African. Jacqui Alexander (1997) wrote about heteropatriarchal re-colonization, "the continuity between the white heteropatriarchal inheritance and black heteropatriarchy" (p.66). Although her research is situated in the Caribbean, its theoretical premise can be imported to explain how ideologies of heteronormativity are embedded in the discussions about queer rights in Ghana. She explained that the struggle to break free from colonialism is largely a political project which involved minimal resistance to the Western economic interests or heteropatriarchal structures. She contended that nationalist movements used the same militarized masculinities as a foundation for liberation and post-colonialism, thereby maintaining the non-status of women and maintaining heterosexuality as basis for citizenship. Ekine (2013) also asserted that current nationalist projects in some African countries build on the civilizing mission of earlier colonialists reinforcing heterosexuality as the natural order without contestation and contradiction. The language used by African religious and political leaders to justify queer discrimination is similar to those used around the world showing how discourses used to justify queer discrimination is historically situated within coloniality and reproduce U.S evangelical theology. Concepts such as

family, cultural and traditional values, sex based on procreation within marriage, and numerous references from religious texts are reasoning blocks used to justify queer discrimination.

Therefore, analysis of how public discourse produced by media organizations, religious leaders and politicians construct the queer subject unveils shared broader discourses of heteronormativity instituted through colonialism.

This study also contributes to queer African research by expanding the discussions on agency in the African context. In addition to revealing how institutional voices constitute and position queer men, this research also explores queers enact agency in this multi-layered context. Drawing attention to context and levels of agency of queer identified individuals can show how subjugation takes place status and how hierarchies are reinforced between groups. It is important to note that not all queers experience discrimination similarly. Exploring how intersectional locations of some queer men may affect their levels of agency shows how some queers may avoid public attention, health disparities, and violence based on gender performance, class, educational background and light skin privileges. Thus, this research broadens the theoretical and methodological scopes of Queer African research by integrating Queer theory, Post-colonial Theory, Critical Intercultural Communication, and Critical Discourses Analysis to explore ideological tensions and queer subjectivities in the African context.

(Queer) Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial Theory. Post-colonial theory is of relevance to my research as scholars study “issues of race, class, gender, sexuality and nationality by situating this phenomenon within geopolitical arrangements, relations of nations and their inter/national histories” (Shome & Hegde 2002, p.252). Combining postcolonial theory and critical/cultural communication research, Shome and Hegde (2002) contended that postcolonial cultural critique is the re-

examination and reconsideration of the effects of colonization such as the appropriation of land and territory, the institutionalization of racism, the destruction of local cultures and the superimposition of Westernized ways of thinking about race, gender, class, and sexuality (Collier, 1998; Shome, 2013; Steyn, 2011; Young, 2001). Examination of the continual criminalization of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana and the transnational politics that sustain its criminality through post-colonial theory is a historical and contemporary project. In addition to historicizing queer criminalization and discrimination, the changing geo-political structure of the international scene influencing national politics, gender, and sexuality in Ghana will also be taken into consideration.

A growing number of scholars in intercultural communication research have argued that focusing on the dialectical relationship between cultural practices and structural forces enables a complex understanding of politics, subject positioning, subjectivities, and communication (Collier, 2009, 2014; Sekimoto, 2014; Shome & Hegde, 2002). Although post-colonial theory provides the historical context, its focus on the nation limits critical engagement with the contemporary transnational and situated nature of structural forces. Within the context of a changing geopolitical structure of the world and the neoliberal re-alignment of global relations, there is call for a revisiting of notions of nationhood, cultural membership, citizenship, belonging and identity, as well as the nature of gendered and sexual subjects (Chavez, 2014). Central to research pertaining to queer Ghanaian men is an understanding of the transnational flow of GLBTQI politics, which invariably structures the relationships between nation-states and also affects the subjectivity and identities of queer people who live in or between those nation states. Therefore, as part of a post-colonial critique of colonial structures and institutions producing and sustaining the criminalization and discrimination of queer men in Ghana, this research will take

into consideration the transnational flow of GLBTQI politics, such as the influence of the U.S conservative right and other conservative movements from the West, and laws from other African countries, and examine their influence on queer subjectivities.

Shome and Hegde (2002) wrote that post-colonial cultural critique is not merely about the study of colonialism and its effect on those colonized, but its goals are first and foremost "critical." As mentioned earlier, the value in asserting a "critical" turn is to open spaces for emancipation and rediscovery as critical scholarship interrogates historical structures of knowledge production (Nakayama & Halualani, 2011; Collier, 1998, 2005, 2009). In this vein, postcolonial theory is used to historicize the discourse and meanings attributed to same-sex sexual relations in the past and present Ghanaian contexts.

Another reason why postcolonial theory is relevant to this project is its critique of power relations and subjugation within the cultural conditions of postcolonial countries. The hierarchical ordering of discourses about same-sex sexual relations is maintained through power relations, defined through the Foucauldian approach to power. Individuals are made subjects through the discourse of state institutions and structures. Foucault (2000) does not imagine the nation-state as having totalizing power. He noted, "Maybe the target nowadays is not to discover what we are but to refuse what we are. We have to imagine and build up what we could be to get rid of this kind of double bind" (Foucault, 2000, p. 336). Foucault explained that power is a relation, power circulates; therefore, it is necessary to employ a multi-dimensional approach to examine how power is appropriated and abrogated. Foucault's explanation of power is especially useful in postcolonial critique to explore how certain colonial structures and institutions of former colonies are used to maintain internal control and domination by their current governments.

Former colonies such as Ghana have to negotiate the limits and authority of state power and individual agency. The extent to which decolonization in Africa is apparent is contested. Lee (2010) stressed that the process of decolonization in Africa is not in the interest of most Africans; rather it further strengthens the colonial relationship between African elites and the West. Through predatory forms of lending, African economies and people are made dependent on Western donors. Consequently, some African elites have maintained particular colonial structures, which further excluded those who did not conform to the ideal “African” nationalistic ideals. Mignolo (2002) contended that if dependency (of Africans on the West) in the modern/colonial times was structured around the center and periphery dichotomy, then it does not mean that it vanishes because colonial conditions have changed somewhat. Relations have been re-structured around “interdependency” whereby the coloniality of power is still maintained. Further evidence of colonialism is seen in recognizing colonial structures of knowledge production embedded in various institutions and geographies of modernity such as education, governance, technology, and economy that creates particular “subjects” in history and silences others (Stoler, 2010).

Knowledge production about the nation within post-colonial nation-states is a continuing point of contention as multiple subjectivities have emerged and questions are being raised about the modes of representation both within and across nationalistic imaginaries. For instance, some queers in Ghana have challenged their subject positions and media representations by making their cultural identities visible through social media and talk shows on TV and radio. Although religious fundamentalists have condemned such talk shows as promoting same-sex sexual relations in Ghana, these talk shows also create spaces for queer men to make themselves visible to the public against the generally accepted myth that there are no queers in Africa.

Post-colonial scholars have shown a growing interest in expanding their studies to engage multiple subjectivities, nationalities and disjunctive modernities that are also colonized. Scholars applying feminism, subaltern studies and queer studies have engaged with post-colonial studies to interrogate further how colonialism also affected other axes of difference.

Queer Approaches to Post-Colonial Theory. Research from Wright (2003), Punt (2008), Spurlin (2013), and Hawley (2001) are examples of research that merges postcolonial and feminist approaches or post-colonial and queer approaches. Particularly relevant to this dissertation project are queer approaches to post-colonial theory. Spurlin (2005) stated that postcolonial studies have seriously neglected the way which heterosexism, heteronormativity, and homophobia have also shaped the world of hegemonic power. Post-coloniality emerged to analyze the social order from the perspective of those who were deemed as abnormal and non-progressive in relation to rhetoric of Western liberation and modernity. At the same time, queer theory also emerged as a continuation of feminist politics against heterosexuality through the analytical framework of Foucauldian examination of sexuality and power. Suitably, post-colonial and queer studies have similar theoretical motives, which are to unveil subjugated knowledge of those whose engagement with modernity is through the violent process of silencing of multiple voices (Punt, 2008). Ann Laura Stoler (2010) argued that the regulation of intimacy was central to the maintenance of imperial power. Using case studies in Indonesia, she explained that sexual arrangements and affective attachments played a critical role in structuring the differences between the ruler and ruled. In this vein, sexuality should be a central concern in research pertaining to the effects of colonialism in Ghana.

This study contributes to research on queer post-colonial studies by showing how the enactments of sexuality by queer men in Ghana disrupt notions of national belonging and

citizenship. Audrey Yue and Zubilaga-Pow (2012) contended that although same-sex sexual relations is criminalized in Singapore, queer Singaporeans enact a cultural citizenship through the logic of queer complicity that complicates the flows of oppositional resistance and grassroots appropriation. Situating the regulation of intimacy, kinship and desire as relevant to the cultural critique of postcolonialism shows the ongoing connections and disconnections between colonialism and conceptions of modernity between queers in the global North in relation to queers in the global South. Spurlin (2005) asserted that the nonchalance of queer theory towards postcolonial contexts assumes the “superiority of Western knowledge about sexuality and the impossibility that postcolonial societies can teach the West anything about sexual identities, categories and politics” (p.30). Currently, queer rights are sometimes celebrated as a measurement of modernity. Aydemir (2012) explained that a particular racial logic underscores emergent gay and lesbian advocacy which removes the geopolitical imbalances which structure the sexual identity of Westerners and non-Westerners. For instance, he explained that the gay-identified Iranian asylum seeker does not just turn into a modern individual by virtue of his (homo)sexuality. In this context, queer men in Ghana are dealing with the remnants of Western colonization efforts in Africa and the intricacies of contemporary Western GLBTQI version of modernity.

The body is an essential discursive element of surveillance and regulation, which disrupts the singular narrative of identity, subjectivity, and sense of belonging within the nation (Alexander, 2008). Since the goal of post-colonial theory is deconstruction and disruption of colonial forms of knowledge production and their influence in contemporary national politics, an integration of queer theory builds on post-colonial theory by bringing gender and sexual identity as central to how the body is constituted in discourses of the nation. Punt (2008) asserted that the

all too comfortable link between globalization and queer thinking, which renders nation states irrelevant, could be worrying. The “nation” is still a defining factor for some queers especially queers from Sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, merging post-colonial theory and queer theory enables me to historicize the discourses of the nation-state and their continual scrutiny of sexual identity.

Critical/Queer Intercultural Communication

According to Nakayama and Halualani (2011) critical intercultural communication, “foregrounds issues of power, context, socio-economic relations and historical/structural forces as constituting and shaping culture and intercultural communication encounters, relationships and contexts” (p.1). A critical orientation to communication and culture aligns with the goals of my research as I seek to explore how discourses shape the relations between/among different cultural group and institutions. Importantly, Nakayama and Halualani (2011) explained that “critical intercultural communication works best to pay close attention to and follow how macro conditions and structures of power, play into and share micro acts/ processes of communication between and among cultural groups” (p.2). Paying attention to structures in both macro and micro contexts shows how multiple levels of agency are enabled and constrained. Also, exploring how power relations construct the representations and subject positions of queer men and how queer Ghanaian men construct their identities in relation to those representations and subject positions are important components in my critical intercultural communication research in Ghana.

Subject positions of queer Ghanaian men, contextually contingent. Collier (2014) asserted that “ontologically and epistemologically, contextual factors frame, constitute and are constituted by social relations and subjectivities” (p.6). She further stated that as researchers, it is relevant to pay attention to the “multiplicity of cultural subjectivities held by, and subject

positions imposed onto, community groups” (p.7). Within the context of this research, paying attention to how contextual factors such as a history of colonization, globalization and transnational flow of queer politics, relate to discourses and material conditions created by social structures and influence of dominant ideologies have implications for levels of agency (Collier, 2009; Halualani, Mendoza & Drzewiecka, 2009).

To further examine how media representations, structures, and institutions influence queer subjectivities, critical attention is given to the intersectional modes through which identities are lived and experienced. Asante, Sekimoto, and Brown (2016) argued that it is relevant to examine the intersectional locations of group members in order to understand how their relative levels of privilege affect their relationships to others. Intersectionality is relevant to subjectivities of queer men in Ghana, as well as subject positions produced within the context of structuring forces, because both act together to constrain and enable specific bodies at particular times. Within critical intercultural communication, I focus on queer intercultural communication in order to centralize gender and sexuality, among other identity categories such as class, religion and profession, as fundamental to how queer men in Ghana negotiate their African/Ghanaian identity.

Chavez (2013a) noted that queer studies is tangibly and compellingly intercultural. However, the intersections and interplays between the queer and the intercultural have not been fully examined and unpacked (Eguchi, 2015; Eguchi and Asante, 2016, Chavez, 2013b; Yep, 2013). Yep (2013) wrote, “Queer and transgender studies can provide communication scholars and practitioners with power and political tools for examining the production and constitution of modes of difference- particularly those related to gender and sexuality” (p. 119). The interrogation of such relations unveils how unequal power relations frame the intersubjective

experience of interlocutors who are positioned differently across race, class, gender and geopolitical spaces. Carillo-Rowe (2010) emphasized the aforementioned claim by saying that “the inter of intercultural communication is a capacious site of unfolding interaction across lines of difference. It gestures toward the unknown and unknowable space between unevenly located subjects” (p. 221). Placing sexuality and gender as central to identity negotiation processes and the constitution of subjectivity increases our understanding of “other bodies” from multiple cultural perspectives, including queer subjectivities outside the United States. Along with Gust Yep (2013), Chavez (2013) has called for queer and trans theoretical approaches to international and intercultural communication bringing to fore how same-sex sexual relations and gayness circulate and operate transnationally. This is especially important when examining queer identities in Ghana.

Queer intercultural communication expands and revamps concepts such as “third world,” “nation” and “imperialism” by showing the profound ways through which those with non-Western racialized, gendered and sexual identities challenge, resist and enact their identities within/across the boundaries of the nation (Chavez, 2013a). A key element of queer intercultural communication is also how the nation-state, through its institutions and structures, (re) produces ideologies about same-sex sexual relations. For queers in Ghana, the state is a fundamental reality which they/we also have to navigate. Although attention should be given to how queers describe challenging and resisting specific identities, this analysis must be accompanied by acknowledging the subject positions by the nation-state.

A queer intercultural communication perspective enables me to explore the implications of the transnational nature of queer politics and how same-sex sexual relations is being re-enacted, co-opted and resisted by queers in non-Western countries. In addition, a key question is

how the transnational flow of capital and queer mass mediated messages shape localized ways of enacting sexuality. One example of the transnational nature of queer politics, is the approach to fundamental human rights accorded to citizens moving within and across nations which is often valorized superficially.

While queer theory and its politics have gained much attention in the United States and Europe, its applications for queers in African countries require much more exploration. Recently, Nigeria and Gambia passed stringent anti-gay laws in their countries even in the midst of international criticism that the laws are against fundamental human rights. The governments of some countries such as Britain, Germany, and the USA have tried to restrict international aid in response to these laws. In the last few years, Nigeria and Gambia's law makers have been compelled to answer comments made by Hillary Clinton and Tony Blair threatening that countries that do not adhere to the human rights of GLBTQI people will lose their international aid.

Queer intercultural communication scholars can shed light on how gay and lesbian identities are being used strategically within the interests of the nation as a measurement of modernity and progressiveness. Eng (2010) has examined how support for gay and lesbian rights has increased, yet the support for people of color and objections to the racialization of sexuality have waned. Eng calls this phenomenon, "queer liberalism." Queer Liberalism is of much concern to queer intercultural communication scholars who seek to interrogate the logics of neoliberalism and the commodification of difference encoded as universal human rights (Campaiola-Veen, 2012).

Eng (2010) is also concerned with how the West is portrayed as progressive through the economic empowerment of gays and lesbians and mass-mediated consumer lifestyle, and

politically through the legal protection of rights to intimacy and privacy. He argued that these forms of liberalism and progressive rhetoric have resulted in a colorblind society, which legitimates a system of capitalist exploitation that largely favors the North over the South. Similarly, concerns for queers in Sub-Saharan African countries have increased while economic exploitation and the continual extraction of resources in African countries have been left unexamined. Hence, the colorblindness of the new liberal and progressive order needs further attention as the concern for sexual minorities still places the West as liberal while legitimizing a capitalist exploitation of the global South. Liberalism in this context refers to the assumption that the West is more open and accepting of same-sex sexual relations as depicted by politicians and widely circulating portrayals of queer consumers and queers in prime time television. This recognition of liberalism also means paying attention to the role colonialism played in destabilizing and re-structuring the diverse sexual identities present in many African locales.

Queer intercultural communication scholars can also shed light on the connections between identities, politics and globalization. It is important to establish that within the context of transnational flow of people and capital, the divisions between the West and East or North and South have become more porous (Shome & Hegde 2002). The constant flow and movement of people and capital across national boundaries complicate a sense of belonging and especially, same-sex sexual relations and the "nation-state." This means that the glorification of "authentic" localized sexual economies which are typically imagined to exist prior to colonization by the West, or the attribution of queer identity as "foreign," are not neat categories of examination. Oswin (2008) suggested that we should draw attention to the fact that there is something other than the local and the global, the Western and the Non-Western. Also, Hochberg (2010) asserted the "something" that Oswin is indicating here is culture; an entity which is mobile, translatable

and in a constant state of becoming. For Hochberg, then "culture cannot be neatly mapped into existing geopolitical, linguistic and ethno-national maps. It is articulated as a movement between sites, languages, traditions and localities" (p.499). Finally, in my research, culture is never singular but always plural.

Queer intercultural communication scholars offer a scathing critique of how gay identities are incorporated into the imperialist nation-state. Puar (2007) described this phenomenon as "Homonationalism" where gay and lesbian identities are embedded within the logics of the nation state as needing protection typically from the Muslim or non-white other. Puar (2007) provides a framework to critique the imperialistic nature of gay rights, which becomes entangled in the oppression, and subordination of other groups of people. For instance, Ritchie (2010) argued that the Israeli-Palestinian border represents the spaces where Palestinian queers are subjected to the regulation and scrutiny of the Israeli state as protectors of the "injured" from the "barbaric" Palestinians. This is not to downplay that all Palestinians are subjected to the regulations and scrutiny of the Israeli nation-state, Orthodox Jews, and some Islamic policies. However, for queer Palestinians visibility and protection are gained through the endorsement of compassionate Israeli LGBT activists. Hence, the politics of "visibility," "coming out" become narratives through which queer Palestinians have to accept the protection of the Israeli State. Queer intercultural communication approaches thus, force scholars to understand the complicated intercultural and interlocking of histories of colonialization and how they manifest in the present constructions of identities, relationality, and politics.

In addition, intersectionality is a central theme in queer intercultural communication. It is relevant to show the ways which multiple bodies enact their intersectional identities and negotiate their identities across different levels of power. Lugones (2007) argued that although

everyone in a capitalist, Euro-centered modernity is both raced and gendered, not everyone is dominated or victimized in terms of their race or gender. Queer intercultural communication scholars complicate not just the relationship between “minorities” and Whiteness, but also examine how some queers of color can manifest places of privilege due to their gender performance, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and immigration status. As well, Eguchi (2015) explained that although particular attention has been paid to the homogenizing desires of Asian queer male identities and Whiteness, less emphasis has been placed on queer-of-color to queer-of-color connections. He wrote, “The overemphasis on the queer eroticism of Asian-White encounters reproduces aesthetic, intellectual and political disconnections between Asian and Black” (p.29). Eguchi’s statement implores scholars to explore the “different relationalities between queers of color in order to decenter the material and discursive effects of Whiteness in the knowledge production of Asian queer males and desires and attractions” (Eguchi, 2015, p.29). Furthermore, decentering Whiteness can reveal how some queers of color experience oppression differently.

Using a queer intercultural communication perspectives enables scholars to explore the different ways that queers of color negotiate their identities within the structuring context where Whiteness, heteronormativity and homonormativity are used to reinforce a stable and universalizing view of sexuality. Eguchi and Asante (2016) used the theory of disidentification to examine the ways that transnational queers of color negotiate their identities as Japanese and Ghanaian immigrants in the U.S. Using the theory of disidentification as the theoretical lens, Eguchi and Asante (2016) showed that identity negotiation does not follow a predictive pattern or a process of learning and growth but is saturated with complex, contingent, contradictory renegotiations of identities, belongings and power, and these occur within a hierarchy of

difference.

In my study, I put subjectivity and subject position in conversation. Collier (2014) wrote that ideological discourse drives policies, and policies influence material conditions for diverse community members. Accordingly, exploring the particular ideological frames used to construct queer men in Ghana, evidenced in online newspaper reports, interview discourse of NGOs, and interview discourses of Ghanaian queer men, provides a way to understand how African heteropatriarchy and the transnational movements of queer politics and national interests converge to create particular subjects and subjectivities.

Subjectivity, Subject Positions and Agency

Subjectivity as a theoretical construct is relevant to my project on queer Ghanaian men as a way to examine how queer Ghanaian men are responding/re-orienting themselves within the transnational flow of queer politics and sometimes reactionary local queer activism, politics and governmentality. Central to subjectivity is the enactment of agency within the structures, institutions and representations, which shape queer experiences. This is important to point out because “power relations are constrained and enabled by structures as well as are evident in status positioning and levels of agency which are dynamically negotiated in discursive interaction” (Collier, 2009. p.5). Institutional forces and historical factors can enable or constrain positions of enunciation or enactment of identities. Described by Jorgenson and Phillips (2002) as “freedom of action” (p.2), agency can be constrained or enabled through discourse as contextually contingent discourses “limit the scope for action and possibilities” (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p.17) Central to my research is the examination of how institutional voices, government policies, media representations and laws influence the “freedom of action” of queer

Ghanaian men. This is very evident relationally, as discourses around queer men in Ghana place them in particular subject positions, which subjugate queers.

Representations of same-sex sexual relations impact the available choices for queer men to enact their queer identities. Central to my research is building understanding of how subjectivities are constructed, how subject positions form relations that are informed by ideologies and how these relations impact agency. Agency is not only the freedom to act, but also is conceptualized as the ability to enact specific communicative acts in specific contexts (Collier, 2014) characterized by patriarchy, heteronormativity, and criminality in the current study. Enacting one's identities depends upon circulating representations, ideologies, discourses and social practices related to same-sex sexual relations, light skin privilege, class position and access to specific resources. These affect queer's abilities to enact specific communicative acts such as seeking help from police or the doctor (Fairclough & Wodak, 1995). Additionally, agency is enacted in spaces between socially constructed action and structurally produced contexts, and therefore between subject positions and subjectivities.

This research will take a Foucauldian approach to the subject and subjectivity. For Foucault, discourse becomes the central frame through which meaning is negotiated and power circulates. Foucault (2000) discounts theorists of ideology and power as top-down. He asserted that power circulates, appropriates and deploys. For Foucault, as Butler points out, the subject is not outside of discourse, and the subject is not produced at an instant in its totality but is "repeatedly produced, which is not the same as being produced again and again" (p. 93). Foucault's later theories of discourse create a space for the subject to resist the discourse (Foucault, 2000). He explains that since the subject is not outside of discourse, then the subject has a potential for resistance.

Such theorizing of the subject has enabled researchers of gender and sexuality to argue for the importance of acknowledging how social norms differently impact different groups of people. For instance, feminists argued that women's subjectivity is different from men's subjectivity given the pre-existing theoretical framework largely started by men (Beauvoir, 1994). Aside from gender and sexuality, race and postcolonial scholars have also critiqued such essentialism and argued for recognizing multiple subject positions such as gender, sexuality, race and class, among others. Anzaldua (1999) recognized the multiplicity of subjectivities and that there is a point where agency can be exerted in different ways living in between and among diverse subjectivities and subject positions. Hence, Anzaldua asserted that black and Chicano feminists argue for a form of agency with alliances of difference (Collins 2000).

Attention to subjects in context to pinpoint agency can show how status hierarchies are reinforced between groups and subjugation occurs. Questions of contextually contingent agency are crucial to understanding how queer Ghanaian men engage with multiple institutions and social systems such as media, hospitals, government offices, legal institutions and representatives, and schools. Placing contextually subject positions of queer men in media discourse in conversation with contextually enabled and constrained queer subjectivities expressed in interviews points to overall levels of agency.

The agency to enact specific cultural identities is an important site of analysis to explore how context influences subjectivity and relationships in intercultural communication (Collier, 2009, 2014). For instance, in her research with Palestinian, Israeli and Palestinian/Israeli young women in a U.S peace-building program, Collier (2009) discovered that intersecting cultural identities were negotiated in contexts that enabled and constrained different voices. She noted

that avowed group identifications as well as ascribed identifications were “contextually variant, sometimes contradictory, as well as negotiated in situated interactions (Collier, 2009, p.364).

More specifically, I analyze the subject positioning (s) and subjectivities of queer men in Ghana through examining newspaper reports about queer Ghanaian men. Texts with “homosexual,” or “gay” enable me to explore how the queer subject is constituted. In addition, interviews with representatives of three NGOs, Center for Human Rights (CFHR), Ghana AIDS Foundation (GAF) and Ghana Human Rights Organization (GHRO) construct the queer subject. Finally, I examine the interview data from queer Ghanaian men to explore how they construct their subjectivities in relation to these representations and subject positions.

Intersectionality

The theory of intersectionality as introduced earlier, is a key theory in intercultural communication. Theorists contend that social phenomena and social inequalities are best understood through the examination of overlapping institutional power structures (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2000; Collins & Bilge, 2016). In this study, intersectionality is an analytical tool that can shed light on how institutional power structures such as gender, race, class, ability, sexual orientation and other axes of subject positions interact on multiple and often simultaneous levels constituting hierarchies and power relations that produce systemic injustice and inequality (Collins 2000; Crenshaw, 1991; Johnson, 2001; Yep, 2010). Crenshaw (1991) was the first to use the term “intersectionality” to describe the experiences of minority women and violence. Using case studies from a women’s shelter, she argued that the experiences of African American women could not be reduced to a category of “all women” or all “black women.” She asserted:

While the intersection of race, gender, and class constitute the primary structural elements of the experience of many Black and Latina women in battering shelters, it is important to understand that there are other sites where structures of power intersect. For immigrant women, for example, their status as immigrants

can render them vulnerable in ways that are similarly coercive, yet not easily reducible to economic class.” (p. 9)

For Crenshaw, systems of domination structure the experiences of women, and the women also influence these institutions.

Much of intersectional theory, for example, has critiqued race only or gender only frameworks, which may ameliorate the effects of one system of oppression, while simultaneously reinforcing other power structures (Meyer, 2012). Accordingly, intersectional approaches argue that any attempt to examining social inequality and discrimination should account for the multiple and simultaneous effects of systems of oppression. Eguchi (2015) contended that research with intersectional framework should take into consideration the experiences of individuals who are oppressed along multiple axes of inequality. With foundations in feminist studies, Collins (2000) referred to the various intersections of social inequality as the matrix of domination. These are also known as vectors of oppression and privilege. Collins (2000) argued that intersectionality is an analysis claiming that “systems of race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation and age form mutually constructing features of social organization, which shape black women’s experiences and in turn are shaped by black women” (p. 299). Therefore, intersectionality is an important theoretical lens to examine the impact of media representations, social structures and institutions on the lived experience of queer Ghanaian men.

Although intersectional theorists have revealed limitations of using singular frameworks for understanding social phenomena, studies of hate crime and queer discrimination in queer African studies have overwhelmingly emphasized sexuality and/or gender to examine, for instance, violence against queer men (Ekine & Abbas, 2013; Tamale, 2011). In the Ghanaian context, anti-queer violence can be explained not only by examining sexuality but also by

analyzing gender, as many of the kinds of violence that queer men experience occurs when they do not do gender “appropriately.” Studies of violence and queer discrimination in Africa have overlooked the gendered implications of anti-queer violence. Ndashe (2013) emphasized how “cultural heterosexism” was a main factor in the gay bashing of queer people in Uganda. This led to the murdering of David Kato, a prominent gay activist. Herek (1990) contended that attributing cultural heterosexism as the major instigator of violence against queer individuals omits how sexism, and in the context of Ghana, patriarchy among others, shape violence and queer discrimination.

Analyzing violence and queer discrimination through intersectionality shows how systems of inequalities are interlinked. Collins (2000) described the matrix of domination as a particular arrangement of intersecting systems of oppression that are historically and socially situated. These needs much more attention in Ghanaian and African contexts. She argued that these arrangements are interrelated domains of power, which are structural, disciplinary, hegemonic and interpersonal. Howard (2014) critiqued Collins about failing to incorporate the lived experiences of lesbian African Americans who have to navigate complex structures, histories and cultural ideologies. In order to expand Collin's matrix of domination, Howard (2014) introduced a black queer identity matrix as a form of analysis to uncover the structural, cultural, ideological and historical underpinnings that shape and re-shape complex worldviews, gender presentations, and sexual identities. Thus, paying attention to intersectionality has implications for identity negotiation research in critical intercultural communication research in Ghana.

Adopting an intersectional framework from women of color studies and queer of color studies, I view gender and sexuality as overlapping rather than competing systems of inequality,

not privileging one system over the other. There have been calls in critical intercultural communication research to explore intersectionality as more than a list of categories of analysis but attending to how various subject positions locate group members into intersectional locations as well as how group members construct intersectional subjectivities or identifications (Collier, 2005, 2009; Yep, 2013). In the context of this research, intersectionality destabilizes the idea that identity is fixed and bounded. Intersectionality disrupts the notions that identities are singular or unchangeable; and identities are approached as fluid and contextually negotiated. Macdonald (2015) argued for an anti-categorical approach to intersectionality in order to destabilize binary categorizations such as men/women or black/white, which are mostly grounded in stable identity categorizations (Collins, 2000). For instance, analyzing one identity as racially oppressed and the other as perpetually a racist oppressor is too simplistic to explore intergroup relations. To counter such forms of universalization, Yep (2012) argued for “thick intersectionality.” He explained, “Thick intersectionality explores the complex particulars of individuals’ lives and identities associated with their race, class, sexuality, and national locations by understanding their history and personhood in concrete time and space” (p.173).

To further draw attention to gender and sexuality in critical intercultural communication research, Yep (2013) asserted that it is relevant to queer/quare/kaur/trans/crip bodies to examine the multiple intersections and how they articulate together. Also, Gaudio (2009) explored the sexual norms of the yan daudu’s social practices in Northern Nigeria, where men sleep with other men but do not call themselves “gay” or “homosexual.” Gaudio pays attention to the gender and sexuality of the yan daudus and to a lesser extent, class and national positions, where these identities shape how the yan daudu experience their queer subjectivity. According to Yep (2013) to queer/quare/kaur/trans/crip bodies, then, is to understand how class and being able-

bodied contribute to queer subjectivity in the Nigerian context. For instance, questions could include how institutions and organizations position yan daudu's ascribed identities as "gay" and "homosexual" within the symbolic and material conditions of the Western sexual system and transnational queer politics. Furthermore, how they participate as a productive body and consumer citizens in a neoliberal economy can also be addressed.

In Communication Studies, queer intercultural communication researchers have paid critical attention to how gender and sexual identity are negotiated in relation to other systems of oppression (e.g. Chavez, 2012, 2013; Eguchi, 2015; Eguchi, Calafell & Files-Thompson, 2014; Eguchi, 2016; Howard, 2014; McCune, 2015; Yep, 2012, 2013). They have also critiqued mainstream intercultural communication scholars for paying lip service to intersectional analysis and not paying particular attention to gender and sexuality (Eguchi, 2015; Eguchi & Asante, 2016; Chavez, 2013). Gender and sexuality is an area of analysis related to intersectionality that is central to my analysis of queer Ghanaian men's experiences.

As explained above, research about gender in African contexts tends to ignore sexuality while centering "women" as a protected class of citizens as if "women" have no sexuality. It comes as no surprise that some African male leaders consider African women as needing access to specific resources in order to close the wage and education achievement gap and contribute to the economy while simultaneously restricting and limiting women's access to reproductive health. Nigerian legislatures rejected a bill that would reduce gender and sexual discrimination against women. They argued that the bill undermines Nigerian traditional cultural values, Sharia Law and Christian beliefs; where women are supposed to take care of the home and do not need to have a voice in politics.

Tamale (2007) argued that one of the most “effective ways in which patriarchy uses sexuality as a tool to create and sustain a gender hierarchy in African societies is by enshrouding it in secrecy and taboos” (p.18). Tamale (2009) also wrote about the gendered dimensions of sexualities in Uganda, which implicitly ignore lesbian identity. Even laws tend to be preoccupied with male-male sex. As mentioned earlier, attention to the sexuality of Ghanaian women is typically reduced to the conventional mothering role and reproductive capabilities (Asante, 2016; Manuh, 2007; Tamale, 2007, 2001). In order to navigate these social systems, queer Ghanaian men have to navigate African patriarchy, which also affects how they experience their queer subjectivity. For example, Asante asserted that in Ghana, he had to engage in hyper-masculine performances in order to deflect his queerness (Eguchi & Asante, 2016). Part of queer men's gender performance also functions to repudiate forms of femininity (McCune, 2014), which becomes part of enacting queerness in the Ghanaian context. Thus, those whose gender performances can pass as "heterosexual" are treated differently than those whose performances cannot pass. Within my dissertation research, intersectionality enables me to examine identity negotiation and performance as “interplay between individual subjectivity, personal agency, systemic arrangements and structural forces” (Yep, 2010, p.173) rather than focusing on apriori social identities (Butler, 2007). Thus, an examination of the subjective experiences of queer men in Ghana will benefit substantially from an adequate intersectional analysis of identifications and representations produced by multiple social structures of domination.

Attending to intersectionality will inform the current understanding of violence against queer men and queer discrimination in the African context. I believe intersectionality provides the theoretical lens to critique the historical and ongoing social formations of subject positions and limitations when one narrative of oppression supposedly captures the experiences of all

oppressed groups. The danger in assuming that queers from Africa are equally oppressed oversimplifies the complexity of queer African subjects as they engage with institutions and structures with different levels of agency. For instance, class positioning influences how some queer men in this study experience their queer identity.

Newspaper reports of a "gay-bashing" incident in Accra, Ghana on February 19th, 2015 dealing with a popular music producer, Albert Appiah emerged in many media outlets. Violence against queer men happens in Ghana and is sometimes reported by the press, but it hardly garners public outcry or sympathy. However, due to the popularity and socio-economic status of Albert Appiah, there was swift attention of the media and musicians to this case. In fact, reporting moved from frames of gay bashing to a class-based critique of criminals who were represented as "poor," and positioning the music producer, as a well-meaning, educated businessman. Indeed, the press defended him. Socio- economic class definitely played a role in the way this case was handled, which led the police to make an arrest. Another indicator of difference is that those with the financial capacity to secure their own apartments and homes tend to have more agency to enact their queer identities and sometimes are defended by their family and media when issues of their queerness emerge.

Despite the many contributions of intersectionality, scholars do problematized its emphasis on inherent difference of minority groups, arguing that intersectional approaches would be better served if there is an emphasis on social processes producing subjugated subject positions. I focus on intersectional differences between queer men in Ghana in order to avoid essentializing their queer experiences as universal to other queers. Indeed, the larger context in which the participants described their experiences, including colonial histories, conservative

religious institutions, class and gender norms, played a significant role in their experiences of violence and discrimination at public hospitals.

The importance of emphasizing sexuality through an intersectional analysis of queer Ghanaian men's experiences, therefore, cannot be understated. Consequently, along with attention to structures and material conditions, attending to intersectionality unveils the different levels by which queer Ghanaian men account for and navigate structures and institutions and how these work to encourage and limit their agency.

Research Questions

In this dynamic and complex context, multiple discourses are at work. These discourses create social hierarchies between heteronormativity and queer, African and un-African, legal and illegal, which in turn, affect the intersectional identifications of queers in their everyday social interactions. Macro, meso and micro structures are linked just as subject positions and subjectivities are linked. This study, therefore, seeks to answer the following research questions in the context of queer criminalization and discrimination in Ghana. The first research question that is explored include: how are queer men subjects constituted and positioned in public discourses as it is constructed by online news organizations, and (b) discourses from interviews with NGO representatives and (c) Ghanaian queer men? Research question two asks: what do the discourses accomplish related to social hierarchies, agency, power relations and ideologies?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

This study seeks to understand how power relations and ideological tensions over same-sex sexual relations are produced by subject positions and subjectivities of queer Ghanaian men. These goals are achieved by examining how queer identities have been constituted and positioned in public discourse based on selected online newspaper reports. Also, I examine interview texts with representatives of three NGOs, and how queer men's discourse constructs their subjectivities, subject positions and relations. Finally, I uncover what the discourses accomplish related to social hierarchies, agency, relations between subjects and institutions and ideologies.

Methodology

Reflexivity and Positionality

Makoskey-Daley, James, Ulrey, Joseph, Talawyma, Choi and Coe (2010) asserted that scholars should recognize and respond to power relations in interviewing relationships. Importantly, she mentioned that it is relevant to understand the material and productive effects of structural power on the recruitment process and the research process as a knowledge-producing activity. Collier and Lawless (2016) further noted that relationship between researchers and collaborators are situated within contexts and structures of power relations which continue to evolve. My intersecting cultural identities and subject positions include being someone who passes as "heterosexual," with male, academic, educational and some degree of class privileges. These ascribed identities have implications for my relationships with interviewees.

While waiting for another participant to join the focus group, I started a conversation with two of the participants present. After talking about life as a queer men in Ghana and the

U.S, Jonah asked me why I chose to have the interviews at a health center. I told him it was a way to provide a cover for the kind of conversations we are having and also, it was cheaper than a hotel. He responded strongly in the local language “I hate hospitals.” In the moment, I realized how the “health center space” could affect the mood of the participants. Also, I remembered how I disliked going to hospitals because of the lack of confidentiality. Being away from Ghana for about nine years, I did use reflexivity in planning the site of the interviews. I should have asked participants if they would be comfortable. I now realize the space I chose to have the focus group interviews could have not been a welcome space for the queer men I interviewed. The health center space connotes a different sensibility for queer men in Ghana due to how they are treated by nurses and some doctors.

As I conducted the interviews, I was positioned as a Western, U.S American educated queer African man. This subject position sometimes constrained my ability to establish rapport with the queer participants. For instance, during the interviews one of the participants mentioned, “You Americans have no idea what we go through, it’s very hard for us.” I smirked and told him I am not American and lived in Ghana till I was 22, so I can relate to some of his experiences. However, he seemed unconvinced and walked out to use the restroom. Being a queer Ghanaian man, I thought it would be easy to establish a rapport with my participants but it became difficult as I was positioned as an outsider by some of the participants.

While conducting the interviews, I realized not all my participants could speak English fluently. English is not commonly spoken in Ghana and queer men who do not speak good English were sometimes positioned as “unintelligent” and laughed at by other participants. Initially, I thought this was insulting and told some of the participants not to mock other participants who made grammatical errors when speaking English. But after reflecting on how

my academic background might be blurring another interpretation of the incident, I realized such “teasing” had a social function in the context of the Focus group interviews. Using both the local language and English with grammatical errors was part of establishing queer homosocial relations since some of them did not know each other. Thus “teasing” became a way to encourage group cohesion.

Makosky-Dale et al (2010) stated that being critically reflexive shows the nuanced ways in which power relations operate through “participants’ articulations from various subject positions, feelings of tensions or discomfort that may arise during the interviews and participants overt and covert expressions of, dislike for and/or discomfort with language” (p.80). This is especially important, as I conducted the interviews with both academic and “queer” language of identification which also influenced the ways I interpreted my participants’ enactment of identity through the speaking from multiple subject positions. For instance, the interview question regarding how queer participants identified themselves became difficult to explain to some of the participants. After using both English and local language terminologies to explain the question, more than half of the participants did not use GLBTQI acronym to describe their sexual identity. The implications of this became evident when some of the participants mentioned that they are both gay and straight which led to a long argument whether someone can be gay and straight at the same time. Most of them used the local term for queer, “sassu.” This term has more local relevance than GLBTQI and as a researcher from the U.S, my academic lens prevented me from using local terms.

Defining Queer. Western scholars have conducted most of the research on sexuality and the majority of what has been published on the African continent emanates from South Africa. Tamale (2011) asserted that the reason for the imbalance in research pertaining to sexualities in

Africa has a lot to do with geopolitical power differences rather than academic superiority. The dominance of Western theories and perspectives on sexuality studies and the fact that the main languages of academia are colonial have serious implications for the rapidly growing research on sexualities on the African continent. I approach gender and sexuality in this dissertation with the knowledge that an uncritical application of Western theories to non-Western contexts could yield acontextual and impractical research results. I am also aware that the cultural understandings of sexuality in Ghana and other African countries do not exist in isolation from the broader global circulating discourses of sexuality. This means that how sexual identity is described by institutions and structures such as religious leaders and politicians contains both local and global discourses of sexuality. Similarly, how queerness is enacted and performed by queer men in Ghana consists of not only localized versions of sexuality but multiple competing globalized discourses of sexuality. Therefore, I utilize queer as a political frame that “encompasses gender and sexual plurality and seeks to transform, overhaul and revolutionize African order rather than seek to assimilate into oppressive heteropatriarchal capitalist frameworks” (Ekine & Abbas, 2013, p.3). Thus “queer” in the context of this dissertation denotes a way of knowing that is viewed both as discursively mediated, historically situated and materially conditioned (Johnson, 2013).

Critical Discourse Analysis

This study utilizes critical discourses analysis as the methodology and method to analyze how language use can reproduce and mask discrimination, inequalities and reify and resist existing power relations. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a field with competing approaches to the study of language, power and ideology (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Richardson (2009) explained that some scholars employing CDA adopts a functionalist definition of discourse whereby the world is constituted through active language use. For instance, Gee (1999) wrote

that “language simultaneously reflects reality (the way things are) and constructs (construes) it to be a certain way” (p.82). This means that language use contributes to the (re) production of social life, power relations between institutions and among groups and social inequalities. Within the context of this research, subject positions and subjectivities of queer men in Ghana are mediated through the active and functional use of language which creates hierarchies among groups and makes discrimination of queer men part of social processes.

Critical discourse analysis is an appropriate methodology for my research because, as Titscher (2000) explained, “CDA seeks to have an effect on social practice and social relationships” (p.147), particularly the relationships of disempowerment, dominance, prejudice and/or discrimination (Richardson, 2007). In line with the goals of this study, CDA has the methodological tools to uncover ideologies and discourses about queer men naturalized as “common sense” at particular times and in specific contexts. Queer discrimination is sustained and reproduced through ideologies such as heteronormativity and African patriarchy embedded within the wider social and cultural processes. Additionally, power relations frame the various discourses and further reify who has influence over and access to discourse. Therefore, to explore how queer discrimination is constituted as legitimate aspects of social and cultural processes, it is relevant to explore how texts are produced, interpreted and received, and importantly, explore their ideological effects. Wodak (1996) explained that society and culture are dialectically related to discourse. She explained that society and culture are shaped by discourse, and at the same time constitute discourse. Thus, the methodological assumptions in CDA related to texts, social conditions, ideologies and power relations fit the goals of this study.

Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

There are different approaches to CDA. However, the approach most relevant to the goals of this dissertation research is that of Norman Fairclough. In contrast to the socio-cognitive model of Van Dijk (1999), social psychological approach of Wetherell and Potter (1992), and discourse-historical approach of the Vienna School (Wodak, 1996, 2002), Fairclough (2003) defines CDA as the "analysis of the relationship between concrete language use and the wider social-cultural structures" (p. 16). Fairclough attributes three dimensions to every discursive event. He explained that every discursive event is simultaneously text, discursive practice (which also includes the production and consumption of texts and social practice. This form of CDA is appropriate to this study because of its capacity to include more complex discursive and social practices (Richardson, 2007). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) noted that social analysis and discourse analysis can be fruitfully utilized together by integrating transdisciplinary theories and language analysis. Fairclough's model also provides scholars the chance to analyze power and agency as elements of social processes.

Discourse

Scholars have defined discourse in various ways. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) wrote that discourse "is a particular way of talking and understanding the world or an aspect of the world" (p.1). Within the context of this research, discourse is conceptualized as how online newspaper reports, representatives of the three NGO, and queer Ghanaian men express knowledge about queerness and queer identity in specific contexts. This research particularly relies on Fairclough's (2003) definition of discourse which is language use as social practice. Fairclough argued that language is part of the social process through which an aspect of the world or "reality" is constructed. Language then is not merely a channel through which

information about underlying mental states or facts is communicated. On the contrary, “language is a ‘machine’ that generates, and as a result constitutes, the social world” (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 9). This means that discourse contributes to the construction of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and meaning. Accordingly, the processes of text production and consumption is where discourse can be found (Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough’s approach is a text oriented form of discourse analysis that “unites textual analysis, macro sociological analysis of social practice and micro-sociological interpretative tradition” (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 66). In this vein, language is the mediating process through which social and institutional practice, such as discrimination and inequality are sustained. Finally, ideologies such as colonialism or Christianity that are implicated in the discourse are also analyzed.

Fairclough (2003) argued that discourse as language use should also be examined in relation to the wider social context in which it is used. For instance, in Ghana, the discourse that is used to describe queer men typically naturalizes their bodies to prostitution, pedophilia and HIV/AIDS. These representations are activated in media, political and religious discourses, among others. These discursive fields act to position queers as against the norm and deserving of subjugation. Issues of power relations in institutional discourses must be studied in that queers are positioned as deserving violence and underserving of healthcare.

Discourses are not permanent, and positions ascribed to particular groups are usually contested. Discourses used in particular situations are characterized by ideological tensions. For instance, NGOs and queer Ghanaian men have challenged the particular subject positions of queer men in Ghana as outside human rights protection and questioning of their Africanness. In order to uncover how institutions and structural agents constitute identities, discourse analysis of online newspaper reports and interviews texts was performed. Discourse analysis revealed the

various subject positions ascribed to queer men by institutional voices such as religious and political leaders and representatives of NGOs.

In addition to analyzing to discourse as contextualized social practice, this research also seeks emancipatory possibilities. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) wrote that critical perspective is concerned “with communication as a medium through which social actors produce and deliberate knowledge claims, and realize their potential for self understanding and determination” (p.49). Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) asserted that critical research “investigates and analyzes power relations in society and seeks to formulate normative perspectives from which a critique of such relations can be made with an eye on the possibilities for social change” (p.2). Given the political and economic challenges, and human rights violations that queer men face in Ghana, it becomes relevant to theoretically explore discourse and point to emancipatory possibilities for creating a more equitable society in Ghana where everyone has more access to resources and legal protection.

One key assumption which informs my use of discourse analysis is that discourse is historically and culturally contingent. Anchoring this research in the historical context of queer criminalization and the current transnational flow of queer politics helps to unravel the colonial, heteronormative and homonormative ideologies which constitute discourses about queer men in Ghana. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) explained, "The ways in which we understand and represent the world are historically and culturally specific and contingent: our worldviews and our identities could have been different, and they can change over time" (p.5). Thus, it is imperative to understand the historical and cultural situatedness of queer identity and politics in the Ghanaian context.

Another key philosophical assumption which informs discourse analysis is that knowledge “is created through social interaction in which we construct common truths and compare what is true or false” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 5). Focusing on the different cultural positions taken by online newspapers, representatives of NGOs and queer men, this study also identifies the relationship between knowledge and social action. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) argued that “Different social understandings of the world lead to different social actions, and therefore the social construction of knowledge and truth has social consequences” (p.6). Therefore, by focusing on these texts the ideological tensions which frame representations, subject positions and subjectivities of queer men are revealed.

In sum, critical discourse analysis is an appropriate methodology for this study as it has the theoretical and methodological tools to examine language use in social contexts. Discourse produces individuals and groups into subject positions. The same discourse is also constructed from subject positions (Muneri, 2016). Fairclough (1989) wrote, “Occupying a subject position is essentially a matter of doing or not doing certain things in line with discursive rights and obligations” (p.38). Therefore, power relations and ideological positions are central to how identities are constituted and must be considered as relations of struggle over subject positions (Muneri, 2012).

In order to reveal how discourse constitutes the queer subject, this research uses an adapted version of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) used by Muneri, (2012, 2016). In this approach orders of discourse are central in understanding how same-sex sexual relations is constituted in Ghana. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) define order of discourse as the “complex configuration of discourses and genres within the same social field or institution. It can denote different discourses that partly cover the same terrain, a terrain which

each discourse competes to fill with meaning in its own way” (p. 141). Fairclough and Wodak (1995) wrote, “The importance of the order of discourse is the relationship between different types of discourse within a network or among networks. These relations are often focus of social struggle and conflict” (p.56). Thus, orders of discourse related to heteronormativity, neoliberalism, Africanness or morality, for instance, are an essential element of analysis in this study.

It is important to focus on the order of discourse especially relating to the transnational flow of queer politics, African nationalism, neoliberalism, the role of colonial history and how they relate to same-sex sexual relations and other subject positions. Discourses such as pro human rights, pan-Africanism, the threat of HIV/AIDS, globalization and Western values on sexuality also constitute orders of discourse. Nonetheless, orders of discourse are open to change, and the analysis also considers variations in discourse that may emerge in the interview texts and newspapers over time. Furthermore, orders of discourse are analyzed in relation to the subject positions of various subjects at particular moments (Muneri, 2012). Additionally, orders of discourse are examined within the wider context and discourses (both local and transnational) and Pan-African politics. Finally, orders of discourse are analyzed as materially and institutionally anchored and embedded in wider social practices.

Method

Media Sources

The media landscape in Ghana is divided along state and privately-owned newspapers, television stations and radio stations. According to Hasty (2005), the most provocative and influential news stories circulating through mass media into the public sphere are produced by state and private press. While newsworthy events are also covered by radio and television,

newspapers and their online content constitute the discursive dynamics of local news discourse by providing the characterization and terms for discussing social issues. For instance, some of the private radio stations and private newspaper organizations borrow the same content and narrative form of news reports from the state-owned institutions (which have the money and resources to investigate and deliver particular stories). Thus, state-funded news organizations define the discursive limitations of issues being discussed in the public sphere. As a result, all news stories are subsumed into ongoing narrative frame of national news. This is particularly evident in news stories about same-sex sexual relations.

In Ghana, as in other post-colonial countries, news discourse is divided into two distinct genres, the state-funded newspaper, and the private press. Dramatic differences are evident in news stories from both private versus state-owned newspapers in their critique of the President, government policies and corruption. However, their stories about same-sex sexual relations tend to be similar and critical. Tettey (2016) contended that their similarity in reports about same-sex sexual relations could be due to the acceptable social norms criminalizing same-sex sexual relations and the ongoing subjugation of oppositional views. Moreover, since media organizations are associated with the two main political parties in Ghana, New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National Democratic Congress (NDC), the reporting about same-sex sexual relations is a barometer for the reading public about which political party takes the most anti-queer position. Situated at the interstices of public and popular culture, the combined discourse of state and privately owned newspapers, and radio stations constitutes an intensely contested public sphere. This space contains the authoritative social imagery of the government's position on same-sex sexual relations while allowing dissent and public deliberation on the issues involving

queers from NGO representatives, human rights lawyers and some government officials to emerge.

One important feature of newspaper reporting in Ghana is the “house style,” also known as “who leads” journalistic style of writing. Hasty (2005) argued that house style refers to a specific textual frame for shaping the narrative of most news stories of state-owned newspapers in Ghana. This frame structures a set of preferences by highlighting certain elements of an event while de-emphasizing or obscuring other elements. The house style focuses on the pronouncements of “newsmakers” such as religious leaders, political leaders and comments from leaders in other countries as news worthy stories. This process echoes an interpretative frame which legitimizes statements of community leaders as representation of newsworthy events.

Training of Ghanaian journalists at the Ghana Institute of Journalism emphasizes a similar style of journalism. According to Hasty (2005) journalism students in Ghana are taught how to organize the six essential elements of news event by identifying the who, when, where, why and how the news happened. The journalist then chooses the most provocative aspects of the story and uses it to contextualize the entire story. In the United States, leads are commonly structured around important events, relevant actions or new discovery. However, around half of the stories in most of the Ghanaian news articles are designed to highlight pronouncements of personalities with leads that quote the public comments of an authoritative “who.”

This style of news structuring and reporting is very common in reports about queer men. News stories about queers typically begin with a quote by a religious leader or politician, identifying him by name and title. Then the following paragraphs elaborate on the quote and a reference is sometimes made to the occasion of his/her speech. This style of reporting articulates and reinforces a specific logic of state hegemony. Participating in this hegemonic project means

that news organization construct and reinforce a particular public imagery by conveying the “official” and authoritative statement concerning the issue being reported.

The radio stations and newspapers selected for this study include state-owned and privately owned media organizations. Below, I overview each of the news sources and offer a summary of the news stories related to GLBTQI issues published from summer 2014 to summer of 2016.

Myjoyonline.com. Joy FM is a privately-owned radio station in Accra, Ghana. It was judged the second-best radio station on the African continent by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 2006. In 2008, Joy FM won the Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana Award for Media Organization of the year and Ghana Journalist Association Program of the Year. The radio station (established in 1994) is owned and managed by the media company, Multimedia Group Limited. The news content on Joy FM is aired in English only. In addition to the radio station, Joy FM also manages an online news portal called *Myjoyonline.com*. The news articles on *Myjoyonline.com* are short and concise, making it easier for readers to skim through the articles and share the news content. The news content on the radio and the website predominantly appeals to the working class, middle-class and primarily English-speaking Ghanaians in Ghana and those in the diaspora. Their Christian audience tend to be Charismatic Evangelicals who are mostly well-educated, use English during their church service and are anti-queer. Thus, the news reports about same-sex sexual relations tend to reproduce the dominant narrative voiced by Charismatic evangelicals and political conservatives.

Citifmonline.com. Citi FM is another privately-owned radio station located in Accra. The radio station (established in 2002) is owned by Omni Media Limited. Their news content on the radio is reported in English. In 2012, Citi FM was recognized as the most Innovative

Newsroom in Africa for its use of digital media online, social and mobile media in news gathering and dissemination processes. Citi FM was awarded the New Radio Station of the year by the BBC in 2007 (*Citifmonline.com*). Citi FM also manages *Citifmonline.com*, an online news portal. Some of their radio news content is posted on *Citifmonline.com*, and it is written in English. The news reports about same-sex sexual relations tend to emphasize anti-queer statements from religious leaders. They also offer commentary on international politics on gay marriage and description of violence.

Peacefmonline.com. *Peacefmonline.com* is a subsidiary of Peace FM; both are owned by Despite Company. Peace FM was established in 1999 by Mr. Osei Kwame Despite. According to their website, the objective of the radio station is to demonstrate singular support for the local music industry which was on a rapid decline in Ghana in the late 1990's but has since become more popular. Peace FM plays local Ghanaian music from the 1960's and 1980's, and currently, has a large marketing base. Peace FM is a marketing success due to their use of the local language, Twi. Peace FM live streams and uploads their radio news content on *Peacefmonline.com*, enabling Ghanaians in the diaspora to have access to news stories in Twi. However, online news articles are written in English. Reports about same-sex sexual relations are typically anti-gay as articles consist of statements and comments from particularly, Christian religious leaders, political leaders and presidents of other African countries. Sometimes, they offer commentary on gay marriage rulings in other countries.

Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times. *The Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* are Ghanaian state-owned daily newspapers with a combined circulation of more than 100,000 copies per day. Established in 1950 by Cecil King of the London Daily Mirror Group (Asante, 1996), they are both widely read newspapers in Ghana. *The Daily Graphic* has seen many editors

replaced over the course of its history, particularly, post-independence, after a string of successive military coups that resulted in the dismissal of editors who opposed the government and their policies. Hasty (2005) notes that after 1979, the newspaper was named *People's Daily Graphic* under the presidency of Jerry John Rawlings for a few years to remind the people that "it belongs to them" (Hasty, 2006, p.12). Anokwa (1997) contended that because it is state-owned newspaper, it regularly covers the government in favorable light, dealing and encouraging national unity and government policy. In 2012, *Daily Graphic* re-launched their website, *Graphic Online* and according to Alexa.com, it is currently among the top five news websites in the country. Its online news reports are written in English and reports about same-sex sexual relations tend to be editorials and anti-queer statements from religious and political leaders.

The *Ghanaian Times* (previously known as the *Guinea Press Limited*) was established by the first President of Ghana, the late Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1957 as a printing press for the Convention People's Party (CPP). After his overthrow through a military coup in 1966, the *Guinea Press* was taken over as a state property by National Liberation Council Decree 130 in 1968 (Asante, 1996) and renamed the *Ghanaian Times* in 1971. The *Ghanaian Times* launched its website in 2013. The news content on its website is written in English and reports about same-sex sexual relations tend to emphasize the criminality of same-sex sexual relations.

The Daily Guide. The *Daily Guide* is a privately-owned newspaper organization owned by Mrs. Georgina Blay. The *Daily Guide* is associated with the National Democratic party; whose leadership was in power from 2012 to 2016. It publishes six times a week and is regarded as the most popular independent newspaper in Ghana with a circulation of about 22,000 a day (GhanaNewsAgency.com). The *Daily Guide* launched its website in 2008. Its online news articles are written in English. While some of the reports from the *Daily Guide* bring violence

against queer men to public attention, the criminal acts of violence are described rather than critiqued.

In sum, private and public news organizations differ in their critique of government policies and the president. However, their reporting about same-sex sexual relations are similar. Most of the newspaper articles lead with comments and statements from anti-queer leaders but offer less critique of the statements. In this approach, structural agents make the news and their statements and comments about queer men are reported as the “official” stand of the state on queer issues (Hasty, 2005).

Non-Governmental Organizations

The three NGOs included in this study have been working with queer men for more than five years. Center for Citizen Rights (CFCR) was established in 2003 to promote sexual minority rights in Ghana. It is the most organized and well-funded NGO that specifically caters to people who identify as GLBTQI. CFCR provides a variety of programs, most notably, self-defense courses, security training and HIV/AIDS outreach. Until recently, they have started organizing human rights workshops aimed at empowering sexual minorities about their rights as queer Ghanaians. They have seven salaried workers and 17 local and international volunteers as of August 2016.

Ghana Aids Network (GAN) is a community-based health center in Accra. It was started by a Ghanaian doctor based in the United States in 1999. Although their programs do not specifically cater to queer men, their HIV-AIDS program includes queer men who are HIV positive. They are one of the few health centers where HIV-positive queer men can access anti-retroviral drugs at a subsidized price and sometimes, get health care for free. They have 12

salaried administrative officers, two full-time doctors in their health facility in Accra, and two volunteers from the United States. They also have health centers in Tarkoradi, and Tamale.

Ghana Human Rights Organization (GHRO) was started in 2005 and has received consistent funding from the United States Embassy and University of Rochester Center for Community Health. GHRO does HIV prevention work supported by various Western governments and international agencies. This organization was started by one person and he hires workers when he receives funding for projects. Unlike other NGOs, GHRO does not have long term projects. Most of their projects are short term and sometimes they get sub contract projects from GAF and CFCR. Thus, the owner does not have regular salaried workers and he rent office spaces when he receives grants for projects.

The three NGOs in this study received consistent funding from international agencies to reach at-risk populations in Ghana including queer men. Their funding comes from international organizations such as the Global Fund and sometimes from Western embassies such as the Netherlands, The United States, Canada, and Germany. However, all the NGOs in this study receive funding from the Global Fund. The funds from the Global Fund are distributed to the NGOs through the Ghana AIDS Commission, which reports to the Office of the President of Ghana. According to their website, the Global Fund is a 21st-century partnership organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria as epidemics. Founded in 2002, the Global Fund is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by diseases. The Global Fund raises and invests nearly \$4 billion dollars a year for supporting programs run by local experts in countries and communities most in need.

Interviews

Interviews with representatives from NGO's and queer Ghanaian men enabled me to uncover views of NGO officials and experiences of queer men. These texts contain discourses revealing subjectivities and subject relations, and implicated power relations, and ideological tensions.

Queer Ghanaian men were interviewed to understand how they socially construct their identities within particular contexts and experience subject positions. Interviews are an effective means to get accounts of those who embody queerness and experience the materiality of their queer identity combined with other intersectional identity categories. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2011) "Interviewees are conceived as speaking subjects who utilize discourse to perform their identities as well as to make sense of their own positions in the social structure" (p.180). While media discourses are produced by media organizations and representatives, discourse from individuals provides access to accounts of situated experiences. In addition, individual interview discourse offers the opportunity to examine consumption of institutional discourses promoted through online news reports. Analyzing individuals' views of their subjectivities in the contexts also enables me to better understand their "availability of choices" and levels of enacted agency.

Focus group interviews were used to collect research data from queer men. Focus group interviews are especially suited to solicit accounts of lived experiences of queer men in Ghana, as this method presents a collaborative process for meaning construction, and the cultural performance of communication (Hollander, 2004). Focus group interviews also revealed the ideological struggles around what constitutes same-sex sexual relations in the Ghanaian context. Focus groups also provided the platform for participants to affirm and contest others' accounts of what they constitute as the queer experience in Ghana. Focus group interviews were also used

because there is more comfort and security gathering at a location such as the office of a health center than traveling to and meeting in a hotel meeting room.

A total of 21 Queer Ghanaian men participated in focus group interviews. Five focus groups were conducting with four to six participants in each focus group. The interviews took place in the office of a health center in Accra, and they lasted for approximately two hours. Interviewees were offered snacks and 50GHC (\$12) for each participant as compensation for transportation.

A snowball sampling approach was used to recruit queer men in Ghana. Lindlof and Taylor (2011) asserted that “snowball sampling is well suited to studying social networks, sub-cultures, or people who have certain attributes in common. It is also sometimes the best way to reach an elusive, hard-to-recruit population” (p.114). Due to the socio-political climate surrounding queer men in Ghana, this form of recruitment enabled me to reach a specific group of people with low social visibility. Queer men generally trust each other within the context where being openly queer is not socially acceptable. Therefore, friend referral yielded better results than other forms of sampling strategies. Since intersectionality is a major theoretical construct, queer men from different socio-economic classes, ethnic backgrounds, gender performance and educational backgrounds were recruited.

Personal interviews were used with officials of the NGOs. Interviews were conducted on the premises of the NGOs. Six personal interviews were conducted, two from each organization. The organizations were selected based on their programs and projects related to GLBTQI rights, longevity and existence for at least five years, success at obtaining grants and securing funding. IRB approval was obtained from the University of New Mexico for all interviews. After being read the informed consent form, all participants gave their oral consent to participant and have

their interviews tape-recorded. All data from the transcribed interviews was de-identified and pseudonyms assignment to individuals and organizations.

Coding and Interpretation

Textual Analysis. This research utilizes textual analysis as the initial analytical step to identify concepts. Richardson (2007) noted that newspaper texts are the means through which citizens come to know who they are and their subject positions in the world. He also asserted that newspapers mediate the relationship between those with access to status and resources and everyone else. In the context of this research, online newspapers and news portals from radio stations carry out similar editorial policies as print newspapers. Newspapers are not unbiased texts but reproduce discriminatory social norms and enforce the views publishers and editors. Newspaper discourse reproduces ideologies (Van Dijk 1999); therefore, online newspaper reports and articles from online news portals also reproduce and/or resist the social order.

Purposive sampling was used to collect news stories and editorials published in various online Ghanaian news organizations and portals. Currently, all major Ghanaian newspapers and some radio stations have a web presence, and their news content is shared through social media. This enables newspaper articles to be distributed widely across the country and beyond. Tettey (2016) wrote “Together, these online websites are valuable depositories of information that has a national resonance and global reach, with an audience that is largely Ghanaian but de-territorialized within global circuits” (p.90). The online nature of newspapers presents easy access to past news reports and editorials without the constraints of geographical distance and the challenges of getting physical copies of newspapers. Thus, I examined online news reports.

Selection of newspaper articles to examine were based on the following criteria: 1. Newspaper articles were published online from summer of 2014 to summer of 2016. 2.

Newspaper articles reported on major issues about GLBTQI rights in Ghana such as statements from Western leaders about GLBTQI rights in West Africa, gay bashing in Ghana, arrests of “gay” people in Ghana, press releases of religious leaders in Ghana, comments of African leaders about same-sex sexual relations and marriage equality in the United States.

The samples of online newspaper articles were limited to radio stations with online presence and print newspaper organizations with online news reports and editorials. These online news articles reflected the viewpoints of private owned, state-owned, pro-government, pro-opposition, and politically neutral groups. This range of media outlets enabled me to attend to aspects of production such as how ownership type and correlated with news content. Newspaper articles were found using terms such as “homosexual,” “homosexuality,” “bisexual” “gayism,” (this is a term used in Ghana) and “gay.” “Queer” is hardly used in these news outlets.

Analysis through CDA. Adapting Norman Fairclough’s (2003) approach to discourse analysis, I explored the three intersecting dimensions to every discursive event; text, discursive practice (which also includes production and consumption) and social practice. In the first step (textual analysis), I read through the transcripts and newspaper texts to get a holistic picture. In so doing, I analyzed the content of the text to see what is being generally being talked about and identify micro level speech acts. During this stage, I noted statements describing queer men in Ghana. I looked for implicit and explicit avowals and ascriptions about GLBTQI individuals. Next, I did deductive coding. In this stage, I looked for theoretical concepts that were problematized in the research questions. For example, I noted how queer men were positioned as criminals or presented with constraints on their actions or access to resources. I then conducted inductive coding to uncover other concepts. For instance, some of the interviewee discourse encouraged queers to be activists who should call attention to their needs for political change.

After doing both inductive and deductive coding, I looked for similarities in comment and claims and organized them into preliminary categories; these became preliminary themes. When satisfied with a theme, I looked at how thematic categories emerged in context to one another such as negative portrayals of queer men as unchristian and queer men as irresponsible for their own health. Finally, I examined what the themes accomplished such as subjugation in institutional settings.

Analysis of discursive practice includes attention to historical, and contextual factors that affect production and consumption of the discourses. Noting the specific discourses which represent queer people at particular times and in particular conditions helped me to build understanding of the salience of cultural identities, relations between groups and implication of these on the subjectivities of queer men. The funding structure of NGOs and international influence from countries such as the U.S.A, U.K and the Netherlands, formed part of the contextual situation through which the discourse from NGOs was analyzed.

In addition to attention to history and structural factors, intertextuality was addressed throughout the research. Intertextuality refers to the references and connections that interviews and newspapers texts make to other texts apart from themselves. Fairclough (2003) defined intertextuality as the "property that texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict or ironically echo" (p.84). Intertextuality in critical discourse analysis refers to the idea that texts are products of other texts and they draw from historical precedence as they re-make history. In this case, the online newspapers and interview texts cannot be analyzed without attention to the historical and transnational context and texts that inform the current production of the particular texts I examined.

The last analytical step comprised unveiling implicated ideologies, power relations between subjects and levels of agency. This analysis of the sociocultural practices (Fairclough, 1995) required that I examine how the themes are working or what is being accomplished by the discourse. Because ideologies are produced through multiple discourses, texts and structures, it was necessary to examine newspaper reports and interview texts with NGOs and queer people. Evidence of how agency is enacted was also pinpointed. By placing the subject positions of queer men in newspaper articles in conversation with how queer men described navigating these structures, levels of agency emerge. For instance, although institutional voices demonize same-sex sexual relations, creating the conditions for violence, some of the queer participants with higher class positions and higher educational background spoke of ways they have avoided violence or obtained healthcare in specific contexts. This also shows how intersectional locations affect queer subjectivities and subjectivities in Ghana.

In conclusion, critical discourse analysis enables me to address the theoretical constructs which inform queer men as subjects. Furthermore, I examine how their subject positions impact their diverse subjectivities. Online newspaper and interview discourses were analyzed in relation to the research questions in order to understand the role of agency, power relations, and ideologies produced by discourse about and from the queer subject in Ghana. Discourse plays an important role in the constitution of social reality, discrimination and the reproduction of privilege. Subject positions and subjectivities work together in diverse contexts in Ghana, and a thorough analysis of the relations between them unveiled spaces for emancipation and the potential to resist dominant discourses that silences queer people and restricts their access to resources.

CHAPTER 4

VIOLENCE AND DISCOURSE: QUEER SUBJECT POSITIONS, IDENTITY PERFORMANCE, IDEOLOGIES AND AGENCY

Violence such as blackmail, mob action and workplace discrimination have become part of queer subjectivities in Ghana. The criminalization of same-sex relations by the state and online news media discourses about homosexuality and/or gay men from particularly, religious leaders have engendered social conditions and norms where violence, workplace discrimination and social injustice against queer men or men identified as "gay" have become the social order. Although most African States aspire to act as liberal democracies and honor human rights where each citizen is treated fairly under the law, effeminate men and men who are identified as non-heterosexual are denied state protection when they experience blackmail, mob action and discrimination at the workplace. Epprecht (2008) argued that queer people in South Africa (a country which incorporated sexual orientation as a protected class in 1996) still endure some form of violence as demonstrated by “corrective rape” of lesbians in the southern part of the country. I have witnessed violence against queer friends in Ghana. In 2004, I had to send money to a mob who had kidnapped a friend before he could be released. The persistence of violence against sexual minorities in post-colonial African countries such as Ghana, is a necessary context to examine the continual significance of colonization, globalization, and neoliberalism in the discursive framing of queer Ghanaian men and the ideological tensions shaping the discussions of GLBTQI visibility politics in Ghana.

It is important to note that in this analysis I include different identifications and labels utilized by the online news media selected in this study, NGO staff and queer men. While reports in the online news media texts referred to queer men as homosexuals, representatives of NGOs identified queer men as GLBTQI. Queer men interviewed in this study conversely identified

themselves as "sassu." Sassu is a local queer Ghanaian parlance which describes someone who is non-heterosexual. Since labels and representations have material, economic and social consequences for those being represented, it is important to include the diversity in my analysis. The different identifications ascribed to same-sex relations by online news media, representatives of NGOs and queer men point to the complexities associated with same-sex visibility politics in the Ghanaian context. Human rights debates and Western queer rights advocates often marginalize the African perspective as simply Africa's homophobia. As this chapter shows, what is left un-interrogated for the most part is the multiple, fragmented historical processes such as colonialism, heteronormativity, patriarchy and neoliberalism animating discourses positioning same-sex desires and relations in Ghana.

In Ghana, sexual contact between two consenting adults of the same-sex is criminalized under the carnal knowledge clause instituted by the British during colonization. However, queer men in Ghana are rarely arrested for just being queer. Same-sex sexual relations becomes a criminal offense in Ghana when two men or women are caught in the act of having sex. While countries such as Nigeria, Gambia, and Uganda have recently created laws to criminalize same-sex sexual relations (including arresting anyone who is suspected to be queer or to promote “homosexuality”) the Ghanaian criminal code does not give the Ghanaian government power to arrest someone if that person is suspected to be queer. Still, men suspected to be queer based on how they dress or talk can be lynched by a mob. Also, queer men can be blackmailed by imposters who pose as gay men in gay chat rooms and gay dating apps without legal consequences. In cases of mob action and lynching, police officers hardly take any action against the perpetrators of the crime.

Due to the lack of legal protection from the nation-state, queer men are more likely to experience blackmail, robbery, and beatings from angry mobs. For instance, between 2013 and 2015, vigilante groups have surfaced in different parts of the country using YouTube videos and radio stations to make public announcements that they will kill and burn all queer men and women in Ghana. The *Daily Guide*, a privately-owned newspaper in Ghana with a circulation of 22,000 copies a day, carried the below story in 2015.

An anti-gay vigilante group who refer to themselves as the “Gay Killers” have recently discovered the activities of an underground group established by members of the LGBT community in Accra. Reports reaching us indicate that at least 4 active members of this group have been lynched in different areas in Accra with the most recent lynching occurring in the early hours of Monday 1st June 2015 (*Daily Guide*, June 15, 2015).

Another report by the *Daily Guide* carried this story from 2014.

A homosexual at Nima in the Ayawaso District of the Greater Accra Region was yesterday killed after a series of tortures carried out on him since his apprehension by the local anti-gay unit. The deceased, identified as Sami Adjei, was in the company of his partner, Yunus Iddris when an angry mob of armed locals attacked them (*Daily Guide*, October 9, 2014).

As shown above, queer men remain vulnerable to citizen justice as social norms sustain ideological myths about same-sex sexual relations that I detail in later sections, such as same-sex sexual relations as unAfrican, “homosexuality” unChristian and outside Ghanaian culture. These discourses are activated to render invisible non-conforming groups through systemic misrecognition, outright discrimination, and alienating myths (Ossome, 2013). These discourses are widely circulating and thus become another form of violence by enabling the formation of “gay-killers” and “anti-gay” units who torture and beat queer men.

In addition to the potential for blackmail and mob action, other forms of violence such as rejection by families and churches, termination of employment, and public humiliation in schools are common. For example, although there are laws against unlawful termination of employment,

queer men are not guaranteed those rights because of the social norms and discourses about queer men that position same-sex sexual relations as outside African traditional values and traditions. Queer men in high schools and Universities in Ghana are more likely to experience humiliation and violence from other students and from school administrators. For instance, a report from the *Daily Graphic*, a state-owned newspaper with a circulation of about 100,000 a day, reported the expulsion of three high school students for being queer.

Three final-year students of the Opoku Ware Senior High School in Kumasi, who are alleged to have engaged in homosexuality on the school's compound have been suspended indefinitely. Their suspension, which was made "in their own interest," followed a mob action by a large number of students of the all-boys school who attempted to lynch the three students (*Daily Graphic*, January 19th, 2016).

It needs to be mentioned that Ghanaian newspaper reports about queer men have also brought issues such as "gay bashing," "murder" and blackmail to public awareness. However, as I show below, discourses about queer men from religious organizations, some government officials and representatives of non-profit organizations position queer men in contested and multiple subject positions. The tensions between how the online news media reports in this study and officials of non-profit organizations constitute same-sex sexual relations and the respondents' discourses about their subjective experiences of queer identity in Ghana show the fluid and contested nature of discourses, identities and cultural norms (Collier, 2005; Moon 2012; Nakayama & Halualani, 2012).

This analysis, therefore, builds understanding of violence as contextually contingent. I uncover structural productions, discursive constructions and embodied consequences. How power relations and ideological tensions over same-sex sexual relations are produced and accompanied by subject positions and subjectivities of queer Ghanaian men are addressed. Specifically, I examine how queer men are constituted/constructed in newspaper discourse and

discourse from NGO representatives. In addition, I examine how interviews with queer Ghanaian men demonstrate intersectional subjectivities and subject positions in relations with others, and how agency is enabled and constrained in particular contexts. Finally, I address the re/production of ideological tensions and relations between groups and institutions. The first research question that is explored includes: how are queer men subjects constituted and positioned in discourses produced by Ghanaian online news media, and (b) discourses from interviews with NGO representatives and (c) Ghanaian queer men? Research question two asks: what do the discourses accomplish related to social hierarchies, agency, power relations and ideologies?

To answer the research questions above, three sets of research data were analyzed; newspaper reports, interviews with officials of NGOs, and interviews with sassu. First, newspapers were selected because they mediate the relationship between those who have access to power, status and resources and all others (Richardson, 2007; Van Dijk, 1998). Newspaper texts reproduce ideologies and constitute homosexuality in specific subject positions. To review, selected online newspapers include: *Daily Graphic*, *Daily Guide*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Myjoyonline.com*, *Citifmonline.com* and *Peacefmonline.com*. They include a range of State and privately owned newspapers and radio stations with online presence. Officials of Non-Profit Organization (NGOs) working specifically with queer individuals were interviewed. Three main non-profit organizations were selected for this study; Center for Citizen Rights (CFCR), Ghana Aids Network (GAN) and Ghana Human Rights Organization (GHRO). Non-profit organizations were chosen because they are mediators between important government programs and queer men. The selected nonprofit organizations were chosen because of their long-term work with individuals who identify as GLBTQI in Ghana. These non-profits have existed for more than five years. Finally, queer men in Ghana were interviewed for this study. The interviews with queer

men enabled me to uncover experiences of sassu and the interviews with officials of NGOs gave me the opportunity to solicit views from those who are involved in the struggle against criminalization of same-sex relations and discrimination. The various texts selected for this study are considered part of the broadly circulating discourses that can help build knowledge about subjectivities, subject relations, power relations, and ideological tensions. In total, 27 participants participated in both personal and focus group interviews; 21 of the participants identified as sassu and six as officials of NGOs. The participants who identified as sassu are all Ghanaian citizens who live in Accra. Similarly, the officials of the non-profit organizations are also Ghanaian citizens. All the NGOs are based in Accra, Ghana.

Contextual Factors Enabling Violence

Article 105 of the Ghana Criminal Code states, "Whoever is guilty of unnatural carnal knowledge (a) of any person without his consent is guilty of first degree felony, or (b) of any person with his consent or of any animal, is guilty of a misdemeanor. This law conflates bestiality with homosexuality and rape. According to Gupta and Long (2008), more than 80 countries around the world that were once British colonies still criminalize consensual same sexual behaviors among adult men, yet seldom between women.

Although enforcement of the carnal knowledge clause is limited to serious offences such as pedophilia and rape, the Ghanaian public's disdain for same-sex sexual relations emanates from a variety of historical events and current institutions. Tamale (2011) wrote that African nationalists seeking the independence of African states aligned the anti-queer rhetoric previously used by British Christian missionaries with African nationalism and anti-colonialism. This process led to the positioning of same-sex sexual relations as a product of colonization and therefore, from the West. O'Mara (2007) explained that extreme cases of poverty and

unemployment in the 1970's and 1980's under successive military regimes resulted in a massive brain drain in Ghana. Most of the educated elites who had fought for the emancipation of Ghana absconded to the United Kingdom and the United States because of government regime changes. During this time, religious fundamentalism became popular, which also contributed to the heightened sense of homophobia in Ghana specifically, and West Africa generally. The rise in religious fundamentalism in Ghana is intensified and validated by Ghanaian Pentecostal churches. The Ghanaian Pentecostal- Charismatic churches differ from the Western version as they emphasize a breakaway from local traditions in order to achieve wealth and good health (Birgit-Meyer, 1998). The Pentecostal churches started in Ghana are also global as they have partnerships with similar churches and branches in South America, Asia and the United States. For instance, although the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost was started in Ghana, there are more than 100 branches across the globe.

Christian and Islamic teachings are used to rationalize discrimination, which is often violent, against queer men. Tettey (2016) claimed that Ghanaian media taps into the “Cultural disdain for homosexuality... [media] frame and amplify discourses to reflect that disdain; thereby creating moral panic that generates a homophobic onslaught by moral entrepreneurs” (p.88). Furthermore, political leaders have taken advantage of the strong public sentiments about same-sex sexual relations to propose regulatory laws against queer rights activism. Tettey (2016) wrote that “there is an unabashed competition among political parties to garner recognition in the media and, hence, gain political capital as the most hostile to homosexuality and the most reliable protectors of heterosexual norms” (p. 94). Thus, political parties utilize strong anti-queer rhetoric to gain public support. This means that violence against queer men is hardly renounced

by politicians and law-makers; this implicit endorsement contributes to violence against queer men being normalized.

Overview

I begin my analysis with identifying what emerged from the first of the three types of texts in this study. The first section examines how queer men are constituted in discourses produced by online newspapers such as the *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Daily Guide*, *Myjoyonline.com*, *Citifmonline.com* and *Peacefmonline.com*. This section shows how violence against queer men is discursively framed and contested by focusing on how queer men are positioned related to discourses of national belonging, criminalization of same-sex sexual relations, religious beliefs and values, and African traditions and customs. The second section explores how officials of NGOs construct queer Ghanaian men in interviews and references to their websites. The last section examines interview texts with queer men to explore how they enact their subjectivities and individual agency within the structural context where violence such as mob action, lynching, and workplace abuse and termination are legitimized as part of the social order. The analysis not only captures the discursive forms but also explore the accomplishments such as relations between groups and institutions which implicate power, levels of agency and ideologies that are reinforced. Below, I begin by examining two themes that emerged from the analysis of newspaper texts.

Print and Online Media Texts

Analysis of newspaper texts revealed the institutional voices and structural forces at work in the reproduction of a particular queer subject. Stuart Hall (1997) posits that the media's main sphere of operation is the transformation and production of ideologies related to particular subjects. In the context of this study, online news media reports about queer men in Ghana are a

powerful source of ideas about queer identities, and these ideas are articulated through the media where they are worked on, transformed and elaborated. Online news media reports from summer 2014 to summer 2016 represent a period of intensive reporting about “homosexuality” and gay men, with 2015 containing the most reports. The intensive reporting was frequently triggered by political events such as comments from presidents or leaders from Western and/or African countries, statements from religious leaders, gay marriage rulings in other countries and presidential elections in Ghana. Other events include the lynching or gay bashing of queer men in some parts of Accra, male-male pedophilia and rape.

Two themes emerged from the analysis of online news media texts in 2015. The analysis reveals two major events in 2015. First, is the gay bashing of Albert Appiah, a popular music producer in Ghana and second, the United States Supreme Court ruling on marriage equality. By exploring discourses that emerged about queer men in these two events, first, I unveil how online news media reports about the U.S Supreme Court ruling on marriage equality activated Pentecostalist-Charismatic religious discourses of doom and curse if gay marriage is allowed in Ghana. Second I show how the news media reports activate class, cisgender and patriarchal privileges as a means of justifying anti-queer violence.

Institutional Voices Demonizing Queers

Pentecostalist-Charismatic discourse is one of the primary discourses for discussing same-sex relations in online news media reports because of the dominance of Christian religious beliefs in Ghana. A WIN-Gallup International survey ranked Ghana as the most religious country in the world among 57 countries in 2012. According to the study, 97 percent of Ghanaians indicated that they are religious. Chris Stein (2012) from the *Christian Monitor* noted that 70 percent of Ghanaians identified as Christian, 17 percent identified as Muslim, and the rest

identified as traditionalist or aligned with other religions. The Pentecostal-Charismatic church is the most common form of Christian denomination in Ghana and most parts of Africa (Meyer, 2004). Founded on what Meyer (2004) describes as "prosperity gospel," their mantra relies on individual and national economic progress in relation to morality. The congregation is promised financial stability and social mobility when they give money to the church and live a moral Christian life. Thus, Pentecostal-Charismatic church discourses about homosexuality resonate with most of the public, and additionally, they are articulated together with nationalist discourse and anti-colonial rhetoric.

In the course of the last ten years, the role of Christian religion in Ghana has expanded in the Ghanaian society. Once confined to a hidden and elusive domain, the Pentecostal variant of Christianity has become increasingly visible and dominant in the Ghanaian media landscape. The prevalence of Pentecostalism was made possible during Ghana's move towards democracy following the adoption of the 1992 constitution, which entailed the liberalization of the media and opening of public space to the concerns and views of ordinary people. Hackett (1998) wrote that the Pentecostalist were very quick to understand the implications of the liberalizations of the media, which entailed a shift from state-ownership and control over radio, TV and the press, to privatization of these outlets. They realized that broadcasting their messages through radio and television was a perfect way to proselytize in order to attract more people to their church. Therefore, they began to buy more airtime and broadcast their activities through radio and TV. Nowadays, early in the mornings, virtually all Ghanaian radio stations offer zealous sermons by Pentecostal preachers. In addition to a wide variety of Christian programs, television viewers encounter advertisements of popular churches inviting viewers to come to their crusades to receive wealth and financial success.

What has become even more problematic is how the video-film industry in Ghana has contributed to a Pentecostally-infused public culture whereby representations of witches, demons and devils are associated with same-sex relations. These representations project "pentecostalite" mediations of popular culture onto the screens of big cinemas, small video centers in the suburbs, and domestic TV-VCRs. This process taps into public beliefs about spirits, juju (voodoo), blood money, and associates them with images of same-sex relations. Therefore, views of same-sex relations are articulated through "Pentecostalite" terms which shape the contours of discussion about violence against queer men. For instance, in a discussion with my friend who is currently a pastor at a Pentecostalist church, he noted that queer men should just be burned because he does not want to be punished by God for the sins of queer men.

Although colonialism introduced missionary churches with affiliations to Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican roots into Ghana, Pentecostalist churches have become more dominant. Meyer (2004) argued that while some missionary churches and African independent churches evolved to include traditional African religious practices and cultural forms, the Pentecostalist churches reasoned that Ghanaian/African religious practices are demonic and should be resisted. The Pentecostalist churches rely on the Bible alone and reject any use of religious objects such as particular gowns, candles, incense as "occultic." Thus, specific religious practices in the missionary churches such as the Catholic and Anglican churches are deemed as satanic by Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches.

The Pentecostalists have a strong appeal to both rural and urban areas in Ghana. Many people approach the Pentecostalist churches to solve problems related to health and wealth acquisition. Their specific perspective has an emphasis on individual salvation and prosperity in the world. The majority of their congregations are middle-aged women, who often have to rely

on themselves and take care of their children without receiving much assistance from their (absent and/jobless) husbands. Others are young, educated men and women, that is, people worrying about their future life. In the same way as the missionary churches, Pentecostal churches oppose the practice of polygamy and same-sex relations. Meyer (2004) argued that in terms of social placements, Pentecostalist churches are most attractive to people who attempt to move upward economically, mainly by business and trade. In this context, there is an over-emphasis on individual wealth acquisition through the working on one's own salvation. These churches offer their congregants a new individualist ethics that matches their aspirations to achieve power and esteem irrespective of age or ethnic origin.

Next to Pentecostalist churches of the older type which include the Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God and the Apostolic Church, is a newer type of Pentecostalism called the Charismatic Church. These churches such as the International Central Gospel Church, Christian Action Faith Ministries and International Bible Worship Center were founded by Ghanaians in the mid 1980's and are internationally oriented. They have branches in Europe, and the USA (Van Dijk,1997). These churches appeal to young and middle-aged people of both sexes who are experiencing some economic success and are often involved in international trade.

One main feature of Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches is the elaborate discourse on demons and devils. They offer rituals during which powers of darkness manifest themselves and are exorcised in a practice called deliverance. Deliverance is conceptualized as the spiritual fight between God and Satan, and the church promises to liberate individuals from all forms of occultic bondage including poverty and ill health. In the context of this study, same-sex desires are also conceptualized as a demon possession by Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches, and individuals with such desires are encouraged to seek deliverance from the devil.

The separation of the spheres of politics and Pentecostalism lasted until the 1990's when Pentecostalist churches started to move beyond their sole focus on church affairs and the private lives of church members and ventured into debates about the state of the nation. Meyer (2004) contended that Pentecostalist church leaders have entered into discussions on political debates not as just opinion; their popularity has re-articulated the terms of the political debate. Gifford (1998) maintained that Pentecostalist churches have created a distinctive dualistic political theology that Ghana would only prosper and progress under a God-fearing leader who is not involved in occultism. This means public discussions about the future of Ghana is mediated by Pentecostalist discourses on progress and national belonging. Pentecostalist churches were able to mobilize Christian discourse as a resource for political debates due to the Ghanaian public's growing critique of the political bourgeoisie of the government as morally corrupt and easily manipulated by Western progressive ideologies. In this context, Pentecostalist preachers gained more credibility as moral guardians of the state than politicians. This preference was carried into debates regarding discrimination against queer men.

As another important element in the context, the United States Supreme Court ruled for marriage equality in all 50 states in 2015 (Huffingtonpost, 2015). The influential move by the U.S. Supreme Court prompted a barrage of online news media reports about gay marriage in the U.S. and what it means for Ghana and the rest of the world. These reports included statements and press releases from many leaders of Pentecostalist churches about gay marriage and the implications of U.S marriage equality to countries such as Ghana.

Myjoyonline.com is owned by a private radio station, Joy FM. Their news content on the radio is mostly in English including the news content on their website. Their political views are left-leaning, and they appeal to working-class, middle-class and predominantly English speaking

Ghanaians and Ghanaians in the diaspora. In addition to a radio station, the company also owns a TV station and an events management company. *Myjoyonline.com* reported a statement from the leader of Emmanuel Assemblies of God Church in Kumasi:

Rev. Dr. Duncan Nuakoh, the head pastor of Emmanuel Assemblies of God Church at Asafo in Kumasi, has urged President Mahama to be bold and take a firm stance against same-sex marriage and other immoral sexual relationships being pushed on some African countries for legalization (*Myjoyonline.com*, August 11th, 2015).

The above comment by Dr. Duncan Nuakoh is characteristic of Pentecostalist political discourse. The comment insinuates that the U.S. will coerce the Ghanaian government to accept “gay marriage.” The fear appeal regarding the U.S. forcing Africans to accept “homosexuality” is consistent with other anti-West and anti-colonialist discourse and might well resonate with readers of *Myjoyonline.com*, who tend to be younger, educated, seeking socioeconomic mobility, and might belong to Charismatic churches. Meyer (2004) points out that leaders of Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches feed on young Ghanaian’s anxieties about their future. Pastor Nuakoh’s comment not only emphasizes his views on homosexuality but also urges the President to protect Ghana from the West. This statement assumes that the President does not have the moral agency to protect young Ghanaians’ future so Pentecostalist leaders, through the media must speak directly to him. This discourse about the need to protect Ghana from others “pushing” “immorality” on African countries” is also linked with concerns over earlier comments by Hillary Clinton and Tony Blair in 2011 that International Aid will be restricted to African countries that do not uphold the human rights of GLBTQI citizens.

The emphasis on same-sex marriage is problematic as it creates a particular queer subjectivity. This problematic queer subjectivity is also evident in the other examples featuring the use of “homosexuality”. The above comment implies that all queer Ghanaian men want to get

married placing the marriage institution as the ultimate queer utopia (Munoz, 1999). However, Otu (2016) and O'mara (2005) found that marriage is not the ultimate goal for some queer men in Ghana, and safety to explore their own sexualities is more important than getting married. Rev. Nuakoh's statement also shows the problem with globalized GLBTQI identity politics which emphasize access to same-sex marriage as the ultimate queer achievement. The intersection of Pentecostalist preachers' discourse about gay marriage with neo-colonial rhetoric critiquing U.S. imperialism, positions advocacy of same-sex relations as the new Western imperialist and demonic project.

Rev Dr. Nuakoh's statement is ironic and problematic given the particular Christian precepts endorsed by the Assemblies of God Church. Central to the Pentecostalist-Charismatic religious doctrine is the insistence on the separation of the nation-state from pre-colonial traditional Ghanaian/African customs and traditions; such traditions are depicted by Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches as demonic and occultic (Acheampong, 1994; Gifford, 1998). In other sections of the report, Dr. Nuakoh mentioned the need for the president of Ghana to protect "African culture" from the West. The demonized "African culture" in Pentecostalist theology is revitalized as needing protection in discussions of decriminalization of same-sex relations. What is not mentioned in Rev. Dr. Nuako's statement is which "culture" he is asking to be protected. It seems the African culture he is advocating for is one which privileges Christian heterosexual men while silencing queer men's voices from political participation. The contradictory claims position Ghanaian/African culture as essentialized and discursively framed as demonic at one point but also worthy of protection from outside imperialists at others. Same-sex relations as demonic and immoral violate African culture as well as evidence what is dangerous about African culture. The discourse that homosexuality is the new Western

imperialist project creates conditions where discussions of decriminalization of same-sex relations are associated with embarking on a Western colonial project.

The online news media reports do not include comments or coverage from representatives of Ghanaian institutions created to protect human rights of queer men such as the Center for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) or counter discourse from representatives of NGOs who work with queer men. Alternative views are absent. The context here is important in that most privately-owned radio stations who also own the online news organizations rely on Pentecostalist churches for advertising revenue.

Similarly, government officials' comments in relation to statements from Pentecostalist leaders are hardly reported because of the social importance of these churches and their sphere of influence. For instance, during the elections in December 2000 in which the first peaceful change of government occurred in a West African country, the Pentecostalist churches continued their political strategies by holding national prayers for the nation at the National Stadium and advocated to keep the electoral process peaceful. The strong links and interdiscursivity between discourses from Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches and the Ghanaian government has created a political atmosphere where Pentecostalists' views on good citizenship and Christian virtues are equated. In this context elected officials reject policies and laws protecting same gender loving men and effeminate men from violence in order to avoid being positioned as a Western sympathizer against God.

Peacefmonline.com is owned by Peace FM radio, a privately-owned radio station in Ghana. Peace FM uses the local language (Twi) to reach their listeners. However, the news content on their website is written in English to reach their listeners in Ghana and those in the diaspora. Because of their use of the local language, Twi, most of their programs emphasize

“tradition,” going to back to Ghanaian/African roots. As mentioned earlier, Peace FM gained popularity in Ghana due to their emphasis on returning to Ghanaian forms of cultural expressions through music, film and the arts. The owner of Peace FM radio also owns a TV station. Some of their programs include covering festivals and customs of some tribes in Ghana. Although the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches approach the public showing of African festivals and traditions as demonic, more than half of Peace FM and Peace TV programs are sermons from Pentecostalist churches. Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches mostly use English in their sermons so do not advertise on Peace FM. In response to the legalization of same-sex marriage in the U.S, *Peacefmonline.com* reported on a sermon from a convention of Pastors in Accra.

Churches in Ghana will resist any attempt to legalize homosexuality in the country, a Senior Pastor of Calvary Grace Chapel of the Assemblies of God Church, Ghana at La, Reverend George K.K. Abaidoo, has said. President Barack Obama assented to homosexuality in America after the Supreme Court had approved of the practice. Consequently, it is now legal for individuals of the same sex in America to marry (*Peacefmonline.com*, August 26, 2015)

The above statement from Reverend George K.K Abaidoo positions the U.S ruling on same-sex marriage as something that will be rejected in Ghana. The statement "churches will resist any attempt" speaks for all churches in Ghana and unifies the anti-gay sentiments of the Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches as shared by all churches in Ghana. Quoting Abaidoo's comments also reproduces the widely circulating discourse positioning politicians as corrupt. Therefore, this discourse in which Revered Abaidoo speaks for all churches and all Ghanaians in this manner conflates the views of the Ghanaian Pentecostalist leaders and Ghanaian citizens as if they are synonymous in their articulation of anti-gay sentiments.

Also, differences among Ghanaians with regards to sexuality and gender are erased as they are spoken for by Pentecostalist-Charismatic church leaders. Specifically, queer subjectivities are not incorporated in the coverage creating a singular Ghanaian subjectivity. To

further describe the context in which such singularity emerges, the erasure of voices of those who are oppressed is a key feature of how journalism is taught at the Ghana School of Journalism. Hasty (2005) wrote that Journalists are taught to lead stories with comments and statements of government representatives, public officials, and community leaders such as pastors and preachers. This is because these individuals make the news rather than those who are in subjugated positions. Additionally, this style of journalism reproduces patriarchy as church leaders who are quoted tend to be male, and males in Ghana tend to hold higher social status, control many aspects of social life (Manuh, 2007) and given the subject positioning to speak for others. This means their views about same-sex relations and desires will repeatedly be reported and maintained and thus come to constitute overall public views while silencing the voices of queer men and women.

As another institutional influence, the Catholic Church has permanent observer status at the United Nations and oversees the writing and implementation of policies pertaining to reproductive choice for women and HIV preventive measures. Ahlberg and Kulane (2011) wrote that the Catholic Church has used its permanent status in the U.N to dissuade African governments from implementing policies deemed immoral such as condom use and reproductive choices for women. Since a significant number of the non-profit organizations in some African countries are faith-based, abstinence until marriage is preferred and recommended rather than alternative forms of, for instance, birth control. Anti-gay legislation has also been supported by the Catholic Church in Africa. In Ghana, the Catholic Church helped fund the building of the majority of the high schools as well as providing other kinds of support. Hence, the Catholic Church and its resources hold influential power in government decisions regarding sex education and reproductive health among women and men.

However, Catholicism is decreasing in popularity in Ghana. Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches perceive Catholicism and Anglicanism as “occultic” because of the ritualistic nature of their church services (Meyer, 2004). Also, Acheampong (1998) wrote that while the Catholic church incorporated different forms of tribalistic traditional rituals into their forms of worship to promote Ghanaian/African pride, Pentecostalist churches advocated for a complete break from tribal traditions and customs, again claiming African traditional practices are demonic (Meyer, 1998). Nonetheless, Pentecostalist churches side with the Catholic Church in their articulation of a singular Ghanaian hetero-nationalist identity that displaces same-sex desires and visibilities as foreign, occultic and demonic. For example, Palmer-Buckle, quoted below, is a prominent Catholic priest in Ghana, and his comments about homosexuality as sinful attract regular media attention. His messages tend to be embraced by the Pentecostalist-Charismatic leaders and rejected by queer men and human rights advocates.

Citifmonline.com is owned by Citi FM, a privately-owned radio station located in Accra. All their on-air news content is reported in English. Some of their news content is posted on their website as well. Their reports about homosexuality follow the same pattern; statements from Pentecostalist-Charismatic leaders and Catholic Church leaders. *Citifmonline.com* published a statement from Palmer-Buckle, who is also the Metropolitan Archbishop of Accra, at a conference of Catholic Priests in Accra.

Most Reverend Charles Gabriel Palmer-Buckle, Metropolitan Archbishop of Accra, has described homosexuality as anti-human and anti-social which affects the marriage institution. He said the Catholic Church is against the practice of homosexuality because it is against the law of God and humanity. (*Citifmonline.com*, July 27, 2015).

Palmer-Buckle positions same-sex sexual relations as anti-human and against the marriage institution. First, Palmar Buckle evokes the authority of the Catholic Church through statements

such as "the Catholic Church is against the practice of homosexuality." Second, he uses Catholicism as the moral compass for national belonging and sexual citizenship by saying "homosexuality is against the law of God and humanity." Furthermore, Palmer-Buckle positions the decriminalization of same-sex desires as the demise of the marriage institution. These statements position the Catholic Church as the ultimate defender of Ghanaian family values from corrupt government officials and Western family values which have now been tainted by marriage equality.

These subject positions constrain queer men's abilities to fully participate in the political discourse of the state and discourage them from seeking state resources. For instance, Palmer-Buckle is earlier reported as saying that same-sex sexual relations do not produce children, therefore, cannot be ordained by God. Procreation is centralized as the key to human existence and an element of the Ghanaian/African identity. This discourse is problematic and situated in broader discourses and policies steeped in heteronormativity and patriarchy; these act to confine men and women to predetermined gender roles. However, queer Ghanaian men's desires and homoerotic expressions reveal the ruptures and discontinuities in this heteronormative singular Ghanaian identity. The subject positions ascribed to queer men are subjugating, and such locations evidence active status hierarchies which enable systems of oppression to persist and operate efficiently.

A key feature of Pentecostalist-Charismatic (PC) church theology is the belief that poverty and poor health are from Satan. Growing up in a Pentecostalist tradition, pastors preached that God wants to give "his children" more money but someone in the family or a particular behavior is preventing us from receiving financial success. So, in order to achieve financial success and good health, one needs deliverance from curses through exorcism and

payment of tithes and offerings to the pastors. In some cases, women and children have been murdered by their spouses because a pastor told them they are the cause of his failure to get a job. In most cases, “grandmothers” are blamed as witches in the family preventing their children and grandchildren from achieving financial success. Given the patriarchal nature of Ghanaian society, it comes as no surprise that most of the leaders of Pentecostalist-Churches are men and the majority of their congregants are women. Besides patriarchy enabling men to be the beneficiaries of advantages, , Manuh (2008) argued that patriarchy holds Ghanaian women responsible for the failings of their spouses and children. In this context, same-sex desires are disciplined by patriarchy as well as being described as evidence of God’s curses; this positioning inhibits individuals’ abilities to earn financial success. Thus, within the context of increasing poverty and gendered social inequalities based on failed government policies and corruption, Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches are pointing to the increasing visibilities of GLBTQI politics in Ghana as the reason for their congregants’ unemployment and lack of financial success.

In some of the online news media reports from Pentecostalist-Charismatic church leaders, same-gender loving men are positioned as an “abomination” and “cursed” in relation to the Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic Christian. For instance, online news media reports of statements from anti-gay preachers and pastors explain that if homosexuality is legalized, God will punish everyone in the nation with loss of financial stability, widespread diseases and a breakdown of society.

It is an abomination, he said. He opined, a nation or individual that tolerates an act described as abominable by God, becomes an enemy of God; it attracts a curse that transcends generations and a severe punishment from God including separation from God. It will be very pathetic and surprising to see our dear nation which was once hailed as a model for other countries across the sub-region, to go down the drain and be cursed by God because of negligence and failure of leaders of the nation and its inhabitants to hold on to what has kept the nation this far and compromise on abominable laws, he said (*Myjoyonline.com*, August 11th, 2015).

Another report from *Citifmonline.com* offered a similar depiction of homosexuality from a Muslim Imam in Takoradi, a city in the central region of Ghana. Islamic and Pentecostalist discourses are used similarly to construct homosexuality as sinful and devilish.

The Chief Imam of Takoradi, Alhaji Mohammed Awal, has warned all Muslims to stay away from homosexuality, describing the practice as “dirty” and “abominable.” He urged Muslims that such “devilish” acts would attract the wrath of Allah (*Citifmonline.com*, July 12th, 2015).

Both comments from the anti-gay Pentecostalist preacher and Muslim Imam position homosexuality as an abomination that will bring the wrath of God or Allah to the country. Islamic and Pentecostalist values are aligned with discourses of national progress and being an example to other nations to position homosexuality as the reason for the Ghana’s impending loss of stability. In the current economically challenged context homosexuality is positioned as the reason God will punish the country in financial, social and moral realms. In this vein, Pentecostalist and Islamic beliefs about homosexuality work as interdiscursive systems that feed on the anxieties created by failed economic policies and corruption. Both sets of discourses blame same-sex desires for incurring the wrath of God or Allah. Atonement for the nation comes from criminalization. . By positioning homosexuality as an abomination already condemned by God, any violence which same-gender loving men experience can be legitimized as saving the country from people who are occultist and enemies of morality and the nation.

Not all online news media reports about so-called homosexuality, depicted homosexuals as foreign, unAfrican, cursed, and/or an abomination. An opinion piece on *Citifmonline.com* challenges the assumptions made by anti-gay pastors and priests that homosexuality is unAfrican:

First of all, if anything is un-African in this situation, it is Christianity. Africans were here having all kinds of sex before the slave traders and colonialists arrived

with the Bible, Victorian ideals, and the Quran. Before them, sexuality was more fluid on the continent. Homosexuals (Lesbians and Gays) were found and tolerated on the continent. They were found among the Asantes and Nzemas in Ghana, the Bagandas in Uganda, the Zandas in Sudan, and the Khoikhoi's in South Africa. Some of these relationships were formalized, with the female husbands and boy-wives paying a bride price to the parents of their partners. Asante chiefs were given the best of the men during wars. Soldiers had gay sex all the time. I suspect the word *Kojo Besia* and the like were not derogatory; they were coined for the transgendered. There were traditional priests who only slept with men in some parts of the continent. The sexual graffiti on ancient buildings confirm this. (*Citifmonline.com*, July 29th, 2015).

A central claim for continuing criminalization of same-sex desires by religious leaders and African nationalists is that same-sex sexual relations is unAfrican, and homoerotic desires are unChristian. These justify rejection of same-sex desires and pleasures by Africans. The editorial above presents a rebuttal to that argument by asserting that it is Christianity that is unAfrican. The more diverse readers of *Citifmonline.com* are likely to side with the arguments presented by this author in contrast to arguments from religious leaders citing Biblical principles. Another opinion piece on *Peacefmonline.com* asserted that although the debate against homosexuality is warranted, the misinformation about the practice is worrying.

What I don't like about this homosexuality debate is the misinformation that even well-educated Ghanaians due to their disgust about this practice seem to disseminate to Ghanaians. It is not true that animals don't practice homosexuality because they do (*Peacefmonline.com*, October 12th, 2014)

Citifmonline.com and *Peacefmonline.com* are private radio stations. As privately owned they can provide the platform for competing discourses about same-sex desires to emerge. State-owned newspapers such as the *Daily Graphic* do not feature opinions which are in favor of decriminalizing same-sex desires or show feature opinions from human rights activists or representatives of NGOs who work with same-gender loving men in Ghana. The opinion pieces and alternative voices that these stations distribute enable queers to complicate the ways they are

positioned and essentialized in other media outlets. These spaces become sites of counter discourses and contestation of the essentialist and ahistorical discourses of the religious leaders.

Although violence against queer men is reported by state-owned newspapers such as the *Daily Graphic* or the *Ghanaian Times*, it is hardly condemned. Ghana is a signatory to the Declaration of International Human Rights in which sexual orientation is classified as needing protection. However, the dominance of Pentecostalist discourses in the political sphere makes it difficult for the Ghana government to publicly denounce violence against same-gender loving men or to support decriminalization of same-sex desires, and the anti-West neo-colonial discourse discourages references to an international document such as the Declaration.

Although Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches and Ghanaian Muslims frown on violence in general, their discourses about queer men create the context and institutional spaces where violence against queer men and effeminate men are legitimized. Specifically, Pentecostalist-Charismatic discourses dominate discussion about queer rights in Ghana because they are able to tap into popular belief about demons, curses and spirits and link them to same-sex desires. In this context, policies that can prevent discrimination and violence against same gender loving men are hardly pursued by policy makers. Problematically, discussions of same-sex relations and queerness as integral to Ghanaian cultural norms are being re-articulated in “Pentecostalite” terms.

As previously illustrated, online news media reports, where audiences expect to find public discussions about same-sex sexual relations and its criminalization, tend to report statements and comments from anti-gay religious leaders, most commonly Pentecostalite-Charismatic pastors, without interrogation or counter claims. Since Pentecostalist pastors and

priests are revered, therefore unquestionable, their discourses about same-sex relations silence voices of human rights activists and politicians who could speak against violence against queer men. The dominance of Pentecostalist discourses in discussions of Ghanaian citizenship, patriotism, national belonging and sexual subjectivity continues to maintain the hegemonic religious discourse constituting sexuality and the nation-state.

Complicating Gay Bashing through Intersectional Subject Positioning

Gay bashing happens regularly in Ghana. In some cases, queer men are beaten to death by groups of mobs. In other cases, queer men are lured by online gay imposters and robbed of their personal belongings. When some of them refuse to give up their cellphones, they are beaten until they do. As, a queer Ghanaian man, I have been privileged to avoid such attacks. However, I have witnessed the dreadful bruises from violent attacks on Ike, Angel, Nana and Joel. In 2005, Angel was hospitalized because a supposedly gay man he met on Facebook and dated for six months robbed him of his money and cell phone. The emotional and physical scars are a continuing reminder of the price paid by queer Ghanaian men to overcome the fear of violence to fulfill their queer desire to be with another man in a heteronormative and patriarchal society like Ghana.

The resilience of queer Ghanaian men to maintain same-sex relations and sexual desires amidst oppressive systems and structural forces such as the criminality of same-sex relations, and the potential for public humiliation and mob violence, means that queer men, such as myself, can occupy subject position at different temporal and spatial moments. These different subject positions were evident in the first widespread media coverage of violence against a supposedly queer man in Accra. As I show below, this case had the potential to spark public deliberations about violence against queer men. However, online media reports reproduced the systemic

discursive operations of classism, patriarchy and heteronormativity, and indeed compounded their intersectional effects, culminating in the production of a specific essentialized Ghanaian identity.

On February 19th 2015, the bloody images of Albert Appiah, a famous music producer and event organizer in Ghana, surfaced on YouTube and were shared on WhatsApp (a free app which allows for large video sharing often used by those in the diaspora to keep in contact with their families). The YouTube video depicted the beating of Albert Appiah by a group of men accusing him of sodomizing a "boy" called Salim (who later was identified to be 25 years old) in his car. The YouTube video sparked public outcry. Famous Ghanaian musicians such as "Efyia," "Wanluv Kubolo," politicians such as Nana Oye Lithur, and Officials from the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) condemned the gay bashing of Albert Appiah as inhumane. Also, a report from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) stated,

Ghanaian celebrities including Efyia, Wanlov and C-Real have taken to social media to condemn the beating of Albert Appiah, a suspected gay man, opening a rare window for debate on homosexuality in a country where gay sex is illegal (bbc.com, February 19th, 2015)

Efyia, a Ghanaian musician, posted on her Twitter feed, "You cannot beat the gay out of someone, the world is changing, get with the times!" (@efya February 2015). A representative from the Office of the Ministry of Gender and Children Affairs mentioned in an interview with BBC, "Although homosexuality is against the law, we cannot take the laws into our own hands." (BBC.com, February 19th, 2015). Although mob actions against suspected effeminate men and men perceived to be gay are prevalent, this was the first time it was recorded and uploaded to YouTube for public viewing. The exposure of the violence against a middle-class Ghanaian man challenged the public imagination and ruptured the normalcy of such violence. The people who committed the crime (gay bashing) were arrested while similar cases remain unsolved or had

very short investigations. The gay bashing of Albert Appiah gained both local and international media attention because the violence was recorded and uploaded to YouTube, and the number of comments about the the video posted by government officials, police officers and musicians.

When I first read about this story, I was elated that government officials and especially the police were becoming aware of the violence against queer men in Ghana. However, online media reports from state-owned and privately owned news organizations both maintained a queer invisibility in their stories. While this invisibility was to be expected, this case showed multilayered and intersectional moments of erasure of queer subjectivities from a story about violence against queer men in Ghana. Valentine (2007) wrote that although social identities might be multiple and fluid for individuals, power relations operate in and through the spaces within which individuals live and move in systemic ways to generate hegemonic cultures that can exclude particular social groups.

While this case is about gay bashing in a specific location in Accra, the online news media discourse overall shows how class relations intersect with patriarchy and heteronormativity to produce the subject positions of those involved. The gay bashing of Albert Appiah occurred in New Town, a suburb of Nima, a residential town in Accra. Nima is popular for its vibrant Nima market. Traders from all over the country and outside the country visit the Nima market. It is also a tourist attraction for Westerners who want to experience market centers in Accra. Nima is also known as one of the poorest and unsafe places in Accra. Largely populated by a Muslim minority in Ghana, armed robbers, blackmailers, murderers, and petty thieves are often associated with the area. Due to the increase in crime rates, the local leaders created the Nima Watch Committee to oversee the reduction of criminal activities in the area. In a 2011 a newspaper report by the Ghana News Agency, the Nima Watchdog secretary, Armasaba Abdul-

Yakeen Aluizah, announced that Ghanaians should desist from associating Nima with crime and criminals. He noted, "It's about time that Ghanaians disabused their minds about the widely-held perception that Nima is a den of criminals and crimes (Ghana News Agency, August 23rd, 2011).

Nima's residents are predominantly from the northern part of Ghana and are sometimes Muslim. Ongoing ethnic tensions and violence in the north of Ghana are most often reported in mainstream media. In 1994, more than 1000 people were killed and more than 100,000 people displaced in the northeastern part of Ghana due to land ownership disputes (Ghanaweb.com). Hence, people from northern Ghana such as the Gonjas and Dagombas are typically viewed by the southerners (Akan people) as prone to violence.

As well, the anti-gay vigilante groups who have vowed to expunge Ghana of all "homosexuals" utilize names that are associated with people in northern Ghana. Unmistakably, gay lynching or gay bashing reported by Ghanaian newspapers typically happen in northern Ghana and in Muslim communities, particularly Nima. Marginalizing Muslims and Northerners in discourses of intolerance and criminality is part of historical context of precolonial ethnic rivalries between the Ashanti/Akan people and ethnic groups in northern Ghana. Nima is also a space where the wealth gap between residents is very evident. In this vein, discourses of the dangerous Muslim and violent Northerner are conflated with discourses of poverty and criminality to constitute criminals who are from Nima. Thus, the gay bashing of Albert Appiah at Nima raises questions about his queerness; because of the class status of Albert Appiah he is not positioned as a resident but an outsider.

In the online media texts, words such as "accused" and "suspected" set the tone throughout the reports to treat "gay bashing" as a robbery gone wrong and not constitutive of the frequent violence that queer men experience in Ghana. A passage from the *Daily Graphic*, a

state-owned newspaper exemplifies this: “Initial investigations seem to suggest that the gay allegations are complete cooked-up story against the victim, Albert Appiah, also called Kinto” (*Daily Graphic*, February 12th, 2015). Another statement from *Citifmonline.com*, a privately-owned radio station with an online presence where news is shared, alluded to similar notions: “The video showed the victim, Albert Appiah popularly known as Kinto, being attacked by a group of young men who accused him of being a homosexual” (*Citifmonline.com*, February 11th, 2015). The *Ghanaian Times* also reported this incident as: “A man suspected to be gay has been assaulted by a group of people at Accra New Town (*Ghanaian Times*, February 12th, 2015).

What is problematic in the above reports is that this event was characterized as a unique occurrence involving a celebrity, and therefore newsworthy, while ongoing violence faced by queer men and effeminate men in Ghana is not mentioned by either state-owned or privately owned news media. By positioning the victim as “accused” of being gay by armed robbers, these news reports erase the experiences of queer men in general as victims of state, community and individual violence.

In the context of “gay bashing” reporting, there is a passive construction of Albert Appiah. Richardson (2007) noted that transitivity in a text is concerned with how actions are represented. As such, transitivity describes the relationship between participants and the roles they play in the process described in reporting. Below, Appiah is represented as weak, assaulted, and as still taking the four men to the bank. This description positions him as unmanly, weak and vulnerable. This is exemplified through the *Daily Graphic* report.

The Police Superintendent said immediately after Appiah parked his car, four men accused him of being there to sodomise a boy, assaulted him, seized his car, took away his ATM card and ordered him to go with them to the bank to withdraw money for them, but found his account in red, at the bank (*Daily Graphic*, February 11th, 2015)

The agency of Albert Appiah is removed through the use of passive verb construction and lack of contextualization of the event. The chosen construction implies that Albert Appiah was the victim, seized by four men and taken hostage. Due to the extreme brevity of the report, readers are not able to ascertain the nuances in the report. This is where journalistic discourse becomes ideological as it sets the limit of what can be known and what can be ignored about a story. Richardson (2007) argued that textual meaning is communicated through relations of presence and absence. For instance, the readers are left to wonder, why Albert Appiah would risk meeting with Salim in a neighborhood known for such violence against queer men. Intersectional structural barriers such as criminality of same-sex relations and ideological effects of heteronormativity are ignored.. The need to survive and fulfill a sexual desire can force some queer men to meet in secluded spaces such as in their cars or in “unsafe” places such as Nima or Christian Village, which has many dark areas. However, what drives queer men to have to engage in risky practices to fulfill their sexual desires is not mentioned in the report.

In line with the wider circulating global discourses about Africa’s innate homophobia and violence, discourses from online news reports position the armed robbers as poor, therefore, violent and homophobic. Since Nima is conceptualized as a place where violence and homophobic violence are rampant, poverty is linked to homophobia. This discourse does not include an interrogation of the material conditions sustaining such violence.

Transnational discourses related to Africa’s homophobia are activated here. For instance, in the BBC report about the gay bashing of Albert Appiah, Ghanaian musicians are interviewed to speak about the "homophobia" of Ghanaians. Wanluv Kubolo, a Ghanaian musician who is known for his use of heteronormative promiscuous language in his songs and wearing skirts in his music videos, says that Ghanaians are too homophobic and he does not think same-sex

relations will be decriminalized in his lifetime. What is left out of the discourse of Africa's innate homophobia is how poverty (and being Muslim) are linked to homophobia. In the context of queer liberalism and its articulation with U.S or European empire building, queer men in Ghana are centered as needing saving from Ghana/Africa's innate homophobia. This context is reproduced by online news media reports that point to Nima to highlight the homophobia of poor Muslims criminals.

The view that queer men are financially stable works discursively with Pentecostalist church leaders' discourses as they disseminate views of queer men as people who use sex with men as juju (voodoo) for money. Queer men are also positioned as luring and seducing their "victims" with money. These local beliefs clash with globalized media representations of white gay men as financially stable and rich. The intersection of the transnational mediations of white gay culture with localized Pentecostalist church beliefs produces a particular Ghanaian queer subject in relation to "poor" people. While Appiah is not identified as white, he is identified as successful and a celebrity.

While queer men are subjugated by heteronormative institutions and cultural norms, the criminals are positioned as poor and also subjugated by transnational capitalism and neoliberal economic policies. Albert Appiah working within the normalizing structures of heteronormativity. The "poor" coded as the robbers from Nima, are also striving to survive within the confines of growing inequality.

Reports about the gay bashing incident of Albert Appiah showed that citizenship is tied to exclusive heterosexuality. It became evident that when facing violence state protection is most often guaranteed when one's heterosexuality is confirmed by the police, a patriarchal and heteronormative institution of the Ghanaian state. A report in *Myjoyonline.com* depicts how

heterosexual citizens are positioned in relation to queer men within the context of violence.

Myjoyonline.com is a privately-owned radio station with an online presence.

Acting Superintendent of Police, Mr. Jango said: “but for your information now we are not aware that this Kinto guy was involved in any acts of 'gaism'. He insisted that the police were “just getting this new information [text messages between Kinto and the Salim showing that they are lovers] that perhaps the assault was on account of his 'gaism',” and that his outfit would look into the matter. ACP Jango added that the victim will be called in to assist in investigations when necessary but stressed that until the veracity of accusations of homosexuality are confirmed, “for now, what we have is assault on Kinto and causing harm” (*Myjoyonline.com*, February 15th, 2015).

The statement "until the veracity of accusations of homosexuality are confirmed" shows how the police would have treated this case if his homosexuality was confirmed. Although Albert Appiah's conversations with his friend, whom he went to visit when this incident happened, are part of the YouTube video to prove that he could be gay, the final police report insisted that Albert Appiah is indeed heterosexual. This subject position shows that while Albert Appiah might be oppressed a queer man, he has cisgender privilege, class and celebrity status privilege; these enable the police to confirm that he is heterosexual without public contestation.

Using the incarceration of CeCe McDonald as an example, Johnson (2013) contended that racialization, social class, and gender expression are just some of the intersecting identities that impact how oppression and privilege are experienced. In this case, Albert Appiah's masculine performance and class privilege provided the “evidence” that the police used to prove his heterosexuality. In fact, this is the first time online news media reports provided any background about a victim of gay bashing. “Mr. Appiah, popularly known as Kinto Rothmans, is the organizer of the popular Friday Friends event for tertiary and senior high school students, a weekly party at the Silver Lounge at the Accra Mall” (*Daily Graphic*, February 12, 2015). This shows the intersectional interplay of patriarchy, class, gender conformity and heteronormativity

(Chavez, 2014). This process also positions effeminate queer men as perpetually queer, and their safety cannot be guaranteed by the state. For instance, a month after the gay bashing of Albert Appiah, there was another gay bashing incident of Robert Gansah. While both cases are similar, Robert did not receive any media coverage because he is effeminate, he is from Nima, and his heterosexuality was not confirmed by the police. Although queer men are aware of the potential for violence, it is evident that intersectional subject positioning influences how that violence is framed, how queers who are attacked are positioned, and the outcomes of such violence.

Interview Texts from Officials with Human Rights Non-Profit Organizations

Given the context of violence for queer men in Ghana such as being beaten by a mob, blackmail, and termination from employment, non-profit agencies have become the bridge between important government programs, such as HIV prevention programs, and the queer Ghanaian community. The NGOs included in this study deliver important HIV/STD prevention programs to queer men. These community-based organizations are the brokers between international agencies such as the Global Fund, local government organizations such as the Ghana AIDS Foundation and the queer population in Ghana. Since same-sex sexual relations are criminalized in Ghana, HIV discourse has become an acceptable entry into discussions about discrimination and violence against queer Ghanaian men. For instance, representatives of Human rights NGOs in this study argue that violence and discrimination affect access to HIV-AIDS medications and prevention programs. Using HIV discourse enables the NGOs to seek international funding and obtain Ghana government support while steering public attention away from the criminality of same-sex sexual relations. Thus, unlike other West African countries such as Nigeria and Gambia, the government of Ghana provides limited support to queer

Ghanaian men by allowing funds and resources from international organizations to be transferred to the human rights NGOs in this study.

The three NGOs included in this study have been working with queer men for more than five years. Center for Citizen Rights (CFCR) was established in 2003 to promote sexual minority rights in Ghana. CFCR is the most organized and well-funded NGO in this study; they specifically cater to people who identify as GLBTQI. CFCR provides a variety of programs, most notably, self-defense courses, security training and HIV/AIDS outreach. Recently they have started organizing human rights workshops aimed at “empowering” sexual minorities about their rights as queer Ghanaians. They have seven salaried workers and 17 local and international volunteers as of August 2016.

Ghana Aids Network (GAN) is a community-based health center in Accra. It was started by a Ghanaian doctor based in the United States in 1999. Although their programs are not specifically catered to queer men, their HIV-AIDS program includes queer men who are HIV positive. They are one of the few health centers where HIV-positive queer men can access anti-retroviral drugs at a subsidized price and sometimes, get health care for free. As a health center, they have 12 salaried administrative officers, two full-time doctors in their facility in Accra, and two volunteers from the United States. They have health centers in Accra, Tarkoradi, and Tamale. Ghana Human Rights Organization (GHRO) was started in 2005 and has received consistent funding from the United States Embassy and University of Rochester Center for Community Health. GHRO does HIV prevention work with specific Western governments and international agencies. They do not have salaried workers and rent office spaces when they receive grants for their projects.

The three NGOs in this study received consistent funding from international agencies to reach at-risk populations in Ghana including queer men. Their funding comes from international organizations such as Global Fund and sometimes from Western embassies representing the Netherlands, The United States, Canada, and Germany. However, all the NGOs in this study receive funding from the Global Fund. The funds from the Global Fund are distributed to the NGOs through the Ghana AIDS Commission, which is under the Office of the President of Ghana. According to their website, the Global Fund is a 21st-century partnership organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria as epidemics. Founded in 2002, the Global Fund is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by diseases. The Global Fund raises and invests nearly \$4 billion dollars a year to support programs run by local experts in countries and communities most in need.

Four personal interviews were conducted on the premises of the two NGOs and the other two interviews were conducted in public spaces. The interviews lasted about 60 minutes. During the interviews, officials were asked to discuss the goals and mission of the NGOs, the kinds of programs they create for queer men, how they navigate the criminality of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana to create programs specifically for queer men, some of the barriers and obstacles to their work with queer men and finally, how newspaper reports about queer men affect their programs with queer men in Ghana. The potential for violence remained a consistent theme implying how the NGOs navigate social norms that legitimize violence against queer men. Below, I explore two themes about how the officials of NGOs constitute the relations between queer men in their programs and their organization, and also how they navigate the potentiality of violence against them.

NGOs are Positioned as Saviors

Appiagyei-Atua (2002) wrote that since the 1990's, the role of human rights NGOs in Ghana has been increasing. This increase also means that NGOs exert more political power in their advocacy for the rights of ethnic and sexual minorities. This process has created a rift between the Ghanaian government, Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic Churches and human rights NGOs with the former positioning human rights NGOs as supporting the agenda of foreign governments and international agencies. Due to the political context sustaining the criminalization of same-sex relations in Ghana, discourses from representatives of the NGOs in this study appear to remain neutral when describing their relationships with the government of Ghana because funds from international organizations such as the Global Fund are funneled through the Ghana AIDS Commission, which is under the office of the president of Ghana.

The concept of political liberalization embodied in the globalization process that was unleashed in many countries in Africa following the collapse of the Cold War led to political reforms being introduced in the majority of African countries to promote and protect human rights of Africans. However, governments of many African countries such as Ghana quickly placed mechanisms, enforced by the military, to limit such exercise of freedom. Although such contrivances have been reduced and removed since the 1990's due in part to NGOs, queer Ghanaian men are still denied their basic right to association, sexual freedom and to engage in consensual sexual acts. In this context, the human rights NGOs in this study play multiple important roles as agents of international human rights watchdog organizations and as credible sources who speak for queer Ghanaian men at international conferences on human rights. Consequently, this process has engendered an imbalanced relationship between the interests of queer Ghanaian men and the local NGOs (Otu, 2016).

Appiagyei- Atua (2002) wrote that given the strong relationship between International Nonprofit organizations (INGOs) and community-based organizations, the local NGOs, to a larger extent, have become imitations of INGOs. Discourse from representatives of NGOs in this study show that they are rather strategic in creating alliances with the Ghanaian government when necessary while seeking international funding opportunities to continue their work with queer Ghanaian men. In this vein, the NGOs in this study play a fundamental role in the international “development” agenda (which also includes human rights protections) set by International Organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and United Nations.

This development program for “third world” countries, currently known through post-development discourse, has been critiqued as limiting and in fact unproductive in the countries where these policies have been applied. Jakinow (2008) maintained that post-development discourse assumes that the local is authentic and unchanging, and worthy of preserving. Furthermore, grassroots organizations and local NGOs are seen as non-hierarchical and inclusive. In other words, the shift in the development discourse from a top down to recognizing cultural sensibilities is still not yielding a contextually relevant picture of development. Pieterse (1998) wrote that while the shift towards cultural sensibilities that accompanies this perspective is a welcome move, the plea for acknowledging, indigenous culture, local knowledge, and local culture, can lead to ethnocentrism. Simply put, the local culture is perceived as homogenous without complexity and intersectionality. The development discourse also evinces a one-dimensional view of globalization where queers in third world countries become worthy of saving while downplaying the effects of neoliberal global capitalism on queer subjectivities (Puar, 2007). As I explain below, discourses from representatives of NGOs in this study show

that while they are strategic in creating alliances and maneuvering within structural and institutional barriers, their discourses implicate the “development” ideology of I/NGOs which position queer Ghanaian men as homogenous, passive, voiceless and needing saving from Africa’s and Ghana’s homophobia.

An examination of the website of CFCR shows how they position themselves in relation to queer Ghanaian men

We seek to confront human rights issues that leave the voice of marginalized communities silent and aim to help them reclaim their voice to be heard in the society where we live.

While this organizational text critiques the marginalization and silencing and describes their mission as enabling voices to be reclaimed, there is no description of how the organization will accomplish this goal. The discourse also does not name the institutional and structural forces that constrain voice and options for work. By not addressing the structural and institutional limitations in detail, CFCR officials position themselves as saviors in relation to queer Ghanaian men. Such positioning can be problematic to queer men who use their services if the clients are positioned as helpless and without individual agency. In this vein, CFCR as an organization positions itself as the entity that can guide the reclaiming of queer voices in Ghana. Such discourses contribute to a paternalistic relationship between CFCR and queer Ghanaian men. Paternalism is a key element of the “development” ideology where people in the third world are already positioned as under-developed and voiceless, therefore needing “development.” This paternalistic construction of the relationship between CFCR and queer Ghanaian men was evident during the interview with Kojo from GHRO. Kojo, when asked about the aims and goals of his organization, spoke of how his organization “teaches” queer men about how to navigate homophobia

Well, most of our activities are community-based. We reach out to our clients with HIV information, prevention, and protection. And capacity building for MSM's or men who have sex with other men. We also teach them how to navigate homophobia, blackmail and police arrests and all.

Although Kojo started his statement by saying that his organization is "community-based," implying that queer Ghanaian men are part of the decision-making processes and program creation in his organization, he ends his comments with how he "teaches" queer Ghanaian men to navigate homophobia and blackmail. Subsequently, queer Ghanaian men are positioned as having no embodied localized knowledge of navigating homophobia and blackmail. Knowledge from queer men about how they navigate cultural norms, family obligations, gender expectations, institutionally supported discrimination and violence, are downplayed while knowledge from the officials of NGOs, who are able-bodied, cisgender queer men with class and patriarchal privileges, is positioned as superior. Consequently, localized knowledge from diverse queer Ghanaian men, constructed through the persistent navigation of violence from police and mob action from citizens does not become part of how queer men are described by officials of NGOs. The positioning of queer men as needing to be taught constitutes queer men as lacking agency and dependent on the NGOs.

Due to the criminalization of same-sex relations in Ghana and the potential for violence against organizations that support queer men, the websites of NGOs such as CFCR and GHRO do not specifically mention GLBTQI. Words such as human rights, equal rights, education, empowerment, gender sensitization, civil activism, democracy and good governance, women's rights and advocacy are used in their posted mission statements, vision and aims. In this way, the NGOs may avoid public and government scrutiny of their programs. For example, the mission statement of CFCR shows how they broadly define the cultural groups they work with to avoid government and public scrutiny.

The mission of CFC is to build a democratic and accountable organization and to strive for the attainment of equal rights and removal of all forms of discrimination in all aspect of life for Ghana's marginalized groups and most at risk populations. CFC also aims to inform, counsel, educate, empower, and support people in matters relating to law and health and well-being. CFC believes that "sexual rights are a human right."

Using terms such “marginalized groups” and at “risk population” enables CFC to navigate outside of spaces describing criminal acts, where they describe their services to queer men. For example, the Ghana AIDS Foundation (GAF) is an NGO that focuses on HIV/AIDS prevention that includes queer men. Although they include queer men in their HIV prevention programs, they do not specifically mention GLBTQI as among the list of groups they reach out to. GAF also uses ambiguous terminologies such as "target groups" and "at risk populations."

The ultimate goal of WAAF is to establish and deliver prevention, behavioral, care and support services for the general population but with emphasis on the Most At Risk Populations (MARPS).

The use of these labels on the websites of GAF and CFCR enable them to seek international funding while steering public attention away from their focus on queer men. In this context, queer Ghanaian men are constituted in broadly defined health discourse terminologies to help them access important health preventive services. Kwabena from GAF in Accra stated when asked how his NGO navigates the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana:

"Everyone needs HIV intervention, but we cannot single out MSMs only, so it has to come with secrecy." The secrecy that Kwabena mentioned is necessary due to the potentiality of violence against queer men or against their organization in Ghana.

Although words such as “empowerment” “at risk population” and “target population” sound enticing to international donors, they are categories that are far removed from the lives of queer Ghanaian men. Empowerment discourse, in particular, feeds into development ideologies which position third world queers and spaces as under-developed and needing international

intervention. Appiagyei-Atua (2002) argued that even though NGOs in Ghana from the 1960's helped to resist international interventions and advocated for localized understandings of human rights, political liberalization has rather open up spaces for white Western-dominated development ideologies to emerge through local NGOs (Smith, 2010).

Western INGOs and their same-sex visibility politics have paid very little attention to the significance of cultural belonging, ties to the family, and the impacts of fear, shame, ostracism, and punishment from familial ancestors to the construction of queer Ghanaian identity. Otu (2016) added that like the LGBT politics in the United States, LGBT human rights politics in Ghana privileges sexuality over other sites of identity. In this context, the NGO representatives' discourses are reproducing White Western same-sex visibility politics that elevates same-sex sexuality, but also neglects other identities and the historical relations of power enforced and established through colonization and Christianity. For queer Ghanaian men, this means alternative sexual expressions and ways of being queer such as not "coming out," getting married to women while engaging in same-sex sexual relations and disidentifying with one's effeminacy can be described as under-development, primitive, pre-modern and uncivilized. These moves also encourage white Western notions of being queer through the rhetoric of sexual liberalization. Sexual empowerment is particularly a problematic goal.

Empowerment Discourse Constrains and Enables Agency

Empowerment discourses are situated in the ongoing neoliberal economy. Neoliberalism, writes Hong and Ferguson (2011), relies on valuing respectability and normativity to subject the racialized (among others) to brutal violence through rhetorics of individual freedom and responsibility. All the officials of NGOs interviewed in this study described the importance of empowering queer Ghanaian men through human rights education. They spoke of empowerment

as being well-informed about one's human rights and also as having financial stability. When asked about how economic and political conditions affect their work with queer men, Kwabena from Ghana AIDS Foundation stated,

[Queer] people are unemployed, and some people live in the darkness when it comes to certain information, so they need empowerment in general. Some [queer] people are impoverished because of their location. But mostly, they need empowerment.

Kwabena described queer Ghanaian men as lacking information about their sexual identity and information about their human rights as Ghanaian citizens. He attributes the lack of information about their human rights to unemployment rates among queer men in particular regions of Ghana. Although queer Ghanaian men are more likely to be unemployed due to social stigma and institutional barriers, his solution to the problem of unemployment and poverty reduction among queer men is empowerment. When asked to explain why he thinks empowerment is necessary for queer Ghanaian men, Kwabena asserted that some queer men are economically unstable, so they are recruited and paid by some radio stations in Accra to be interviewed as spokespersons for all LGBT people in Ghana.

We need more empowerment because if you are an empowered LGBTQ person, you will not go on television to speak about your sexuality. People go to the radio stations and say things which are not true about us.

What is largely missing in this empowerment discourse is the structural context pushing queer Ghanaian men to be paid by radio stations to speak on behalf of all queer men in Ghana. The social and neoliberal economic conditions creating disenfranchised queers in the third world are not discussed in this empowerment discourse. In other words, queer Ghanaian men are being asked to take personal responsibility for fixing structural problems.

In her analysis of contemporary queer politics in the United States, critical race and queer of color theorist Cathy Cohen elucidated how efforts for queer visibility politics privilege sexual oppression over other sites of oppression such as race, class, and nationality (Cohen, 1997). Cohen's critical diagnosis while limited to GLBTQI politics in the US, presents useful insights to examining the impacts of GLBTQI visibility politics in Ghana. Like Cohen, I argue that the comment from Kwabena does not recognize the historical moments and the structures of power that define the everyday experiences of sexual minorities in Ghana. Cohen's example of queer visibility in the US reveals how GLBTQI politics in the US disenfranchises those queers who, trapped by their racial and class historical moments, become disposable bodies. Referring to the experiences of black queers in the US, she shows how race and class formations, which are hierarchically structured, shackle the lives of these minorities. Similarly, queer Ghanaian men are always caught up in the multiple binds of interlocking oppressions.

Yet, the discourse from representatives of NGOs shows the construction of a particular normative queer identity linked to self-empowerment. How queer Ghanaian men are positioned in these kinds of discourses of empowerment is problematic as it locates empowerment as individualized and linked to queer men's knowledge about their human rights. This discourse assumes a singular normative GLBTQI identity that queer Ghanaian men can be taught to embody by the NGOs. This assimilationist politics of queer liberalism have been critiqued by U.S queer of color scholars who argue for a more anti-assimilationist identity politics that emphasizes intersectionality.

The empowerment discourse also manifests in programs of the NGOs such as Security Training where a particular focus is placed on defining and controlling the bodies of queer men

as a counter discourse to perceived violence. For instance, I attended one of the Security Training programs of CFCR in 2015 sponsored by the Canadian Embassy. Security programs emphasize behavioral changes such as talking differently, dressing like a “man” and assessing security risks when meeting someone for the first time through the internet. What was surprising throughout the training was how the queer participants’ input was not incorporated into the training. They were rather told how to speak like “men” and stop dressing like women. While some of the participants objected to the trainer’s version of empowerment, only one participant objected openly. When Kwaku, an effeminate queer man spoke about the need to be himself, the program leader told him, if he experiences violence, he should not call him because he has provided him with the training needed for him to avoid violence. While avoiding violence is necessary, queer Ghanaian men are projected as requiring "management and manipulation” to conform to neoliberal practices such as empowerment or self-help.

While addressing security in the context of violence is justified, the focus on the body alone shifts attention from institutional discrimination and social norms condoning violence to queer men’s specific sexual behaviors and gender expression. The shift positions queer Ghanaian men who behave in an effeminate manner as accountable for experiencing physical violence and discrimination at the workplace because of what they are wearing or how they walked. The empowerment discourse ignores the structural effects of heteronormative institutions such as the police, teachers in schools, hospitals personnel, families, and church leaders while centralizing individual empowerment as key to achieving equality. This form of empowerment is not radical and pushes queer Ghanaian men to take non-radical means to equality while acting to safeguard heteronormativity. The NGOs form of empowerment protects capital interests and promotes normativity while silencing queer Ghanaian men from voicing their oppression as interconnected

to the increasing global inequality. Simply put, the discourses from the NGOs show that they are not protecting queer men's interests but providing a non-radical way for them to harness their dissatisfaction while allowing "business to go on as usual."

Petras (2005) argued that NGOs depoliticize sectors of the population, undermine their commitment to public employees, and co-opt potential leaders. He explains that:

NGOs shift people's attention and struggles away from the national budget and toward self-exploitation to secure local social services. This allows the neoliberal government and international institutions to cut social budgets (p.5).

The depoliticization of programs is corroborated through two interviews. The officials of two NGOs explicitly mentioned that their organizations should not engage in political advocacy or lobbying to change the law that criminalizes same-sex relations because it will not benefit LGBT rights in the long term. For instance, when asked whether their organizations should lobby for the decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana, Kojo from GHRO mentioned that:

Not now because we are not, uhm, we don't even have the capacity to challenge or pay for legal services or send representatives to court to follow the case up. We do not have the necessary resources to do that. We intend to build the capacity within the community members. A community member can take it up but not necessarily as an organization or not having the backing of any organization. Any individual who is interested in this can go, but we have to build capacity with our community members so at the end of that exercise you may know who is qualified to go to the Supreme Court to challenge it. But it is a lot we must do before we can get to that stage.

Kwaku, an official from CFCR also noted:

One of the major things we need to do is to empower the community members so they will know what the laws of Ghana are and they will also know their rights and responsibilities. We also need to build a capacity of advocates at all levels. Then we are heading towards the right direction. Also, it is very important to see that, community members themselves are participating in their own advocacy so that it does not seem as if someone else from somewhere is telling us to give them their rights, but the community members themselves. They also need to have the power to know what to say and at what time. We have also done training sessions and even come up with an LGBTQ Handbook which talks about terminologies,

laws, etc. It is a tool that is used to empower individuals so that they can know what is legal; this is when I can be assaulted, this is abuse, and this is a threat.

A theme in both comments is to build capacity among queer men before seeking decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations. Although this may seem like a step in the right direction, queer Ghanaian men are given that responsibility to seek decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations themselves after receiving “capacity” from the NGOs. Capacity in this context refers to empowerment and development of skills and abilities that queer Ghanaian men can receive from the NGOs. Kwaku refers to an LGBT “handbook” which queer Ghanaian men can use to empower themselves so they can avoid violence. In this context, even though the NGOs are local organizations helping queer Ghanaian men to navigate homophobic violence by asking them not to “come out of the closet,” through how they talk, walk or dress, they are also reproducing homonormativity by policing queer Ghanaian men’s bodies to act as “normal” Ghanaian LGBT persons which *queer* Ghanaian men ultimately resist.

Petras (2005) wrote, “The NGOs in developing countries co-opt the language of the international development: ‘popular power,’ ‘empowerment,’ ‘gender equality,’ ‘sustainable development,’ ‘bottom-up leadership” (p.6). However, the problem is that this language is linked to a framework of collaboration with donors and government agencies that subordinate practical activity to nonconfrontational politics. Although the NGOs in this study want to “help” queer men, their discourses feed on discourses of self-help and personal self-transformation largely embedded in neoliberal ideology and Whiteness. This is problematic because the structural barriers and institutions forming the context for homophobic violence to emerge are ignored. Ostensibly, neoliberal discourses of self-help and empowerment are encouraged as solutions to violence.

Focus Group Interview Texts with Queer Men

In this section, I analyze interview texts with queer men themselves. I conducted five focus groups with 21 queer men in Ghana. Interviews lasted for about two hours. All the queer participants are Ghanaians and live in Accra. Among the participants, four are students, three have their own businesses, five are employed by different organizations in Ghana, and eight participants are currently unemployed or are volunteering at an NGO. Two participants indicated that they are HIV positive. The participants are given pseudonyms to maintain the anonymity of their identity.

Two themes emerged in the examination of the focus group interviews texts with queer men. The first theme captures how the participants enact levels of agency in contexts of violence. In addition to physical violence, discrimination at the workplace, indiscriminate termination of employment and workplace bullying were mentioned. The second theme refers to how the participants negotiate their subject positions through specific identity performances. I examine the contextually contingent nature of cultural identity negotiation and agency in the examples below.

Enacting Agency in Contexts of Violence

As a Western-trained cisgender, male academic, I was anticipating a heartfelt, gloomy response to questions regarding violence against queer Ghanaian men. To my surprise, the discussion on violence was rather full of laughter and amusement. Some of the participants even tried to enact some of the scenes where clearly they were in grave danger. The nonchalance associated with how agency is spoken about shows the normalcy of the strategies of survival adopted by sexual minorities within the margins instituted by the hegemonic binary that supports the narrative that gender is normatively masculine and feminine. The discourse from the queer

Ghanaian men in this study who also identify as “sassu,” (a local queer identification) shows that modes of identification and experiences of violence are, however, mediated through other loci of identification such like class and race.

This theme examines how intersectional subject positioning influences the violence that queer men experience in Ghana. Violence in this context is broadly defined as taking multiple forms that include physical violence from mob action, online dating, and forms of discrimination in the workplace. Although physical violence is not uncommon, discrimination at the workplace is a growing problem based on the stigma around same-sex relations in Ghana. During the focus group interviews, participants recounted multiple instances where they had been threatened by people walking on the street because they “looked” gay, which meant that they looked effeminate. When asked about the kinds of discrimination he faced, Joseph spoke of the following:

I was with a friend at Lapaz; we were walking to my house. Before we realize, one guy was saying "batty boys" "gays, " and he started throwing stones at us, but we did not run. Some women were looking at him. But we did not even turn around.

Joseph's statement shows the vulnerability of effeminate men to mob action especially in areas such as the market where mob action is likely to occur. Lapaz is a market place, and public attention to a man's effeminacy based on how he is talking or what he is wearing can take a deadly turn when other people in the market join those agitating the violence. Mob actions are mostly directed toward effeminate men, however, in few cases, suspected lesbians have been stripped of their clothing and whipped.

Neoliberalism and heteronormative regimes of power shape public opinions of class, gender and sexual normativities and subject positions that are fueled by these regimes of power

create social hierarchies. As explained in the case of Albert Appiah, structural hierarchies of class, gender and sexuality drive responses to positioning of same-sex relations and encourage homophobic violence. A larger picture is important however; these kinds of violence tend to be enacted by men who are also economically disenfranchised. The men that Joseph referred to in his story, work and sleep at the market. They are called Kayaye, a local term for women and men who help transport goods and services at the market. Austerity measures introduced in Ghana in the late 1990s and early 2000's have led to an increase in unemployment rates, a rising cost of living and a sharp rise in Pentecostalist-Charismatic beliefs (Acheampong, 1998). The intersections of these historical moments have created conditions where effeminate queer Ghanaian men are easy targets of homophobic violence. The violence by the economically disadvantaged functions as a bid to discipline others and position themselves as higher status than the queer Ghanaian men. In this context, effeminate men are targeted for not doing gender "right" by those who are also not meeting social expectations of class. Thus, economic inequalities intersect with heteronormativity as barriers to queer Ghanaian men's expression of their sexual identity in Joseph's story.

Puar (2007) wrote that neoliberalism works together with heteronormativity to violate racial and sexual minorities in contemporary LGBT political causes. While sexual identity is being championed by Western human rights organizations as an identity to protect, other axes of difference such as nationality and class, are ignored. Such discourses elide the web of racial, class, and global inequalities engendered by a neoliberal world order. This is also evidence of a color-blind sexual politics that ignores how sexuality is experienced through race, gender, and class.

Some of the participants spoke of the potential for violence in online dating apps.

Mathew who works with an organization in Ghana expressed his concern about dating in Ghana through gay social networks.

Grindr, we are not safe; Facebook, we are not safe. Someone will chat with you with a fake account, and you will go meet the person and he will end up beating you and taking everything you have on you. If they do not kill you, then you are lucky.

Although online dating networks such as Grindr and Tinder have been researched as queer safe spaces in the US, Fraser (2010) contended that the internet acts as a closet in the formation of queer subjectivities in non-Western countries. Whereas the anonymity of the individual supposedly works to support the disclosure of sexual subjectivity, gay imposters add risk and constrain agency. The potential to be robbed on gay dating sites has driven more queer men to seek partners on unconventional gay dating sites such as Facebook. However, such online platforms are not free from gay imposters who can pretend to be gay and lure gays to places where they can be robbed.

Albert graduated from a college in Accra and is currently looking a job. He described a story where he met someone on Facebook and was subject to beatings and robbery

About three years ago, I was chatting with this young man on Facebook. From the way he was talking, he seems gay. So there was a program in Tema and he invited me to go. I didn't know anywhere in Tema. So, I picked a taxi and then called the guy to ask him where I should drop. Then the guy told me to drop off at a gas station, so when I got on the highway, he called me to meet him somewhere since I was done dressing up and he wasn't. So, he came to pick me up with a taxi driver, not knowing he had already connived with the taxi driver and made all their plans. When I saw him, he was not the young guy I met. So, he said he has to give his keys to his girlfriend at home. When we got to his house, I was just in the car waiting. That time, I was using a Nokia 5510. It was a brand new phone. Then the car door just opened, and two people sat by me. They said, what are you doing with the guy? The taxi driver was just sitting with ear phones and blowing the music in the car very loud. I told them we are going to a music concert. They kept on saying, 'you bi gay', 'you want to chop his ass'? Before I realized, I was getting slaps here and there. Then the guy who I have been talking to also came

into the car and said ‘You see my face? You see me, abi batty boy wey dem de chop my ass?’ I was just surprised, and then they kept on beating me and beating me while the car was just roaming around and around. They took my money and phone and then they left five cedis. They slapped me a lot, so they pushed me off and then the taxi sped off. When I became conscious, parents were calling me a lot. I wanted to report to the police, but the distance was too far. So luckily for me, a taxi driver agreed to take me home in my bloody shirt. I decided to report it, but I could not remember the car number and what was I going to tell my parents? So, there was nothing that could be done.

Albert’s story shows how online dating apps and social networking sites such as Facebook have been co-opted; they are no longer safe spaces where queer men can find partners with anonymity. Those who have been victims of online gay imposters hardly report to the police because of the fear of being arrested themselves or fear of family humiliation. In some cases, the police ridicule the queer men who come to report cases of robbery and blackmail as mentioned by Isaac who works with a media company in Accra.

A gay guy will report to the police that he has been assaulted and the police will say that if you have gone to get fucked and beaten, what should we do? So, it is a structural problem. The institutions which are supposed to protect the lives of such communities are also, like, because of who you are, we will not protect you.

The lack of police inaction is the construction of a social order where queer men are not safe, and crimes against them become unreported.

In addition, the queer participants in this study explained how they lost jobs or were terminated from their place of employment because of perceived queerness. Sometimes, the fear of being outed at the workplace is a cause for concern for some of the participants. Arnold, an entrepreneur who is seeking a stable job, mentioned that he is scared to look for a job for fear of exposure.

There are some jobs that I believe that I qualify for, but I am scared that I will be outed. I did not apply because of the possible outcome. If the [job site] is a homophobic center, I will not go, I don’t know who might be watching me.

Arnold's statement shows his concerns and the consequences he fears. Arnold also mentioned that he is aware that he is feminine and that his feminine performance of masculinity might make people suspect him to be queer. To be outed at the workplace, or when there is suspicion based on one's effeminacy, these can be grounds for dismissal. Robert, currently unemployed, shared a story about his termination from his job because his manager heard rumors about his sexual orientation.

I used to work as a chef in a hotel. I worked there for about a week, and I would not like to mention their names. So, everything was going on smoothly until one day, the manager called me and told me that the person who used to have my job traveled but now he is back and wants his job back. But when I applied for the job, he did not tell me that. He told me that they wanted a chef and then they put me to the test and then I passed. So why then after one week, you are telling me that there was someone who was supposed to work here and the person is back, so I am fired. One of the employees told me that I should not mind him because they were talking about gay issues and then one of them said you are gay and all that, so I said, okay fine. I didn't say anything and then took my bag and left.

Robert mentioned that he just took his bag and left without further questioning the grounds for his dismissal. Although there are laws against discrimination in the workplace in Ghana, some queer men might not have the financial and social resources to pursue such cases in court. For the most part, this is because of the fear of how one's public image would be affected and also because of the fear of jeopardizing chances for future jobs. Other queer participants with jobs described how they are marginalized by other co-workers because of the way they dress or how they speak. Eli describes his work experience in an organization in Accra.

Also, at the workplace, there are men and women, and when you start getting close to the women, people start raising eyebrows. And you know when you are with girls, and you are a little drunk, and you laugh, screaming and shouting, they become suspicious. As a guy, they expect you to laugh in a certain way. But you know people in our community with less deep voices, the laughter does not come out like that, and people start thinking if you are gay. For instance, my immediate boss has asked me a lot of times if I am gay and I say no. Even a few days ago, she was going through my pictures [on his phone] and she saw pictures of me in earrings and stuff. Then she asked if I was gay, but I said 'Ahh, it's just piercing

and I love piercing and tattoos.’ But she seemed unconvinced. You cannot come out because you are afraid that when you come out, you might lose your job or guys around you will go away or something like that.

Although the description of the relationship between Eli and his boss is cordial, (because his boss has access to pictures on his phone), he is still very cautious not to reveal his sexual orientation to his manager. The fear of job loss and loss of workplace relationships, therefore, are also forms of violence experienced by queer men. Another participant, Jojo, described how he is scrutinized at the workplace about how he dresses and speaks.

People at my workplace tend to ask me about the way I dress. They ask me if I belong to the “gay group.” Because they call you gay, sometimes, you try not to be yourself and try to be manly. Meanwhile, I am not manly. Sometimes, I do not want to talk to people too much. Because I know that when I talk too much the girly attitude will fall in and they will be just looking at you.

Jojo's comment shows how maintaining workplace relationships might be difficult for feminine queer men. Jojo is worried that his performance of masculinity might not be perceived as masculine enough. Thus, he would rather rescind from forming specific relationships because of the fear of exposure from his co-workers. There is the very real possibility that some co-workers might take advantage of some queer men's fears to engage in other forms of violence.

Identifying as queer at the workplace or being suspected of being queer can also lead to workplace bullying. Some of the participants mentioned how they resisted workplace bullying.

Enoch currently works with a manufacturing company in Ghana and said the following

Where I use to work, anytime we went on lunch break, there would be murmurings that the ‘gays’ are here. Because it was getting out of hand, we went to the Human Resources Office to tell them, and the Human Resource manager came to the canteen to say that humans are different so they should be respected. Even those who serve us food sometimes refuse to serve us and then they call someone else to give us the food. It was not nice at all.

Workplace bullying can be exacerbated for queer men when the companies they work for have no policy protecting marginalized groups. The narrative shows how queer men are disrespected

but also that some Human Resource Departments do speak up to protect their rights. In the narrative shared by Enoch, they were able to gain company support through the Human Resource Office. Although this is rare, it shows how corporations and staff do attempt to enforce policies of nondiscrimination for queer men in Ghana.

The experiences described above shows the structural barriers and material conditions that queer men navigate in Ghana. It is evident that an intersection of gender and sexuality influences violence against queer Ghanaian men. I have already demonstrated how effeminate men who do not do gender “properly” can be violated and harassed by mobs who are also economically disenfranchised through growing global inequality. There is the need to acknowledge that self-identified effeminate subjects in this study, for example, lurk in the margins instituted by a hegemonic binary that supports the narrative that gender is normatively masculine and feminine. Their marginal position, however, does not imply that they live eternally in victimization and damnation; rather, it points to how they strategically and practically deal with the heteronormative regimes around which their lives orbit. Describing their struggles against the structures of “manipulation and management,” I conclude that queer men in Ghana resist oppressive structures that police their effeminacy through their *ambivalence*. As I show below, some of the participants negotiated their subject positions by engaging in particular identity performances that are not queer or heteronormative.

Negotiating Positionalities Through Identity Performance

This theme explores how queer Ghanaian men negotiate their intersectional subject positions to avoid violence and discrimination. Ortner (2011) wrote that neoliberalism continues to consolidate heteronormativity, thereby recalibrating racial, sexual, gender and class hierarchies both locally and transnationally. By inhabiting the margins and drawing themselves

much closer to the policed centers of institutions and the state, the queer men in this study have adopted tactics to safeguard themselves from the trauma of homophobic violence.

It is worth noting that participants navigated and negotiated their subject positions in heteronormative spaces differently. In fact, the participants with more socio-economic status, class, educational background and communal ties enjoyed varying levels of State and community protection. For instance, the queer participants who own their own business spoke about how they could enact specific identities without social backlash. Brian owns his business in Accra and said the following:

I can dress anyhow I want in my shop. Sometimes, I get people from banks and other places, and they come to me. I am the boss. I have an apprentice and my workers. When you come, I have changed my hair blond or gold. Maybe you have something to say, but you cannot say it.

Brian begins his statement with, "I can dress anyhow I want in my shop." When asked if he dresses differently when he walks out of his shop, he said yes, he brings different clothes with him in his bag to change into when he is in his shop. Brian notes differential levels of agency which are dependent on the spaces in his shop and outside. Brian's description evidences the contextually contingent nature of identity negotiation and also agency. He speaks of his class status by emphasizing that people from banks and other places come to his shop. Moreover, he has apprentices who work in his shop.

Brian's statements show how queer men inhabit multiple spaces of belonging and positioning to shield themselves from violence. This means they occupy the interstitial position between having agency and victimhood. Homi Bhabha (2004) maintains that such interstices provide the terrain for the emergence of new strategies of selfhood and identity. When asked if he has experienced discrimination before, Brian explained that he had not experienced discrimination because he is careful of where he shows his queerness. This evidences Munoz's

idea of disidentifications that states that sexual and racial minorities develop survival strategies when faced with oppressive circumstances. Brian's survival tactics involve doing gender differently in his shop and outside his shop to disidentify with the re-identification by the state as homosexual.

Although English is the main language in Ghana due to British colonialism, other local languages are spoken at home. During the focus group interviews, some of the participants used both English, Twi or Ga to describe their same-sex relations and experiences. In this context, some of the words and phrases had to be translated into English. "Eniadin" is a Twi word that loosely translates into English as someone who is resilient and forceful amidst imminent odds. Participants used "eniadin" and "staying strong" interchangeably to characterize their abilities to navigate oppressive structures. Using both English and Twi shows how the queer participants understand their bodies as in-between two queer worldviews and historical moments.

Calling for strength or eniadin was offered by queer Ghanaian men who are cisgender, able-bodied, can rhetorically perform masculine gender performances, who have good paying jobs, and have supportive families. These intersectional locations constitute spaces of privilege in heteronormative oppressive structures. Those who are students or work for various companies in Ghana explained that they avoided homophobic violence by "being strong." Arnold is a University student and perceives himself as not feminine. He stated how he defended his rights when threatened by another student:

One happened on campus. I was just passing with a friend. He is a little girly, but I don't care. So, this guy shouted, "We will do things to you people." So, I went back to this guy and stood up to him saying, what will you do to him? Then this guy became quiet. I told him that, he cannot say anything to anyone. Then the guy became quiet. I was thinking if they start doing that and you too you try to stand for your rights, they get some little fear within them and then they back off but if they start doing that, and then you run, then that's where they feel empowered to overpower you.

Verbal threats of violence against mostly effeminate men are very common in Ghanaian University campuses. While walking in front of University Halls, voices of students on the third or fourth floor of the hall can be heard screaming "gay" "batty boy" "trumu trumu." Effeminate men are humiliated as they walk across the hall to their rooms or to the University market. Because physical violence of any kind is not allowed on University campuses, queer Ghanaian men are hardly violated or experience mob action on University campuses. This gives queer students some leverage to apprehend other students who verbally abuse them. Other queer students just walk away.

In this context, Arnold still took a bold step to confront the student who threatened him. It is worth noting that Arnold's cisgender and class privileges allow him to challenge another student who scorned him for walking with an effeminate man. By challenging the other student, he also disavows and creates ripples in the sea of heteronormativity as he refuses to accept the terms and conditions set by heteronormativity. In the context of the story, he becomes what Ahmed (2010) eloquently describes as a "willful subject." Ahmed uses willful subject to describe the feminist killjoy. She explained that to be both queer and a person of color is to be put in a position that challenges systems of oppression. The willful subject, as Ahmed describes, is not inclined to follow the heteronormative parameters enforced by the State and other cultural institutions. In fact, Arnold's actions against that student unsettle the utopic articulations of heterosexual happiness, stability, and normality that he and his effeminate friend are disrupting just by being seen on the University Campus.

Adam was the most outspoken of all the participants in his group. He is effeminate and said he likes to wear skinny jeans. Although skinny jeans make queer effeminate men vulnerable to violence, some wear skinny jeans to attract other men given the context that queer men are

almost invisible in the heteronormative aspirations of Ghana. As a queer man in Ghana, wearing skinny jeans is how a potential partner was attracted. When another man looks for a longer time, this is an indication that person has some interest. In this regard, participants' reference to skinny jeans is a performance of sexual agency, a way to disrupt the normative gender binary enforced by heteronormative cultural institutions. Adam said the following when asked if he has experienced violence or discrimination.

Where I work, every time I go to out to buy food, everyone [outside] looks at me. Sometimes, I come back to the office to look at the mirror if there is something wrong with me. But, I try to stay strong and face them. I am sure they think I am gay, but I do not care. I am the one working, and they are just sitting by the roadside selling stuff.

Adam's comment shows that he is willing to risk violence to satisfy his sexual desires given the barriers of forced heterosexuality. In this process "staying strong" becomes the discursive mode of resisting the heteronormative gaze and the management of queer bodies by heterosexual subjects. Such enactment of agency is enabled by Adam's socio-economic status. Adam positions those who are selling items on the roadside as unemployed while positioning himself as employed. His employment in a reputable organization positions his queer identity differently than queers who are not employed. In this context, he is comfortable wearing skinny jeans to work. Thus, his avowal of being strong is contextually contingent on his class status. Along the same lines, wearing skinny jeans is a survival strategy and a coping mechanism to deal with his sexual desire within the constraints of heteronormativity and the potential for violence.

In one of the focus groups conflict ensued about how effeminate queer men become the cause of their own violence because of how they behave in public. Clark (2006) explained that "straight-acting gay identity is constructed in opposition to cultural stereotypes of gay men that conflate femininity with homosexuality" (p.192). In this vein, straight acting gay men reproduce

social hierarchies of gender that devalue femininity. Although Clark was referring to gay men in the U.S, a similar conflation of effeminacy and gayness within the context of patriarchy and heteronormativity happens among queer men in Ghana.

Transnational same-sex visibility politics has shifted understandings of same-sex sexuality, effeminacy, and masculinity in Ghana. In the Ghanaian-Akan context, *Kojo-besia* (man-woman) refers to men who are effeminate. While they are not identified as gay, the transnational flow of LGBT visibility politics has created different subject positions for effeminate men. They are now identified as homosexual or gay and sometimes beaten by mobs to act like a "man," and to get in line with heteronormativity (Butler, 1990). In this cultural context, queer men are also adopting different strategies to pass not as straight per say, but as normative. In the neoliberal economic context, this involves the queer embodiment of higher socio-economic status known as "classy." Classy is the dynamic interplay of the performance of masculinity, working out and dressing in upscale clothes.

Focus group interviews allow for disagreements among similarly placed subjects. This shows that identities are never unified, and in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured (Hall, 1997). While conducting focus group interviews, I was positioned as an American researcher. This subject position meant that I was also positioned as a classy queer man because of class and U.S American nationality privileges. Classy is a localized rhetorical performance of gender and class normativities. As some of the comments from the participants will show, they engaged in classy performances when they are at queer parties or when they are with their straight friends to manage and police both their effeminacy and social status in relation to the norms of heteronormativity.

Violence against queer men formed the context for the performance of classiness. This means effeminate queer men were mostly described as not classiness and blamed for experiencing violence. Adam decried the increase in the social hierarchy and class status within the queer community in Ghana. For instance, he stated: “There is a word trending among the gay community in Ghana now called “classiness.” I do not know where and how this word became a thing in the gay community.” Another participant responded that: “I think what he is trying to say is that there is hierarchy among the gay community; the shirt I am wearing is \$30; the one you are wearing is from Kantamanto.” Kantamanto is an area in Accra, Ghana where second-hand clothing is traded. So, those who buy clothes from Kantamanto are perceived as lower class than those who buy clothes from stores and malls. Some of the participants asserted that performing “classiness” among the queer community in Ghana functions to subjugate those who belong to different a socio-economic status.

Identifying as classiness is a complex interplay of African heteropatriarchy and global stereotypes of femininity. One participant said, “It is like competition.” It is important to note that being classiness as stated by the participants is different from U.S centered forms of gay masculine expression known as “straight-acting” (Eguchi, 2010) or African American queer men’s expressions of “coolness” (McCune, 2015). Some of the participants are aware of their own feminine attributes, however, still speak of those who are not classiness as queer men who are loud, those who wear women’s clothing or hair extensions. The status positioning of poor effeminate men creates a status hierarchy among queer men where those who can perform gender and class normativities are positioned as normative. Joe works with a corporation in Ghana and gave this response when asked how his family is comfortable with his classiness sexuality.

I have a kid brother; he likes me because I am diplomatic about it. I am not like others who are so loud about it. So, my family respects me for who I am.

Joe asserts that his family accepts his sexuality because of how he enacts his same-sex desires in front of them with diplomacy or in a way that is toned down. Joe's comment is exemplary of how neoliberalism disciplines queer Ghanaian men into normativity. While an intersectional analysis of homophobic violence in Ghana can be linked to increasing global inequality and discourses from local Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches, queer Ghanaian men are taking individualized responsibility to police themselves through the process of classiness. Joe's comments show that he is succumbing to the social rationality of neoliberalism that is a normalizing technology of power (Winnusbt, 2012). Joe feels empowered through performances of classiness while positioning other queers who do not conform to such ideals as irresponsible and lacking respect.

Performing classiness can also be a way Joe resists and redefines the social scripts of his sexual citizenship in Ghana. Describing "flexible citizenship," Ong (1999) wrote that in their quest to accumulate capital and social prestige, subjects emphasize, and are regulated by, practices favoring flexibility, mobility, and repositioning in relation to markets, governments, and cultural regimes. In the Ghanaian context, queer Ghanaian men speaking about classiness can be a way they negotiate the structures of meaning about gender, sexuality and socio-economic status. Winnusbt (2012) wrote that one key feature of the neoliberal world order is for subjects to be flexible and adaptive. Thus, Joe's comment about his sexual diplomacy and classiness shows the complex maneuvering of sexual subjectivity in relation to violence, global capital, and the neoliberal order.

Reproducing heteropatriarchal social relations becomes hegemonic in relation to race and desire when the same participant mentioned that white gay men prefer only masculine black

African men because those who act feminine are not classy enough and like to make their sexuality apparent to the public. Joe also claimed that he only dates white men indicating how race, class, and sexuality intersect to produce particular subjectivities and desires:

Yes, we have something we call the White hunters, those who are only dating whites. We have a way we do our stuff. We don't talk much. We go to certain places, and if you give us an invitation to certain parties, we will not attend. When you read Michelle Visage's book about DIVA rules, it tells you what to do, and then you stand out. I work, and because of the way I carry myself, I have fewer problems. But I have a friend who is very feminine and people did not want to talk to him, so he had to leave. Everyone was like, you are gay, and you are making it known. What makes the classiness comes in is that we are all gay, and love to be who we are. I have friends who are normal, and it's just that some do not carry themselves well, and we don't need them to tarnish us so I go to parties and I see gay men wearing weaves and acting feminine, I will not talk to you.

The reiteration of his desires for White men only shows the complicated relationship between colonialism, globalization and racialized sexual politics. When asked if dating a white man makes him more classy than other queer Ghanaians, Joe said “yes,” because white men like masculine black men. The voicing of hegemonic desire replicates colonial intimacies, fantasies and simultaneous rejection of black male bodies as a threat to Whiteness (Yancy, 2008). Desiring white men only also shows the racial-sexual politics that some Ghanaian queer men have to negotiate as black African queers in the globalized representation of deracialized queer politics (Eng, 2003). Within the context where queer Ghanaian men are typically economically disenfranchised due to social norms and stigma against queer men and neoliberal government policies that restrict funding for social programs for queers, having a white man as a boyfriend could provide a chance to leave the country or gain social mobility. Therefore, identifying as classy has social benefits. However, it creates and reproduces gender status hierarchies. Joe is not the only one to make the over-generalization that white men like masculine black men only. Travis is currently unemployed but volunteers with an NGO in Accra. He narrated a story about

his “feminine” friend who dated a white man from Australia online for about eight months. Eventually, the white man decided to visit him in Ghana. He mentioned that when they met, the white man passed by his friend and pretended he had never met or chatted with him before, because he was dressed as a feminine queer man.

Joe talked about avoiding appearing feminine to prevent discrimination. He attributes the fact that he has not experienced discrimination to not acting feminine. He said the following in response to another participant’s story about a hair stylist who acts feminine and was assaulted.

I do celebrities hair, [while doing the hair of a celebrity] she said, ‘oh you are a hairstylist and you are not gay? [joking] I have a gay cousin I want to introduce you.’ But I was saying in my head that I am gay. Because I wasn't doing feminine stuff, she did not know I am gay..... it's about where you want to get to.

Joe's statement implies that discrimination, and by extension, violence faced by queer men is merely their fault because of the way they behave. In response to a participant’s comments about a very feminine gay man who only comes out at night because of fear of violence, Joe said: “So you hear what he said. He is a hairdresser, and he dresses like a woman. I am a hair stylist, and I don't do that.” Joe positions himself as a hair stylist in a dominant status position in relation to the “hairdresser.” Hair stylists have more status than hairdressers; hairdresser is understood as one who does not have basic education (high school diploma) and studies as an apprentice under a senior hair stylist. Hairdressers are also mostly women while hair stylists are mostly men. By positioning the other queer man as a hairdresser and feminine, Joe's comment positions the discrimination and violence he faces as his fault because he dresses as a woman. Also, he demarcates his superior class status as a hairstylist in relation to the “feminine hairdresser.”

As well, Joe's statement reproduces neoliberal ideologies of individualism that reduce systemic and institutional inequality to the body as the problem which should be fixed by the

individual. Boyd (2013) argued "Neoliberal projects of development and economic restructuring have emphasized the individual rather than the state or community as the central actor in projects of social transformation" (p.700). The reduction of social inequalities and discrimination as the fault of the individual is problematic because the queer men who do not have the social status to enact such levels of agency are blamed for the violence they face because of their effeminate gender performance.

Other participants challenged the idea that queer men cannot be classy and feminine at the same time. For instance, Arnold noted that space and place matter in responses to identity performance.

I live somewhere someone else lives somewhere. No one cares how you skirmish (act feminine) and do your stuff there. Because in Chorkor, it's cool. I am also a black hunter. I am sure I will raise my eyebrows when I see a man with a weave on. But it does not mean I will not talk to him; I don't care what you do to yourself.

Arnold is pointing out how context shapes gender performances of queer men in some parts of Ghana. As a rebuttal to Joe's comment about choosing not to do "feminine stuff," Arnold responded that in Chorkor, feminine is cool. Jamestown and Chorkor are areas where queer men can navigate their communities with less social stigma. Arnold is pointing out that, in Jamestown and Chorkor feminine is classy. He also adds that he is a black hunter and would talk to someone with a weave on but probably not date him. His statement reveals his own agency and exercise of choices.

Jeffrey argued that being classy protects him from violence. Working in a corporation in Ghana, Jeffrey gave the following response when the discussion about classy resulted in a heated debate among the participants on what being classy accomplishes. While Arnold and Stephen

both argued that being classy divides the queer community in Ghana, Jeffrey argued that being classy can protect some queer men like him from violence.

[Others commit violence] So, in order to protect yourself and be free from violence, you need to express yourself in a way that these people will not identify you as such.

It makes it easy for others to know who you are if you are not from a discreet society. I don't want to use the word HATE. But it detests me when I see gay men wearing feminine clothes because I am a media person and sometimes we work on stories which bash gay people and all that. So, I do not want to be associated with characters which are easily predictable. So, I don't want to live in a community where I would be easily identified as one. So, the classy thing is not necessarily to shun people away but to make you not stand out and behave appropriately. Because we live in a community where people are attacked. So, the classy things sometimes help someone like me because I do not want to be a victim.

Jeffrey said that he detests seeing gay men wearing feminine clothes because he does not want to be associated with queers in public spaces. He also states that performing classy enables some queer men to act "appropriately" in public. In this context, queer men are being policed by other queer men. This represents how neoliberal ideologies of individualism disciplines queer men to be normative in order to avoid violence. The potentiality for violence drives some queer men to engage in heteronormative cultural identifications and identity performances to avoid violence. Consequently, the queer men who are able to act "straight" hold other queer men to similar standards of heteronormativity creating social hierarchies of acceptability.

Summary and Conclusions

This chapter explored themes that emerged from analyzing three different genres of texts selected for this study, newspaper reports, interviews with officials of NGOs, and interviews with queer Ghanaian men. The first section examined Ghanaian newspaper reports about same-sex sexual relations to show how structural and institutional discourses enable violence. The first theme explored how religious leaders position same-sex sexual relations as devilish and

demonic. Discourses of doom and national destruction were reported by newspapers to position queer men as unchristian and anti-Ghanaian. The second theme examined how intersectional positions constrain and enable violence. I analyzed how the topic of gay bashing of Albert Appiah was reported and what discourses accomplished related to enabling violence against queer men. Albert Appiah was positioned as a middle-class entrepreneur in relation to the criminals who robbed and attacked him. His class identity was positioned as superior in relation to dangerous Muslim and criminal northerners.

The second section explored how interview texts with officials of nonprofit organizations construct queer men within the context of violence against queer men. Two themes emerged. The first is how NGOs construct themselves as saviors. It became evident that although the NGOs position their missions as being the entity to guide the reclaiming of the voices of marginalized groups, their programs focus more on how queer men should exercise individual agency to protect themselves or educate others. The second theme in the second section examined how queer men are positioned as needing empowerment as a way to counter the violence that some queer Ghanaian men experience.

The third section of the chapter explored themes that emerged from the analysis of interview texts with queer Ghanaian men. The first theme in this section examined how queer men enact agency in the context of violence and the second theme analyzed how queer men negotiate their positioning within the context of violence and discrimination through specific identity performances.

Looking across the public media texts, discourse from organizational representatives and from queer men, there are several insights that become important related to discourses and violence in Ghana. A key finding in this chapter is that structural forces and institutional voices

enable violence by positioning queer men as devils, demons and against national progress. However, queer men with higher socio-economic class are positioned differently in such discourses of same-sex sexual relations as evidenced by the newspaper reports of the gay bashing of Albert Appiah. Another conclusion that stands out is how NGO officials' discourses position the organizations as saviors in relation to queer men as victims in need of knowledge and training in following heterosexual norms. Consequently, empowerment discourses are spoken of as ways to reduce violence. However, such discourses constrain the agency of some queer men. The NGOs form of empowerment brackets institutional and structurally produced discrimination and violence to become recommendations for individuals to behave differently to reduce violence. A final major finding is the demonstration of how queer subjectivities and performances are intersectional, contextually contingent and contested. Ideologies such as heteronormativity, individualism, and classism are activated to constitute queer men and also shape queer men's relations with each other.

Related to the online media discourses, texts reveal wider beliefs about heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity. Heteropatriarchy is an "overarching system of male dominance through the institution of compulsory heterosexuality" (Yep, 2003, p. 59). Yep argues that heteropatriarchy structures social relations and creates expectations for individuals to play as a "man" and as a "woman." Constructions of heteronormativity and African patriarchy merge with colonial misconceptions of African sexualities to create a divergent but stringent view of what is considered an acceptable African sexual identity (Epprecht, 2013). This is evident in the ways online news media reports constitute who the state will protect when they face violence, as in the case of Albert Appiah. Additionally, Pentecostalist-Charismatic church and Islamic religious discourse endorses heteropatriarchy through explicit and implicit Biblical narratives of the roles

for men and women. Men are privileged within patriarchal cultural systems, and queer men are perceived as going against "nature" and God. Tamale (2011) argued that queer men are usually targets of violence because heteronormativity thrives on compulsory heterosexuality. Therefore, violence against queer men is seen as justified because they have abandoned their predetermined gender roles. The alignment of Pentecostalist-Charismatic beliefs and values with the Ghanaian nation-state creates spaces where dissenting voices against violence against queer men are marginalized and marked as unbelievers. The themes in online news media reports reinforce ideological links between compulsory heterosexuality, Pentecostalist-Charismatic Christian and Muslim religious ideologies of gender and sexuality, and African heteropatriarchy.

As described by Fairclough (1992), "The discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free flow of ideas in people's heads but from a social practice which is firmly rooted in and oriented to real, material, social structures" (p.66). Violence against queer men is the material condition created by symbolic interactions between discursive practices, historical events, and texts. An important element of the online news media reports about queer men is the propagation of the myth by Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches that same-sex sexual relations was brought to Africa through colonialism.

The relegation of same-sex desires as foreign by African leaders is conflated with the financial and social support of LGBT rights by Western countries. However, the ideology that same-sex desires is unAfrican has been contested by human rights activist and many cultural scholars in Africa (Epprecht, 2008; Roscoe & Murray, 2001; Tettey, 2016; Tamale, 1998). Heteropatriarchal hegemony is reified by the repeated insertion of statements from Pentecostalist church leaders about homosexuality in online news media reports. The religious leaders act as authoritative subjects and opinion leaders of the nation-state and the protectors of African

heteropatriarchy. The repeated reporting of statements from preachers and pastors in state and private online news media aligns their views of same-sex desires with discourses of national pride and identity. In this vein, they position their religious views on same-sex sexual relations as protecting African values and beliefs linked to being a heterosexual Christian. Thus, what these ideologies accomplish is that they create subjugated subject positions for queer men where violence such as blackmail and mob action are legitimized.

Neoliberal discourses of self-help and self-transformation are evident from representatives of non-profit organizations. The discourses also reveal neoliberal, globalized approaches to “educating” and “developing” queer capacities to change media representations and, by implications, public views. The emphasis on personal empowerment and “educating” queers and government officials as solutions to discrimination are also based on neoliberal ideologies. Here, social change is individualized rather than explored as dialectical relationships between institutional policies and discourses and individual subjectivities. Officials of non-profit organizations prescribe personal bodily performance changes as solutions to violence against queer men. Queer men are encouraged to wear masculine clothes and perform masculinity as ways to counter discourses of violence. Describing the synergy between neoliberalism, consumerism and feminism, Gill & Scharff (2007) noted that in popular cultural discourses, women are called upon to exercise self-management and self-discipline to a much greater extent than men in order to exercise resistance and counter-hegemony in patriarchal societies. However, these changes are recommended to men in Ghana. NGO discourses of empowerment are based on neoliberal ideologies of governmentality where marginalized groups are encouraged to look inward instead of outward. Petras (2004) argued that the local nature of NGO activity means that

"empowerment" never goes beyond influencing small areas of social life, with limited resources, and within the conditions permitted by the neoliberal state and macro-economy.

The queer participants' discourses also show how they are embodying institutional forms of empowerment. Notions of individual choice and personal self-transformation as resistance to violence are talked about as solutions to violence. In some cases, those who experience violence are chastised by queer men for making wrong choices about what they wore to meet their assailant or where they met their assailant.

Religious leaders and some NGOs representative position queer men as a homogenous group with similar experiences and behaviors. The voices of queer men evidence multiple class positions, levels of education and job positions and different orientations to the race of their partners. Crenshaw (1991) argued that intersectional inquiry and praxis are needed to address the social problems of violence against women of color. Collins (2000) maintained that solutions cannot be found by imagining women as one homogenous mass or by painting men as perpetrators or by focusing exclusively on individuals or state power as sites of violence. Using intersectionality as a lens shows how violence against queer men emerges in a synergistic relationship between institutions, subject positions, and subjectivities. In the context of this study, the intersectional locations of subject positions and subjectivities of queer men affect how they experience violence. The queer participants with higher education, socio-economic class, jobs, and a stable family spoke of the ability to avoid violence in some contexts because of specific personal choices. Therefore, queers with lower socio-economic status, no job, and no family are positioned as making individual choices that lead to their experience of violence. This is compounded with performing femininity. These views along with broader ideologies of heteropatriarchy and heterosexism reinforce class hierarchies among queer men.

Neoliberal ideologies such as valorizing individual choice impact levels of agency. Collier and Lawless (2014) defined agency as the "capacity of individuals and collectives to engage others and take action within the contexts in which they find themselves" (p.156). They further argue that the ability to act is contextually contingent. Agency is also situated in social norms and subject positions that are implicated in ideologies. In the context of this research statements of Pentecostalist-Charismatic church leaders create social norms which constrain queer Ghanaian men's ability to seek redress for discrimination at the workplace, speak up against mob action and report blackmails to the police.

Across the discourses presented by interview texts with officials of NGOs and queer men, a primary finding of this chapter is an emphasis on the individual to make personal choices to avoid violence through behavioral and aesthetic changes. On the websites of NGOs, agency is approached as having knowledge about individual human rights and exercising personal choices consistent with preferred norms. Popular discourses of heteropatriarchy and heteronormativity from religious and political leaders as well as NGO representative position queer men as having the capacity to just act "straight." These discourses reveal a problematic presumption that individuals are fully agentic and have the capacity to fully avoid violence if they "act straight" What are ignored or downplayed are the contextual structures, laws, social norms and representations that constrain the enactment of specific identities. These discourses reveal the interconnectedness of institutional discourses and local performances.

CHAPTER 5

DISCOURSES POSITIONING QUEER SEX: INTERSECTIONAL SUBJECTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES TO OBTAIN HEALTHCARE

Dominant discourses about same-sex intimacy, desires and queer sex in Ghana affect queer Ghanaian men's ability to access basic health care, and critical information and services for the care and prevention of HIV-AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). In 2011, Boston University's Center for Global Health and Development (BU CGHD) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), in collaboration with the Ghana AIDS Commission and FHI 360, an international non-profit organization, conducted a qualitative study to examine HIV vulnerability among queer men in Ghana. In 2014, the second phase of the men's study was conducted in Kumasi after a brief halt, when religious leaders in Ghana voiced their opposition to the study of queer men in Ghana. The second phase focused on older queer men. The results of the Ghana Men's Study revealed a high prevalence of HIV (17.5%) among queer men at five sites in Ghana. The highest rates for HIV-infections were recorded in Greater Accra (34.4%) and the Ashanti region (13.6%) (Aberle-Grasse, McFarland, El Adas, Quaye, Atuahene, Adan & Khan, 2013). The majority of study participants (>70%) were between the ages of 18-24, living at home and reported having no or low income. That study, however, found that the prevalence of HIV was higher among older queer men (>35 years) and those with higher levels of income. The same study found that less than half (44.8%) of the surveyed queer population had accessed HIV-prevention services in the previous year and that 37% in Greater Accra and 23% in Kumasi had been reached by a peer educator from an NGO.

Two other key findings of the Men's Study are particularly relevant to this dissertation research. First, even though overall HIV infection rates in Ghana are dropping, HIV infection

rates among queer Ghanaian men are still high. Another key finding is the interviewees' concerns about the various forms of health barriers at hospitals and health centers. For example, ill treatment and fear of stigma drove them away from hospitals, and they were treated in a way that made them feel ashamed in health centers. Although there is a continuing effort by both the Ghana government and international organizations to increase health access to Ghanaians in general, barriers to adequate health care still exist for queer Ghanaian men.

Examination of both public texts and interview texts showed the interconnectedness of economic, political, cultural, and family social practices. Queer Ghanaian men's access to health resources and sexual agency (the ability to define one's sexuality and act on that identification in a specific context) are enabled and constrained by discursive ideological fields of heteronormativity, African patriarchy, classism, liberalism and neoliberalism; institutional practices and policies; and material and social conditions, such as violence. The capacity for individuals and collectives to act was also contextually contingent. For example, discourses positioning same-sex sexual relations as diseased and pathological emerged in narratives about how queer Ghanaian men are treated by hospital doctors, nurses, and staff. As Collier, Lawless and Ringera (2016) argued, agency is the capacity for individuals and collectives to act within specific structural constraints. Analyzing levels of sexual agency and other forms of agency is relevant to this study of subject positions and subjectivities, and also relevant to the study of HIV-AIDS and STD prevention research in Ghana. This is because how queer Ghanaian men enact and negotiate their group and individual identities occurs within the constraints of violence, criminality, safe sex, subject positions as sinful, and institutional discrimination.

As noted in the previous chapter, Pentecostalist-Charismatic church discourses position same-sex desires and intimacies as sinful, evil and demonic. These discourses are then amplified

by media organizations. As a result, violence against queer men such as blackmail, mob action, and workplace discrimination have become part of the social order and queer subjectivities in Ghana. In addition to violence against queer men, such discourses have also normalized specific institutional and individual practices in hospitals in Ghana. For instance, queer Ghanaian men are humiliated by nurses, preached to by doctors and denied government funding targeting LGBT health. Due to how they might be treated, some queer Ghanaian men are less likely to visit hospitals when they feel sick or go to public hospitals to get tested for HIV or STDs. Other queer men are also asked by families to leave their homes because of their HIV-positive status (Aberle-Grasse et al., 2013). Meyer (1995, 2003) provided evidence that LGBT individuals who reported higher levels of discrimination, perceived stigma, internalized homophobia, and concealed sexual orientation are at increased risk for negative mental and physical health. In addition to Meyer's findings, McGarrity (2014) argued that the socio-economic status of LGBT individuals contributes to their general well-being even in places where they face discrimination. Thus, the socio-economic status of some queer men had a bearing on how they negotiate their subject positions and enact levels of agency. Economic marginalization goes along with communicative marginalization (Dutta-Bergman, 2004), such that queer Ghanaian men, without access to material resources, were also rendered voiceless through their in-access to platforms where policies are debated, implemented and evaluated.

In this chapter, therefore, I analyze how power relations and ideological tensions over same-sex desires, perspectives and experiences are produced, and how subject positions and subjectivities of queer Ghanaian men are constituted and impact their agency in online news media reports, interview texts with officials of NGOs and interviews with queer Ghanaian men in the context of health. After contextualizing health issues in Ghana, I examine how queer

Ghanaian men are constructed in relation to health in online news media discourse. Next, I show how NGO officials position queer men in health contexts. Finally, I examine how interviews with queer Ghanaian men demonstrate intersectional subject positions and subjectivities in relations with others, and how agency is enabled and constrained when they seek healthcare in public hospitals. Finally, I address ideological productions and relations between queer Ghanaian men and NGOs, and health institutions. To review, the first research question is: How are queer Ghanaian men subjects constituted and positioned in (a) discourses produced by Ghanaian online news organizations, and (b) discourses from interviews with NGO representatives and (c) Ghanaian queer men? Research question two asks: What do the discourses accomplish related to social hierarchies, agency, power relations, and ideologies?

Context of Health Disparities in Ghana

The Ministry of Health (MoH) provides oversight responsibility for all agencies within the health sectors in Ghana. These include the Ghana Health Service, and teaching hospitals. Faith-based institutions include the Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG). There are also quasi-governmental health institutions and a private sector. According to their website, the goal of the Ghana Health Service is to ensure a healthy and productive population that reproduces itself safely. Ghana's National Health Policy (2007) was developed in line with the Primary Health Care Approach and Regional Strategies Program which are programs implemented together with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) set up by the UN, IMF and the World Bank. The Ghana Health Care Approach is a report that provides direction on the national health strategic plans to harmonize and align the management and provision of comprehensive essential health services throughout Ghana. The health sector in Ghana is in transition from a mainly government managed public sector to a greater diversity of both public

and private health service providers. The health sector has suffered many challenges regarding government financing, which has resulted in the diminishing of basic health services. In 2008, Ghana introduced the National Health Insurance Scheme to increase access of citizens to health care. The NHIS allows Ghanaian citizens to make contributions into a fund so that they can receive healthcare when needed. Under this policy, three different types of schemes were set up: District Wide Health Insurance Scheme, Private Mutual Health Insurance Scheme, and the Private Commercial Health Insurance Scheme. Ghanaian contributors are grouped according to levels of income and the district where one normally seeks healthcare. This was done so that socio-economic status of citizens does not prevent their access to adequate healthcare. However, the NHIS has been riddled with problems of government non-payment of bills, and it is facing challenges of financial sustainability and efficiency.

Ghana was among 53 African Union member states who signed the Abuja Declaration in April 2001 pledging to commit at least 15% of its annual budget to improve the health sector. According to the Ghana Health Service 2014 report, Ghana has not met the Abuja Declaration since 2009. The highest level of 13.5% was attained in 2014 with the least of 9.8% in 2009. Due to the limited access of government funds for the health sector, international organizations such as the UN have subsidized the health sector budget of Ghana. There are twenty-six entities operating in Ghana under or with the United Nations with some of them also serving as regional or sub-regional offices. They are the FAO, IAEA, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, IMO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNDSS, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNIC, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNU-INRA, UN Volunteers, UN WOMEN, WFP, WHO and World Bank. The key objective of the United Nations system in Ghana is to support the country toward its vision of advancing equitable economic growth and reducing poverty. Thus, since international

organizations such as the UN subsidize the health budget of the Ghana Health Service, they can exert influence on how and where the Ghana Health Service can spend the subsidized funding. An example of international organizations' interventions in the health sector of Ghana is the commissioning of the Men's Study, which was a project financed by Boston University's Center for Global Health and Development in alliance with UN-AIDS.

An area of increasing international support from the UN and Western countries is HIV-AIDS prevention and support. Overall, HIV/AIDS infection rates in Ghana have been reduced by more than 50 percent as of 2014. However, HIV infections among queer Ghanaian men continue to increase (Aberle-Grasse et al., 2013). The positioning of same-sex sexual relations in human right discourses has enabled international organizations and local NGOs to counter mythical claims by Pentecostalist-Charismatic conservatives and African nationalist views of same-sex desires and intimacies. However, their views are also based on neoliberal ideologies of individualism and market-driven norms of health care as personal responsibility. Based on liberal ideologies, human rights discourses centralize the individual and personal liberty as a fundamental aspect of the modern human subject (Miller, 2010). These discourses position the queer Ghanaian subject as a fully agentic individual who is capable of making individual rational decisions but overlooks contextual factors (Chavez, 2016; Sastry & Dutta, 2013)).

The involvement of international organizations in the economies of African countries has engendered new discourses around human sexuality and global modernity. Kole (2007) argued that sexual and gender plurality, sexual preference, sexual identity and "coming out" have become important markers of development. On the other hand, societies who are now grappling with the globalized discourses of human sexuality and the HIV-epidemic are positioned as sexually repressed, therefore under-developed. Linked to these discourses is the reactive

regulation of same-sex sexual desires and intimacies in Ghana justified by discourses linking them to the increase in diseases (especially, HIV and STDs). In this context, while international organizations seek to regulate the sexual behavior of queer Ghanaian men within discourses of safe-sex, conservative Christians are demonizing same-sex sexual practices as a risky sexual practice contributing to the spread of diseases. In this complex intersection of global and local institutional barriers, queer Ghanaian men are resisting and enacting agency in different forms to seek pleasure and access health care. These structural forces are enabled more than interrogated by public media texts about health.

Print and Online Media Texts

Stuart Hall (1981) posits that the media's main sphere of operation is the transformation and production of ideologies. In the context of this study, online news media reports about queer Ghanaian men are a pervasive source of ideas about queer identities and queer sex, and these ideas are articulated by particular voices and distributed by particular media organizations. . Online news media reports from summer 2014 to summer 2016 represent a period of intensive reporting about "homosexuality." The intensive reporting was frequently triggered by political events such as comments from presidents or leaders from Western and African countries, statements from religious leaders, gay marriage rulings in other countries and presidential elections in Ghana. Other events that the media online organizations covered included the lynching or gay bashing of queer Ghanaian men in some parts of Accra, male-male pedophilia and rape. Two themes related to health emerged in the analysis of these online news media texts. The first theme addresses how "homosexuality" is constituted as pathological by Pentecostalist-Charismatic and political leaders. The second theme analyzes how human rights discourse is co-opted and contested by religious and political leaders.

Queer Sex as Risky and Contributing to STDs

Online news media discourse from both state-owned and privately owned newspapers constituted “homosexuality” as a mental disease, and as a deviation from the “normal” sexual behavior of heterosexuality. Central to these discourses is the assumption that queer sex is risky and contributes to the spread of diseases as if heterosexual sex does not cause diseases as well. The discourse of same-sex sexual behavior as risky, pathological and contributing to diseases is historically situated in scientific research about the abnormality of “homosexuality.” Young and Meyer (2005) wrote that “*Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) introduced the notion of the antipathic sexual instinct (the opposite of heterosexual), which was used interchangeably with homosexual instinct, as “anomaly, abhorrent, tainted, neuropathic, degenerate, inverted and injurious” (p.1145). The association of HIV-AIDS with “homosexual” in the early 1990’s further advanced a disease model for describing same-sex sexual behaviors including sexual psychopaths. Foucault (1976) contended that “homosexuality” was not discovered and then described in discourse, but rather, produced through discourse. He wrote, “Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species” (p. 43).

Discourse of “homosexuality” as disease is in sharp contrast to pre-colonial local discourses of sexuality; these did not construct Africans’ sexualities as an aberration (Epprecht, 2008; Hoad, 2007; Otu, 2015). Colonizers perpetuated and institutionalized Western scientific epistemologies about sexual behavior and pathologized non-heterosexual behaviors as an aberration in human sexuality. African nationalists then reproduced colonialism by co-opting such discourses to seek support for independence and to sustain internal control by constituting

same-sex sexual behaviors as a Western disease. In contrast, Western human rights activists from the United Kingdom and the United States have criticized African Presidents for criminalizing “homosexuality” and restricting important medications and resources to people who identify as LGBT and could be HIV-positive. However, their overt critique of African governments' treatment of LGBT has been resisted by both anti-queer and pro-queer activists as neocolonial overreach (Ekine & Abbas, 2013). LGBT Africans, in particular, have stated that such explicit interventions from international governments and NGOs actually act to support the local anti-LGBT discourses, because of the need to reject Western imperialism and colonization. The anti-LGBT discourses describe same-sex sexualities as a Western disease supported only by Western governments. Thus, Pentecostalist-Charismatic church leaders and anti-LGBT propagandists have contested and co-opted human rights discourse by reasoning against providing health resources to queer Ghanaian men since LGBT discrimination is not a human right violation. As I show below, a key aspect of the discourse from Pentecostalists-Charismatic leaders and anti-LGBT individuals and groups is the emphasize on “homosexuality” as risky sex between men which contributes to diseases, what Tomso (2013) calls “viral sex.”

Richardson (2007) argued that editorials have the potential to sway public opinion with what is assumed as sophisticated argumentation tactics. In the context of Ghana, the editorials are part of print and online news media reports, especially from the *Daily Graphic*. It is read by the educated elite in Ghana since their reports are written in English. Editorials about “homosexuality” in Ghanaian online news media are more argumentative in nature because authors provide “evidence” for their assertions in contrast to news reports of anti-LGBT statements from Pentecostalist-Charismatic leaders about gay marriage.

Sydney Abugri is a celebrated Ghanaian columnist who writes for the *Daily Graphic*. He has received awards for the Best Print Feature, the Best Newspaper Columnist Award and the Prestigious Journalism of the Year Award. Due to his popularity and government support for his positions, his comments and arguments about homosexuality are accepted as part of the “truths” about queer Ghanaian men.

Society and medical science have a responsibility to trace the causes [of homosexuality]. One impediment to managing the issue of homosexuality and lesbianism is the staunch refusal of gays and lesbians to accept or acknowledge that their so-called sexual preferences are unnatural and that they need psychological help with sexual re-orientation and adjustment (*Daily Graphic*, March 23, 2016)

Sydney Abugri positions sex among men and women as un-natural and therefore needing psychological re-orientation. In the quote above, Abugri uses “nature” and “natural” discourses as support for his assertion that “homosexuality” is an “aberrant” in human nature. His broader arguments reinforce Pentecostalist-Charismatic beliefs. In his attempt to provide an objective “scientific data based” analysis of “homosexuality” and claims why same-sex relations should not be decriminalized in Ghana, he infuses Christian religious beliefs about God’s “natural order of things” to argue that homosexuality is un-natural.

Abugri employs a variety of persuasive methods to legitimize Ghana’s treatment of queer men. The introduction of biological discourses of natural and nature is a persuasive tactic; it reduces the queer Ghanaian subject to a singular, over-generalized sexual subject. As part of his argument, he describes how queer men have sex and how anal sex produces diseases. This discourse is quite persuasive with the natural and nature discourses, as alternative sexual practices besides vaginal sex are described as “unnatural.” Interdiscursivity is evident with these discourses positioning queer men and women in general as in denial of their need for psychological re-programming, and critique of the proliferation of Western human rights

rhetoric, act together to produce the master narrative of queer sex as unnatural. The readers of this editorial, who are typically Christians, will interpret his "nature" and "natural" arguments as fully persuasive because he reproduces creationist ideologies in Christian theology. In this context, queer Ghanaian men are advised to seek help and get “back in line” with heteronormativity and God by seeking help from doctors and religious leaders

What is especially problematic in this discourse are the assumptions of inclusivity and protection of life. There is a plea to protect queer Ghanaian men’s life through the call for them to change their ways and seek help. Nikolas Rose (2007) maintained that unlike the life politics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that focused on birth and death rates, sanitation and hygiene, there is a growing neo-conservative effort to control, regulate and reshape the very vital capacities of human life. This discourse is very common among U.S neo-conservatives like former President George Bush, who emphasized the “culture of life” as one of the U.S most cherished values. Tomso (2013) explained that central to this emerging emphasis on life is risk; protecting those individuals and locations where risk is seen to be high even in the midst of war. However, this view of life is limited because of the narrow grounding in a conservative vision of liberal inclusiveness that opposes abortion, promotes heterosexual “family values,” cuts social services to the needy and poor, and requires abstinence-only as a precondition for countries like Ghana to receive AIDS relief funds. Thus, Abugri’s rhetorical linkages of nature and natural implores a biopolitical imperative to preserve life by criminalizing same-sex desires and sexual relations. In this context, restricting health resources to queer men is also framed as within national interest.

Other discourses from private online news media position “homosexuality” as an addiction that can lead to social crimes such as pedophilia. In 2016, two reporters from Joy FM

made a documentary titled *"Living in the shadows: Gays in Ghana."* Their report was featured on *Myjoyonline.com*. The reporters wrote that the aim of the documentary report was to show to the public that there are "indeed practicing homosexuals in the country" (*Myjoyonline.com*, May 5th, 2016). These kinds of reports are common with private news portals such as *Citifmonline.com* and *Myjoyonline.com*. Hasty (2005) argued that private news organizations utilize sensationalist headlines to sell their stories and amass more readers. Furthermore, their stories do not provide a balanced analysis of the particular social issue being addressed. Rather, they embellish their stories to gain more consumers. The narrative of the documentary described above shows how queer Ghanaian men are positioned as sexual deviants and as addicts. For instance, stories such as "Homosexuality is on the Rise," "Homosexuals are Coming to Ghana" are almost exclusively reported by private news organizations. These stories act to create public moral panic about same-sex relations (Tettey, 2016).

Bell (1991) wrote that journalists are the professional storytellers of our age. Narrative form is the sequence through which events are presented to the audience (Richardson, 2007). He argued that narratives articulate and sustain an understanding of the events of the world around us. Although the story below begins with comments from a lesbian, Vicker, it quickly shifts to focus on the gay man. The story of the gay man necessitates an explanation of his "becoming gay" while the background of the lesbian is omitted from the report. Below is a part of the report that tells readers how the gay man became "gay."

After his dad and mom split, life became difficult to the extent that he had to drop out of school, resort to selling on the streets to ensure his sister continues her education. The frustration from this point was too much, so he found help in an elderly man in his neighborhood. But the 'Good Samaritan' abused him. He was buggered the first time, but he would subsequently chase after his abuser for sex. He explains his affection for his abuser grew so fierce that he moved from Accra to Kumasi to be close to him. Things did not work out as planned. (*Myjoyonline.com*, May 5th, 2016)

The narrative of Abeiku, the gay man, plays into conservative/traditional views about same-sex desires as not “born this way,” as portrayed in transnational LGBT visibility politics, but as a learned behavior through sexual abuse. The emphasis on the “strong desire” for his abuser feeds into local mythical tales about same-sex feelings as something one cannot stop when tried, an addiction. Abeiku wanted more sex after being abused so he "chased" his abuser. The institutional and structural constraints which forced Abeiku to drop out of school and not find work after his parents divorced are given no attention. Rather, the emphasis on the gay man’s “Stockholm's Syndrome” is given publication space.

This discourse is problematic as Abeiku’s desire for another man is translated through heteropatriarchal lens about family and kinship. The work of Cherrie Moraga (1993) is an important guidepost for charting the conceptual terrain of queer familia, chosen families. Weston (1992) wrote that chosen families do not directly oppose "genealogical modes of reckoning kinship. Instead, they undercut procreation's status as a master term imagined to provide a template for all possible kinship relations” (p.137). In the context of chosen families, Moraga (1993) wrote that gay and lesbian communities exist on terrains beyond the boundaries of the heterosexual family, on terrain where sexual collectivity and collaboration becomes possible. In the context of Ghana, this means queer kinships and relationships disrupt nationalistic consciousness premised on a democratic egalitarianism for heterosexual Christian Ghanaians. In this vein, the description of Abeiku’s gay identity queers heteronormative family and kinship imaginations of the family, home and sense of belonging, contesting the news media description as an abusive relationship.

The story of Abeiku becomes even more pathological when the story tells of his imprisonment for being accused of raping a young man.

He got a job and found love in a young guy – that too brought him trouble. His lover's parents accused him of raping their son. He was imprisoned.

Foss (1996) wrote that narratives help us impose an order on the flow of experience so that we can make sense of events and actions in our lives. Abeiku's experience as a gay man living in Ghana is told through an emphasis on his sexual deviancy and psychological imbalance. Details of his imprisonment and his release are not interrogated. At the end of the report, Abeiku's background closes with the description: "After prison, Abeiku became a misfit in his neighborhood because people started pointing fingers at him and name calling started" (*Myjoyonline.com*, May 5, 2016). Thus, he is constructed as addicted, troubled, and justifiably sent to jail. "Homosexuality," gay identity and same-sex desires are brought exclusively into the public imagery through reproducing broadly circulating discourses of sexual deviants and psychological imbalance. Such reporting also reifies and continues Pentecostalist-Charismatic conservative ideologies about being LGBT as unnatural, having a mental disorder and a disease. Nonetheless, Abeiku's story shows his literal refusal of the Ghanaian state supported notions of human well-being, life, and citizenship. Thus, Abeiku's story rather *queers* his life as not within the confines of heteronormative aspirations, and pursuing a politics of enduring loss that nevertheless still makes room for the pursuit of pleasure.

Human Rights Discourses as Co-opted and Contested

On December 2011, Hilary Clinton stated, "gay rights are human rights" (*Washingtontpost.com*, December 7th, 2011). Her comments were accepted by progressives working in the health sector in Ghana and Africa in general. However, some religious leaders and politicians positioned Clinton's comment as a U.S progressive gay agenda to globalize the sexual decadence of the West (Kaoma, 2012). Despite the increase in HIV infections among queer Ghanaian men and the decrease in reproductive

choices for Ghanaian/African women in general, some moral entrepreneurs such as Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches in Ghana (Tettey, 2016) rejected the alignment of LGBT rights as human rights.

The rights approach to sexual and reproductive health is rooted in the post-second world war human rights debate when the United Nations created the International standards for a range of human rights including the right to health. Ahlberg and Kulane (2011) wrote that the declaration of the International Human Rights standards opened the door for the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, where women's rights as human rights was affirmed. The declaration noted that women's rights should not be subordinated to cultural and religious traditions. This conference also expanded human rights to include reproduction and sexuality (Sadik, 2000). Similarly, the African Union took a progressive move in 2003 to unveil the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights. In this document, reproductive rights and sexuality were adopted and came into force in November 2005 (Musa, 2006). It has been ratified by 26 countries including Ghana (SOAWR, 2008). However, the state of reproductive and sexual health remains poor in many parts of Africa. Part of the problem is the increasing poverty and inequality in many African countries. Wangari Mathai in 2009 lamented about the increasing number of Africans living in extreme poverty, 164 million. In 2017, that number has nearly doubled to 316 million.

The conceptualization of human rights in relation to sexual and reproductive health is heavily contested by both progressive and conservative ideological camps at the United Nations and beyond. Kaoma (2012) noted that those aligning with the U.S Christian right have positioned themselves as consultants in relation to African politics with the United Nations. Moreover, since most NGOs in Africa are faith-based, they emphasize U.S Christian right religious ideologies

about family and reproductive choices for women. With a Christianity saturated with identified demons and the prosperity gospel, which claims that simple faith in Jesus Christ will bring wealth and well being, Africa provides a receptive home for U.S Christian Right movements that may be the minority in the United States. Similarly, the embrace of reproduction as a virtue and childlessness as a tragedy in much of sub-Saharan Africa provides an opening for the U.S Christian right's promotion of "family values." They claim that human rights campaigns for reproductive choice for women are a Western conspiracy to reduce Africa's population and development. U.S. Christian Right ideology adds a distinctly homophobic spin to some of the cultural traditions in Ghana open to viewing same-sex orientation as a sign of a respected ancestral spirit rather than a demonic possession (Kaoma, 2012).

One key U.S organization involved in providing oversight to the African constitutions and laws that criminalize same-sex desires and reproductive freedom is the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), led by the lawyer Jay Sekulow. The Center's founder, Pat Robertson, is one of the Christian Right's most influential leaders and institution builders. He also launched the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), International Family Entertainment Inc., and the Christian Coalition, and hosts the Evangelist show "The 700 Club," broadcast worldwide." CBN claims its programs are broadcast in 39 languages, reaching 360 million people yearly. Creating ACLJ in 1990, Robertson envisioned it as a counterweight to the American Civil Liberties Union, which Robertson believed was undermining "family values." The influence of these structural agents in Ghana cannot be over-emphasized. The Washington D.C. based Center positions itself as the legal arm of conservatives in the U.S. culture wars; the group defends "the sanctity of human life, and the two- parent, marriage-bound family" (Kaoma, 2012). Its critics view it as "a strong supporter of the Federal Marriage Amendment intended to ban same-sex

marriage” and a strong opponent of “legal, safe abortion” (Kaoma, 2012). In the United States, the center provides legal help to pro-life protesters who harass women seeking reproductive services (Ekine, 2013).

LGBT rights as linked to human rights is positioned in online news media texts as a neo-colonial infiltration of the progressive West. In 2011, former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, threatened to cut funding (which funds most of the NGOs which support LGBT health) to African countries that persecute LGBT individuals. His comment was not only condemned but used by Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic church and political leaders as evidence that “homosexuality” is another imperialistic instrument of oppression from the devil through West to Africa (Kaoma, 2012). As an example of funding, in 2013, Ghana received a \$918 million loan from the IMF with stipulations that health workers who work with LGBT individuals should be protected.

An editorial in *Myjoyonline.com* was written in relation to this loan. The editorial had the title “IMF loan opens doors for homosexuals” (*Myjoyonline.com*, June 10, 2016). Richardson (2007) contended that hyperbole is an example of excessive exaggeration made for rhetorical effect. Such hyperbole in the title above reflects the sensationalism that is often associated with various reports about LGBT individuals from private news organizations in Ghana. Thus, the hyperbole used reproduces the discourse propagated by U.S religious right and Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic and political leaders, that Ghana must resist being forced to accept "gay marriage."

Although the stipulation in IMF loans requires the protection of LGBT individuals in health settings, the editorial rather reconfigures that stipulation as Ghana is becoming a gay rights advocate as shown below.

“Agreeing to protect LGBT is a hidden conditionality for the loan to be approved,” top World Bank official who pleaded anonymity has stated, adding that, by accepting the loan, Ghana now agrees to be gay rights advocates. Consequently, the loan contracted by the ruling NDC government has attracted a number of homosexuals into the country, even though the country’s laws criminalizes unnatural carnal knowledge (*Myjoyonline.com*, June 10, 2016)

In addition to sensationalizing stories about queer Ghanaian men, Hasty (2005) contended that some of the news stories in private news organizations about the government are untrue because they contain ad hominem attacks and provide outright false information to the Ghanaian public through unnamed sources. The quote above connects the loan to the previous ruling party in Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC). This quote further blames the NDC government for inviting “homosexuals” into the country. Additionally, the editorial simultaneously positions same-sex desires as a foreign construct being forced on Ghanaians. This discourse is reinforced by a picture used to represent “homosexuality” in the editorial.



This representation aligns with discourses that same-sex desires are unAfrican and a Western construct, thus, reinforcing the discursively constructed images of same-sex desire to the Ghanaian public. This is similar to what Stuart Hall (1981) identifies as the “base image.”

In this context, images of Western (white) same-sex couples getting married become the "base image" that Ghanaians associate with LGBT rights. Otu (2016) wrote that while Christian fundamentalists use "gay marriage" to frame issues of LGBT rights, most of the queer men in Africa are not interested in getting married; rather, they want to be treated equally under the law. The above image serves a particular discursive function, it establishes gay rights as "the problem of gay rights." This representation implicates same-sex sexual pleasures and desires as a colonial white production, and resistance of such imperialism is required by Ghanaians. Thus, policies ensuring queer Ghanaian men's access to health care are discounted as a Western neo-colonial interference and Ghanaian politicians who want to make changes are chastised as Western puppets.

In Ghana, where 97 percent of the population identify as religious, human rights discourses are interpreted and understood through religious rhetoric. The discourses situating LGBT rights as a product of Western progressives to reduce Africa's population and destabilize African family values are also propagated by the U.S Christian right groups in some African countries. Sharon Slater founded the Family Watch International (FWI) in 1999. FWI has lobbied for "family values" at the International level. Kaoma (2012) argued that Slater's international work is based on the premise that LGBT rights are counter to family values and LGBT is being used to reduce the increasing population in Africa. Thus, LGBT politics is a mechanism designed by United Nations to destroy "African families." The dominance of U.S conservative right ideologies in African countries also became evident during the Ugandan anti-gay bill that called for the death penalty and life imprisonment for anyone who identifies as LGBT. Slater's organization FWI supported the Ugandan anti-gay bill until it was retracted due to the international backlash it received (Kaoma, 2012). Finally, a common and influential

discourse used by the U.S conservative right is that “homosexuality” is a choice and can be reversed through conversion therapy. This is evident in the previous quotation calling for re-orientation. These all work together to form interdiscursivity to support anti-gay policies and practices.

Queer Ghanaian men facing health crises are positioned as making poor individual choices about their health because they choose to engage in risky sexual behaviors. In Ghana, there is also a strong connection between U.S conservative groups and Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches. Their books and videos are readily available to Ghanaian pastors. Some Ghanaian pastors are also sponsored to attend theological schools in the United States. Anyani Boadum is an example of anti-gay preacher with strong ties to U.S conservative churches. His website indicates that he was sponsored by a U.S based philanthropist to study Theology in New York. Upon returning to Ghana, he set up a church and regularly writes editorials to the *Daily Graphic* in support of the criminalization of same-sex desires. An editorial in the *Daily Graphic* by Anyani Boadum chastised human rights activists for promoting a “lifestyle” that has health consequences for their women partners.

To those of you who defend the rights of homosexuals, most male homosexuals are bi-sexual as well. The question is, do they tell their female partners about their bi-sexual status? If they don't, does the woman in question have human rights or not? Let us stop joking about human rights. The discussion regarding homosexuals and lesbians should be centered on the issue of public health, not discrimination, civil or human rights (*Daily Graphic*, July 19, 2016)

Dr. Anyani Boadu defends the position of anti-gay religious groups as not infringing on the rights of queer individuals because “homosexuality” is a public health threat to the nation. Also, “homosexuality” is reduced to a choice since he claims, “Most male homosexuals are bisexual.” Male homosexuals are predators since they don’t reveal their bi-sexual status to their female partners. In an earlier part of the editorial, he explores the psychological imbalance and health

risks associated with male-male sex. He explains that gay sex produces tears and pains that expose gay men to health risks. By removing pleasure and desire from queer sex and reducing queer intimacy and pleasure to “high risk,” readers may interpret queer sex as self-injury and the state as not responsible for providing resources against HIV infections. Thus, the use of religious and biological discourses form interdiscursivity to support the criminalization of same-sex relations.

Queer Ghanaian men are denied state resources to combat the increasing HIV infection rate because queer sex is deemed risky and queer men engaging in queer sex are represented as taking personal responsibility to engage in a risky sexual behavior. This discourse is problematic as it relegates queer sex and desires as outside state rationality of individual responsibility and public health. Simply put, the discourse insinuates, “why would anyone engage in a sexual practice which causes diseases such as HIV?” The representation of queer sex as solely responsible for the transmission of HIV and other STDs is extremely problematic. Furthermore, the depiction of queer men engaging in risky sexual behaviors is simplistic and misses many contextual factors driving some queer men to engage in risky sex such as raw sex or bareback. What is missing in this discourse is that queer Ghanaian men engaging in pleasurable moments during sex within the constraints of institutional and state limitations are an expression of sexual agency to “feel” and be “felt.” This is similar to what Jacqui Alexander calls erotic autonomy. This concept delineates how marginalized and stigmatized sexual subjects do engage in sexual pleasure on their own terms despite the institutional and familial influences against it.

As research from Tomso (2013) shows, for queer men having unprotected sex or willingly subjecting oneself to be infected by HIV is a form of biopolitical resistance. Tomso (2013) wrote that queer men use their bodies and its pleasure as resistance to coercive regimes of

power that place unwelcome restrictions on the practice of sexual freedom. Bailey (2017) added that for queer black men, engaging in risky sexual behaviors such as raw sex represents a different epistemology of sex in this age of AIDS. For black queer men, raw sex is crucial to their sexual satisfaction which may be a source of deep intimacy, connection, and self-affirming that run counter to their experiences of social disqualification and marginalization. To add to what some of the studies suggested above, intimate, queer Ghanaian men may engage in sex for pleasure and others may engage in risky sexual behaviors because of structural vulnerabilities such as homophobic violence and stigma which limits where and with whom one can have sex. However, Dr. Anyani Boadu's comments above ignore the intersectional barriers and ways space can be a structural vulnerability, for instance, spaces to have sex or engage in stigmatized sexual behavior. Some queer Ghanaian men do engage in risky sexual behavior at clubs or at friends' houses because they are not able to engage in sexual pleasure more freely in their shared residences. Thus, Anyani Boadum's editorial is missing how structural vulnerabilities influence sexual subjectivity.

Analysis of the online news media chosen for this study revealed that human rights are hardly discussed as part of the discourses about queer Ghanaian men. Few traditional newspaper reports mention human rights while most of the discussions on human rights are written as part of editorials. Below are examples of the few newspaper reports and editorials where human rights are either mentioned or alluded to.

“We will not respect homosexuality but have respect for homosexuals because they are created in the likeness of God. We are against them adopting children because it is difficult for homosexuals to raise a child to be responsible in the society,” [Arch Bishop Palmer-Buckle] (*Daily Graphic*, July 25th, 2015)

There is a difference between being a practicing homosexual and having a homosexual tendency. It is the practice that the *Bible* condemns, not the orientation (*Daily Graphic*, July 23rd, 2015)

Rev. Kisseadoo insisted that homosexuals have rights to fundamental human rights which must be respected; their right to food, equal pay, right to work and dignity must all be respected. Disapproving of the act of homosexuality does not mean that one is against homosexuals, Rev. Kisseadoo insisted. (*Myjoyonline.com*, June 29, 2015)

I am against homosexuality or same-sex marriage because of my Christian belief and values. That being said, the church must balance tolerance for the "sinner" with zero-tolerance for the sin of homosexuality (*Peacefmonline.com*, July 12, 2015)

The increase in violence against queer Ghanaian men by vigilante groups has engendered new ways of speaking about LGBT individuals. For instance, Arch-Bishop Palmar-Buckle, an influential Catholic Priest in Ghana, positions “homosexuality” as against the marriage institution and family values; but also he asks for readers to respect “homosexuals” as the likeness of God. A similar strategy is employed by the author of the second statement, who separates the individual from the behavior. The changing discourse from condemning queer men since they are created in the likeness of God to rather condemning their behavior is problematic. This claim positions same-sex sexual relations as a choice that can be easily changed. This position serves the interests of anti-gay preachers and policy makers. The emphasis on homosexuality as separate from queer men’s bodies is ignoring the conditions and consequences of anti-queer politics; all of which are related to access to health care.

These discourses enable religious leaders to distance themselves from the harmful effects of their statements and comments on queer men while advocating for the restriction of health resources to queer men. The changing discourse can also be a way that the religious leaders quoted above speak to and attempt to align with more liberal identified Ghanaians who position the Church as intolerant of alternative lifestyles and

behaviors. These Ghanaians recognize queers' fundamental rights to equal pay and dignity. Nonetheless, these discourses function to valorize individualism and the presumption of individual choice and agency with a focus on respect for the individual. While human rights are acknowledged, this recognition does not include the right to choose one's own partner and feed into discourses about same-sex sexual relations as an individual choice.

Non-Profit Organizations Interview Texts

Acknowledging the Contextual Challenges

In addition to how institutions such as Pentecostalist-Charismatic churches position same-sex desires and intimacy as diseased and human rights as a product of Western progressive movements, officials of NGOs have to navigate the broader context and contest these discourses in order to deliver valuable health resources to queer Ghanaian men. Given the social order where LGBT individuals are denied access to critical health resources, NGOs included in this study play a significant role in providing adequate health prevention programs to queer Ghanaian men. These community-based organizations are the brokers between International agencies such as the Global Fund, local government agencies such as the Ghana AIDS Foundation and the LGBT population in Ghana. Health discourse in the context of this international funding has become an acceptable entry into discussions about human rights violations. Consequently, most of the NGO programs in this study focus on STD/HIV-AIDS prevention by including LGBT programs under the umbrella of "at-risk populations."

International and national discourses, structures and institutions related to health form relationships of dominance, discrimination, power, and control (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). The

negotiations of such international and national systems of power and discrimination are evident in how NGO officials speak about the challenges of their work with queer Ghanaian men. Farmer (1996) wrote that structural and communicative marginalization work in unison to create conditions of overall inaccess to health resources. Dutta (2006) added that it is within this climate of inaccess that community members experience poorer access to preventive, support, and treatment resources. Since NGOs who work with queer Ghanaian men receive all their funding from international organizations, their advocacy for the LGBT population has been positioned by religious and political leaders as aligning with Western Progressive ideologies. This has created conditions and factors that affect the delivery of their health programs to queer Ghanaian men. In this theme around navigating contextual structures, I examine two major factors mentioned by officials of NGOs when asked about the challenges they face in their work with queer Ghanaian men.

NGO officials recognize that the economic conditions of the country and lack of government support, both financially and socially, also affect health access for queer Ghanaian men. Yaw from CFCR stated that the economic conditions of the country disproportionately affect some queer men.

I think the economic conditions are affecting the entire population in general. Most of the community members are not working, and some of the medications are very expensive, so they need to work or go somewhere to find medication. There are cases where an LGBT person has been driven away from their homes or schools because of stigma and discrimination and all that. Perhaps, at that time they did not know there was anyone like them, and they do not even have the money to go to the centers. Even if you take the service to them, and then the person needs to get some labs done, they will come back to you for money to run labs before they can even think about medication. So, the economic problems are worse for GLBTQI people who have been sacked or driven from their homes and are now living with their friends who are also struggling to survive or eat.

Yaw describes how the general economic conditions in the country disproportionately affect

some queer Ghanaian men. He further notes that the NGOs have to provide financial support for other lab work in addition to providing free health services and medications to queer Ghanaian men. Yaw's statement shows how economic marginalization increases with health disparities for some queer men who do not have sources of income and also do not have family support. The disenfranchisement of queer Ghanaian men is within the general context of failed economic programs introduced in Ghana in the 1990's.

Since the late 1970s, the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa increasingly made use of loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as a solution to their balance of payments crises and therefore were increasingly led to implementing policies and measures advocated by these institutions such as Structural Adjustment Programs. Structural Adjustment Programs have led to government restrictions on spending and pressures from U.S based corporations through the IMF to privatize public institutions such the health sector. Structural adjustment programs are directly linked to neoliberal ideologies of governance whereby public institutions are privatized, and individuals are encouraged to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. This ideological context places the onus for economic success on the individual and governments can legitimize elimination of nationally funded health programs for specific groups. In the context where queer Ghanaian men are already marginalized, their health concerns in relation to HIV prevention are reduced to the conservative mantra of abstinence and the liberal reductionist response that emphasize condom use or practicing safe sex. Olukoshi (2003) maintained that the social cushioning designed by international charity foundations such as the Gates Foundation, Bretton, Woods Foundation and Clinton Foundation to mitigate the hardships on people affected by adjustment programs has failed to make a significant impact on the continent's social decline and growing poverty. The decrease in access to social resources is

exacerbated for those who are already at the margins of society. Queer men are denied access to poverty alleviation programs on the local level due to how "homosexuality" and LGBT are positioned in discourses about the deserving and undeserving. However, the combination of health disparities and economic disenfranchisement of queer Ghanaian men has opened spaces for NGOs to lobby for cheaper generic anti-retroviral drugs (ARV) to be produced in the country.

Ghana imports more than 80 percent of anti-retroviral drugs from the U.S. Although there is a local pharmaceutical company (Danaman) which currently produces the generic form of ARV, the Ghana government through a contract with the U.S buys and imports ARV drugs from Pfizer in the U.S (UNAIDS.org). Ghana's dependence on imported drugs such as ARV makes it difficult to negotiate for a price reduction. In this context, ARV medications can be expensive for unemployed queer Ghanaian men who are also HIV positive. Yaw asserted that sometimes his organization pays for some queer men to get labs done since they are more likely to be homeless due to being ostracized by their families. Although ARVs are sometimes made available for free to women and some men, queer Ghanaian men might be denied such access because of their sexuality, especially in prisons. Kofi from CFCR told a story about a queer man who was arrested and jailed for having sex with a 17-year-old boy. Unfortunately, the queer man died in prison because he did not have access to an ARV drug. Thus, queer men who are also HIV positive in Ghana experience both economic marginalization in addition to the criminalization of queer sex.

Media sensationalization of LGBT or "homosexuality" stories is evident in public media. Queers are essentialized, and violence against them is justified, thus discouraging queer Ghanaian men to make use of health programs. Kojo from GHRO attested to the dialectical

relationship between how queer Ghanaian men are positioned in media reports and the effect it has on reaching queer men for their programs.

Airwaves, the radio and print media and all. Those are the challenges that we sometimes have because when there is an announcement or news item on gay issues, and it is blown up, [queer] people tend to withdraw, people we reach out to tend to hide and getting our programs off or organizing programs in such communities become difficult. Everybody is afraid or scared because of the news item in the air or newspapers. So, for the challenges, I will say it is when there are media reports about [queer] issues.

Kojo asserted that media reports about queer Ghanaian men create barriers to their programs.

Newspaper stories about gay lynching and announcements by “gay killers” on radio stations create fear among the queer community in Ghana that discourages queer men from visiting health clinics or hospitals. In some communities in Accra, queer men have been dragged from their homes and whipped after a news story about the “increase in homosexuality” in Ghana.

Some of the newspaper reports and radio stations dramatize stories about queer men. For example, “Homosexuality is on the rise in Ghana,” “Homosexuals are Coming into the Country.” As explained by Kwabena from GAF, such reports about homosexuality in the local language, Twi, is even worse because of the linguistic malleability of the Twi language to exaggerate the “nastiness” of queer sex. Some of the news reporters on the radio embellish the description of queer sex in Twi with phrases such as “bend down and let me put it in.” These phrases provoke a different set of meanings than for example, “homosexual.” Such forms of radio reporting and the representations of same-sex relations create a public moral panic (Tettey, 2016), and sometimes vigilante groups emerge to eradicate queer Ghanaian men they know in their neighborhoods.

In the discursive and material context, some queer men do not reach out to the NGOs for help when they need medications or if they are sick because of the potential for violence. The

sensationalization of queer stories by some media institutions also halts on-going discussions of policies and programs until the story dies out. This concern is shared by Yaw from CFCR.

When some issues get into the media, sometimes, the panelists make it worse. The way they will describe the whole issue and make a mockery of it will make the listeners angrier about the [queer] population. So, if there is an intervention going on and people become aware that this is the kind of group you are reaching, then you become concerned about how you go about your activity. So, when there is news about queer men out there, you kind of withdraw a bit just to let the issue die out. For instance, we have a drop-in center here, and our organization was mentioned in the news. Because of the news story, they are not coming here for health assistance because now it is known that anyone who comes here is going there for this purpose or is this kind of person. So, people will like to go out to the main hospital. They are concerned about what others will think of them.

A radio station mentioning CFCR in their programs about queer Ghanaian men had dramatic effects on the work of CFCR. Yaw mentioned that they do not feel comfortable utilizing the drop-in centers because they are concerned about their public image.

NGOs form a vital link between marginalized groups and important intervention programs. However, dominant discourses about same-sex sexual relations interfere with the provision of resources to them. Kwabena from GAF also mentioned that HIV-positive queer men who receive subsidized medications from his NGO tend to stay at home for months without medications when there are multiple news stories about same-sex sexual relations in Ghana. Thus, the sensationalism of news stories about queer men and the subject positions ascribed to queer men create health barriers for the NGOs to reach queer men. Additionally, some queer men might position other queer men who visit these centers as lower class. For instance, when I lived in Ghana, I was aware of health centers for queer men in Accra. However, my friends and I hardly used their services largely because of how we would be positioned by other queers. Those who utilized the NGO services are perceived as "not classy" and "uneducated." Furthermore,

other NGOs are known in the public media as "the place for the gays." In this context, some queer men avoid those centers to reduce stigma.

Another problem that officials mentioned is the lack of Ghana government funding. The lack of government funding for programs specific to queer men is legitimated by the political context and government positioning on the criminalization of same-sex sexual relations. Consequently, all the funding for programs specific to queer men emanates from international organizations, embassies, and the Global Fund. When the researcher asked if international funding affects how NGOs manage their work with queer men, Kofi and Yaw from CFCR, Kwabena from GAF and Kojo from GHRO said no, and Kwaku from GHRO said yes. Although international aid comes with specific guidelines on what the funds can be used for, some of the officials did not think it had any bearing on how they created and managed their programs. This means that most of the representatives position their own organizational abilities to act, i.e., levels of agency, as not constrained by international aid. This is problematic as research from Dutta (2008), Sastry and Dutta (2013) Ahlberg and Kulane (2013) all point to the complicated relationship between local and international NGOs. Even though some local NGOs in Ghana do resist INGO programs and policies, the NGOs in this study are limited in their ability to resist because most of their funding comes from the U.S President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund. Thus, their responses are constrained by the context, and a need to be strategic not to critique the institutions that provide them with their funding.

Another challenge is when the queer men they work with have different needs from what the funds are to be used for. Kwaku from GHRO pointed out the need to involve more queer men in their program planning since there is a disconnect between the programs they design and what queer men have identified as their needs.

Usually, we will write proposals [to international organizations] and then seek out the needs of the community members. But now when you do that, it is difficult for people to gain ownership of the project. We are now in the process where we want them to be part of the project from scratch. It makes project running very easy if you involve people from the start, from identifying the problem to the needs and even writing the proposal. So, when the project starts, there is a sense of ownership, instead of saying “We think you need this or that.”

Kwaku's comment points to the need for but difficulty of gaining the queer Ghanaian community's support for programs that are driven by international donors and then delivered to queer men by local NGOs. However, only Kwaku voiced the tensions between some of the NGO programs and the actual needs of queer men. The lack of self-reflexivity from the other NGO officials about their relationship with donors is problematic as it shows that the goals and programs are determined by international organizations rather than situated assessments of the needs of queer men in Ghana. This acts to reinforce imperialism. The positioning of queer men in international programs without the investigation of the needs of queer Ghanaian men also feeds into discourses of "third world" and "international development" where specific people and locations are deemed under-developed by Westerners and given programs which do not fit the specific context (Mignolo, 2003). Especially problematic is the promotion of condom use and safer sex in "third world" countries. The promotion of neoliberal notions of individual responsibility through an emphasis on safe sex and condom use have been found to be unproductive in reducing HIV infection rates largely due to the emphasis on individual responsibility (Dutta, 2008) instead of the cultural norms and structural forces producing specific behaviors.

Human Rights Discourse as Steeped in Superficial Morality and Individual Awareness

The discourse from the NGO staff interviews shows applications of a rights-based approach to bring LGBT health matters to health policy deliberations about public health. Below,

I address how human rights are defined, how particular discourses of human rights are deployed and the social practices they engender. The representatives of NGO discourse in this study emphasize human rights as part of their aims and mission statements. Although human rights discourses have been used as counter-discourses to call attention to ill treatment in marginalized communities, "rights-based" approaches to community development, mainly utilized by NGOs, have been critiqued. For example, human rights discourse has become an overgeneralized and overused concept and one that is not always applied in contextually relevant ways. Framed within discourses of empowerment and legality, human rights-based approaches to social change have emphasized "a one size fits all" human attribute without consideration to the various cultural norms and multiple enactments of agency that can frame notions of rights and development. Harris-Curtis, Marleyn, and Bakewell (1999) argued

The mantle of rights-based approaches is spread widely across the development arena, covering organizations, programming and the notion of development itself. [We argue that] there is no one rights-based approach that can be taken up as a package within development NGOs. Instead, there are wide varieties of interpretations and associated practices. While many people are talking about rights-based approaches, it is always difficult to establish how far they are discussing the same things. There is still the danger that the notion of rights-based approaches could come to mean all things to all people: a loose and ill-defined idea, which everyone can adopt as they can interpret it to fit their own interests.

Below, in the CFCR discourse, human rights are described with a cognition base; as knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of being human.

Human Rights – to create human rights awareness among Ghanaian young people and marginalized populations in schools, villages, and communities, as enshrined in the Constitution of Ghana.

Their definition of human rights emanates from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The web page of CFCR explains:

Human rights are those rights which everyone should have, simply because they are human. All of us are entitled to human rights regardless of [what] makes us

different. Everyone can claim human rights, despite your sex, skin color, language, religion, social capital, immigration status or any other differences.

Although the use of human rights by CFCR serves to justify an important goal to harness health resources and provide resources to individuals, this form of human rights is not beneficial to queer Ghanaian men. Human rights are constituted as “self-awareness” of one’s immutable right to live and be free. This form of “human rights” is channeled as knowledge about Ghana’s Constitution that guarantees the right to life and freedom of association; however, these rights do not apply when one is queer. This form of human rights enables the NGOs to situate their missions and aims in the broader discourse of UN Declarations of Human Rights without directly showing what rights are being addressed in their programs (safety, access to health care, being paid a wage, etc.) or how they will ensure these rights are honored. Miller (2010) asserted that “rights-based” discourses can be both enabling and constraining which can lead to ideological promiscuity of rights talk. In this vein, NGOs can appear liberal by promoting the broad umbrella concept of human rights in their discourse.

A similar broad view of human rights is reflected in the interview discourse with officials from NGOs. All the officials of NGOs interviewed described that queer Ghanaian men need to know about their rights and responsibilities. Kwabena from GAF mentioned the following

Our main goal is to combat HIV and institute ways to reduce its effect. Until recently, we have included human rights advocacy as well. We have also put in place training that is supposed to help LGBT people know about their human rights and responsibilities.

The form of human rights discourse espoused by the NGOs in this study emphasizes individual knowledge about human rights. Embedded in these statements are discourses of individualism and self-empowerment. The focus on individuality is problematic as it shifts attention from structural health problems to queer Ghanaian men knowing about their human rights. As well,

rights are linked to responsibilities. In this context, the NGO officials discourse reveals a rational agentic individual capable of making behavioral changes to his sexual behavior.

Overall, the human rights discourses used by NGOs construct a rational individual subject capable of individual choices about sexual behavior or making individual responsible choices. This has led to the increase in research that emphasizes sex as a health problem while downplaying queer desire, intimacy, and pleasure. In this context, queer Ghanaian men are encouraged to use condoms and lubricant when having sex with other men to protect themselves and others from diseases. While this is important, how queer Ghanaian men experience pleasure and sexual freedom is not interrogated. Bailey (2017) wrote that dominant HIV prevention discourses are fraught with normative assumptions about gay men and gay sex. Gay men are viewed as promiscuous and needing sexual management to ensure that the general population (coded as heterosexuals) do not get infected with HIV or STD, as though heterosexuals do not get HIV/STD. In other words, diseases are mapped onto queer bodies which legitimates their regulation. Consequently, queer Ghanaian men's bodies are regulated and managed at multiple institutional levels.

While local Pentecostalist-Charismatic church leaders argue that queer Ghanaian men need conversion therapy, representatives of NGOs argue for queer Ghanaian men to monitor their sexual activities through safe sex. This means that health programs target specific behavioral changes even though such models have been critiqued as insufficient and less than effective (UNAIDS, 1999). Thus, queer Ghanaian men are confronted with regimens of racial, national, gender and sexual normativity simultaneously; and these regimes refract sexual desire and pleasure, thus limiting the possibilities for queer Ghanaian men. The discourse demonstrates

how the ideological and political interests of international institutions and donors can be concealed in overly general and superficial constructs such as human rights for all.

Focus Group Interview Texts with Queer Men

Two themes emerged in the examination of the focus group interview texts with queer men. The first theme addresses accounts of how health workers' discourse positions queer subjects as willfully diseased. The second theme examines how several queer participants described negotiating their intersectional identities in hospital spaces.

Health Practitioner Discourse Positioning Queer Subjects as Willfully Diseased

This theme examines how the subject positioning of queer Ghanaian men by staff in public hospitals contributes to health disparities. Some of the participants mentioned that they were humiliated by hospital staff, nurses, and doctors during a hospital visit. When asked if anyone experienced discrimination at hospitals and health centers, Jonathan a 28-year-old, who is currently unemployed said the following:

I went to the hospital because I had constipation. While there, I was assigned to a female doctor. When I was being checked in, the nurse immediately said, "Why? Do you get fucked in the ass?" I mean why should a nurse by profession say such things in front of everybody? (in public hospitals, patients are checked in at the waiting area). I also had a friend who had piles, and we had to take him to the hospital. Right there, the nurse immediately said, this is a gay guy, those who get fucked in the ass. You will start wearing pampers very soon. Batty boys! So, the people also walking in with him become a victim as well because if my brother is sick and I am taking him to the hospital, and they say things like that, you are all fucked. So, next time, if you have some other disease, you will not go to the hospital, and then you realize you are dying.

Jonathan was positioned as "gay" in the hospital space when he visited to seek help for his medical condition. Being positioned as gay enables some nurses and doctors to humiliate queer Ghanaian men who visit the hospital for minor medical problems. Jonathan's comments point to how some nurses and doctors echo the dominant discourses about same-sex relations as diseased.

Queer Ghanaian men are also positioned as making unhealthy, risky and irresponsible sexual life choices in this discourse. Through references such as "you will start wearing pampers very soon," the nurse's discourse in Jonathan's story, connects queer sex with why Jonathan has constipation. When asked how doctors and nurses guessed if he is gay, Jonathan said that his feminine performance of masculinity "gives him away." Discourses always designate positions for people to occupy as subjects. Jonathan is not only positioned as a patient in a hospital but as a gay patient who makes poor choices and therefore one who can be treated differently from a heterosexual patient.

The positioning of queer men and queer sex as an "aberration" and "diseased" by nurses and hospital staff serves as a health barrier to feminine queer men who become easy targets for nurses and doctors to shame. Jordan is currently unemployed and lives with his family in Accra. He described an incident with a friend while waiting for treatment at a hospital. He concludes that being humiliated at hospitals prevents some feminine queer Ghanaian men from seeking medical help when they are sick.

My friend is very feminine, and one time, he went to the hospital to get treatment. So, the nurse had to check his blood pressure. My friend was having bodily pains so when she touches him, he feels pain, and he will express it. However, the nurse asked him why he was acting like a woman. Now not just that, the nurse also spoke to the other nurses that my friend is gay so while we were waiting to be seen by a doctor, some people will come into office to peek at him, so we left. Because of that, he does not want to go to the hospital.

Feminine queer men are easy targets and more likely to be discriminated against and humiliated at public hospitals. Although his friend was experiencing and expressing his pain, he was positioned as "acting like a woman." This process of subjectification for feminine queer Ghanaian men in public hospitals reduces their sexual agency to make appropriate health choices and access health resources. Furthermore, power relations and the social hierarchy between queer

citizens and heterosexual citizens are normalized in this kind of discourse that acts to produce the subjugation of queer Ghanaian men. Subsequently, public hospitals are unwelcoming spaces for especially feminine queer Ghanaian men.

Being positioned as gay in the hospital also means that queer males' sexual identity is blamed as the reason for contracting HIV. While collecting data for this dissertation, I met an old family friend who is now a nurse in a hospital in Accra. During our conversation, she mentioned that one of my friends is HIV positive because "he will not stop being gay." Out of curiosity, I asked her how she found out about his HIV status. She mentioned he flirts with her to perform heterosexuality when he visits the pharmacy. So, she decided to pull his file to find out why he visits the pharmacy quite often and found out he is HIV positive. What baffled me was her attribution of gay sex as the reason he is HIV positive. I kept quiet and walked away, and only later did I realize that her conduct was completely unethical.

One of the participants shared a story about how nurses react when queer Ghanaian men test positive for HIV. Matthew is an entrepreneur in Accra. He shared the following story about accompanying his friend to the hospital when asked how queer men experience discrimination.

[My friend] and I went to this hospital to get tested. When we got there, it was hell, not even the doctor but the nurse. Once she tested the guy for HIV and it was positive, she started saying things like, "When you get up, you go and lie down to get fucked." It was so embarrassing because she was saying that you should have given yourself to Christ. Then she took a Bible and gave it to the guy. It was hell, and then she went to the extent of not willing to touch the guy. So, I told her, "We don't do that. We are all in the health service, you don't know what your family might go through."

The nurse positions Matthew's friend as unChristian, gay and a sinner. The multiple subjugated positions constrain his ability to access health resources available to HIV-positive individuals in Ghana. In this context options for health care are constrained by how he is positioned by the nurse. Matthew stated that the nurse did not want to touch his friend as if he is infectious or so

low in the social hierarchy to be untouchable. Consequently, gay sex is blamed as the cause of his HIV positive status through statements such as “When you get up, you go lie down and get fucked.” In this context, the agency of queer men to obtain health care is constrained because of how he is positioned. Available resources such as social support and free or subsidized ARV medications, might not be open to HIV-positive queer Ghanaian men. Nonetheless, Mathew did exert agency by speaking up to problematize the nurse’s comments.

When I asked for the end of the story, Matthew mentioned that they just left after being tested. The nurse did not provide any information about how and where to get ARV medications or information about social support groups. At that moment, his friend’s ability to make choices about his health is constrained by hospital staff withholding information and paths to medication that HIV-positive women, for instance, can obtain. This means that some queer Ghanaian men will not regularly get tested for HIV until they are very sick. Dutta (2004) wrote that in addition to being refused health resources, marginalized groups do not get the platform to voice their opposition to oppression. This is evident in how this individual and queer men, in general, are humiliated at hospitals and do not have the subject positioning to protest their discrimination or to effect change. The discursive regimes governing sexual identities and desires materialize through how nurses and doctors in the narratives above position feminine queer men and sometimes treat them as if they are an infectious disease.

Jeff volunteers with two NGOs in Accra. He gave the following response below when asked whether he has experienced discrimination at the hospital.

I think because of our sexuality, most of the LGBT community members are dying because they are not ready to be discriminated against when they attend the hospital. Or they do not want to be stigmatized with such as a name that you are gay. So, they do not regularly access the health care system. Although certain things have been made free for them. But the health workers do not know how to talk, and they will discriminate against queer people.

Jeff's comments point to the importance of exploring discrimination as it affects levels of sexual agency and queer subject positioning and subjectivities in Ghana. He mentioned that although certain medications and programs have been made free for queer men, the men still do not take advantage of the programs because of how they are positioned in public hospitals. This shows another example that the ability to enact queer identity in hospitals is especially difficult and depends on more than the provision of free programs and medications. Jeff's comments also point to the effects of the hegemony of religious discourse, criminalization, and biopolitical governance, facilitated by the proliferation of safer sex campaigns, and more generally, by the new public health with its emphasis on risk management.

Utilizing Strategic Subjectivities to Enact Restricted Sexual Agency

Queer Ghanaian men spoke of how they were able to negotiate their subjectivities and thus, subject positions at hospitals. Tyson is an entrepreneur in Accra. When asked how he identifies himself, he mentioned that sometimes at hospitals he identifies as bisexual when asked about his sexual orientation.

Tyson: For instance, going to the hospital, and they ask me of my gender, I say I am bisexual. Researcher: "Is there a reason why you might say I am bisexual or not in specific places?" Tyson: The reason is that when you get there, they already know who you are [queer male]. So, you do not have to hide your identity. You just have to tell them that this is who you are.

Tyson asserted that his feminine queer performance positions him as gay at government hospitals. To minimize the discursive effects of this subject positioning he tells the doctors and nurses he is bisexual when questioned about his sexual orientation. Identifying as bisexual in this context is an exercise of limited agency in a space where dominant discourses about same-sex desires and relations have already positioned him as a sexual deviant. However, being bisexual is still not acceptable in the context of broader social norms and given socio-political and socio-

cultural understanding of gender and sexuality in Ghana. This means identifying as bisexual in the hospital space is rather a survival strategy to get healthcare. In this process, Tyson is also “queering” the fixed LGBT identities ascribed to him in the hospital space by (dis)identifying as bisexual. Although bisexuality is still not accepted in the Ghanaian cultural context, he strategically identifies as bisexual in the hospital space to receive healthcare.

During the focus group interviews, I asked the participants how they identified themselves. Few of them identified as bisexual because they have a girlfriend and boyfriend. However, none of the participants referred to themselves or others as gay or bisexual during conversations, rather, they called themselves *sassu*, a local term for identifying queers. *Sassu* does not mean one is gay or bisexual but emphasizes the ambiguities of gender and sexuality. Yet, Tyson cannot say he is *sassu* at the hospital. Tyson’s identification as bisexual at the hospital shows the negotiation of his local queer identity and globalized LGBT identity politics. In this context, bisexuality is a negotiation of being ambiguously *queer*. Thus, although identifying as bisexual enables him to access important resources through the NGOs and health centers, queer Ghanaian men resist such identity categories by identifying themselves as *sassu*.

Other participants who go to private hospitals also mentioned how they identified as bisexual to negotiate their subject position as gay. Johan is employed and also volunteers with a non-profit organization. The conversation below ensued when asked about discrimination at hospitals.

Johan: I went somewhere to get treatment, and the doctor asked me, “What’s wrong?” And I said I have not been feeling well these days. Then she asked me if I have been sexually active, I said, yes. Then she asked, “What’s your role in sex?” I had to deny saying I am gay to I am bisexual. Researcher: “Did you think if you said bisexual, it lessens the judgment?” Johan: “Yes, because she will not know if I got the infection from a girl or guy. Then she said, “Take very good care of yourself and when you go home, tell your mom this and this and that.” Then I said, “I am not ready to tell my mom anything.” Then she said, “You have

been doing something that your mom has been warning you about it.” I was very surprised to hear this from a doctor so when I left, I called a colleague, and I told him, and he said he would prefer not to see her when he visits the hospital

Johan noted that the doctor asked him about his sex role because the doctor had already positioned him as gay. To avoid being preached to or asked to stop being gay, he says he is bisexual. When asked if avowing bisexuality lessens the judgments on LGBT identities, he gave a strong yes. Although identifying as bisexual can lessen the discrimination and name calling described above, it also feeds into conservative ideologies of “homosexuality” as a choice, the possibility that the person can choose to be heterosexual exclusively, and religious ideologies about the need to procreate.

Johan’s contextual identification as bisexual is not a simple mimesis. As Sedgwick (1990) exclaims, identifying with a political ideology, lifestyle, object, person, history and religious orientation also means simultaneously and partially counter-identifying against it. For example, identifying as bisexual (using a Western acronym for defining sexual identity) in the structural context of hospitals is a way for some of the participants to resist the global discourses of queerness (GLBTQI) while simultaneously negotiating their subject positions at hospitals. This points to what Munoz calls disidentifications where minoritarian subjects work “with/resist the conditions of (im)possibility that the dominant culture generates” (Munoz, 1999, p.6) for queer men in Ghana.

Other participants explained that they identify as gay and bisexual in some settings but not at hospitals because they do not want to face humiliation and discrimination. Brad is a student at a university in Ghana.

I just can’t go to the hospital and then when they ask me what I am, say I am gay or bisexual. You know we live in an area where few people accept gay people,

and I will get a weird look when I say that. So yea, I don't say I am gay or bisexual, I say I am straight.

Kyle is currently employed with a manufacturing company in Ghana and said the following

One time, I think I had gonorrhoea, and I was scared of going to the hospital because I felt they will find out I am gay. But it got worse. So, I went to the drug store, and I told them, I had sex with a girl and this is coming. Mostly I twist the story. So, they gave me the medicine.

Brad and Kyle's comments show the strategies used in identity negotiation (Hall 2012). His statement demonstrates how cultural groups use varied strategies to negotiate their identities within the subject positions and levels of stigma accompanying them. Depending on how the participants are positioned, they use different identification strategies and accompanying identity performances to navigate their queerness.

Besides identifying as bisexual or straight, other participants spoke of personal self-transformative strategies. Benjamin owns his own business and also volunteers at an NGO in Accra. He described various personal behavioral changes that he has used to avoid discrimination at hospitals and health centers. He said the following when I asked about discrimination at hospitals.

So, I got myself attached to a non-profit organization and all the time we learn. There is this thing called behavioral change. How you take care of yourself, how you walk about and do all sorts of things. For instance, as we were saying, when you wake up in the morning and dress up all girlish and go to the hospital, even if you have all the money and that person does not like gays, the doctor can choose to not take care of you. But if you carry yourself as a normal gentleman and you walk to the clinic and do what you are supposed to do, you will be taken good care of. So, that has helped me lot. With all the information, I carry myself properly. I know they will say you can do anything you want, but I want to be a gentleman outside and do anything I want inside.

The use of the word "normal" shows the standard of heteronormativity that some queer men are taught by some of the NGOs to embody. Benjamin mentioned how he has avoided discrimination by "taking care of himself." His explanation of "taking care of himself" is also

about not “acting girlish” but walking like a “normal” gentleman.” Hence, embodied heterosexuality through ways of talking and walking is positioned as the standard that queer males need to strive for if they want to avoid discrimination. This means, the queers who do not present as heterosexual can be blamed for not making normative choices, and it becomes their responsibility when they experience discrimination at hospitals because they did not act “normal.” As mentioned by participants earlier, trying to adapt their behavior is not always successful. Some of the doctors already assumed they were gay. This shows that although some bodies can pass as heterosexual based on specific bodily performances, others are not read the same way even if they wear similar clothes and walk “like a man.”

Thus, the self-policing and sexual management of queer Ghanaian men have clouded the issue of liberal freedom, particularly, sexual freedom in “third world” countries. While LGBT visibility politics utilize sexual freedom to seek for decriminalization of sexuality, there is also an anticipation of a particular kind of LGBT identity which queers around the world are expected to follow.

What these discourses accomplish is the construction of a social status hierarchy of acceptability and queer normativity based on identity performances of heterosexuality. Lisa Duggan (2002), wrote that the new homonormativity is a kind of "politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a depoliticized gay culture" (p. 179). Thus, the performance of heterosexuality by queer Ghanaian subjects to appear "normal" reproduces a socially (in)visible queer subject, which also feeds into ideologies of the queer African being non-existent because queers are "Western."

Benjamin's statement can also be read as a way he resists the social scripts on his body. He mentions, "I want to be a gentleman outside and do anything I want inside." This shows an enactment of agency through different situated performances of his identity in public and private spheres. It is also possible that "acting straight" is a process for him to enact relative agency within the public sphere while simultaneously resisting heteronormativity in the private sphere (Munoz, 1999).

Intersectional locations of class also influenced the performances and negotiations of identity. Don works at a well-known organization in Ghana, and when asked how he avoids discrimination at hospitals, he says that he will just go to a private hospital.

I think it depends on the kind of hospital you go to. I have decided to go to only private hospitals because I do not want to be treated badly. If you talk to me badly, I will talk to you harshly.

In Don's statement, patriarchy, neoliberalism and class normativity intersect, which produces a particular queer subject in the global economy. Don's intersectional identities as male and working in a higher status position with middle-class salary influence his enactment of sexual agency in hospitals. In the neoliberal economy, Don is taking personal responsibility for his identity by making appropriate choices about which hospital to go to and which health care to access. However, what is missing in his remarks is recognition of the structural privileges supporting Don's enactment of sexual agency. Private hospitals partner with specific organizations such as banks, embassies, and corporations to provide healthcare to their employees. This means that queer Ghanaian men who attend these hospitals might be positioned as queer and in a higher-class status. In a patriarchal society like Ghana, queer men with higher-class status reap specific social benefits as they have satisfied a fundamental requirement of a

heteropatriarchal society, which is that the man should be financially stable in order to take care of his wife and children. Don's intersectional locations create a different queer subject in the private hospital space. He also said that he could speak back if he feels he is being discriminated against. Thus, the corporatization of hospitals in Ghana is also creating different queer subjects who become consumers with economic resources. These subjects are treated differently than those in public hospitals where queer patients are positioned as diseased because of their own poor choices and as a burden on the constraining government health resources.

Summary and Conclusions

Each section of this chapter explored themes that emerged from analyzing three different genres of texts selected for this study, online news media reports, interviews with officials of NGOs, and interviews with queer Ghanaian men. Online news media texts emphasized how representatives of institutions such as Pentecostalist-Charismatic leaders construct the queer subject as pathological, unnatural and “homosexuality” as a psychological disease using biological discourses of “nature” and “natural.” Online news media texts also revealed how human rights are co-opted as Western imperialism by Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic leaders. Religious discourses about same-sex desires and intimacies are amplified by online news media reports that give institutional legitimacy to these discourses. As a result, the subject positions ascribed to queer Ghanaian men in institutional discourses structure the relationships between queer men and health practitioners, and between queer men and health care institutions and practices. Thus, when queer men visit hospitals, they are humiliated and shamed for making wrong individual choices about their sexual health and are positioned as diseased and

pathological. Together, these two themes show how queer men are positioned in public discourse related to health as it is constituted by online news media.

The second section explored how interview texts with officials of non-profit organizations construct the queer subject within the context of health disparities. Two themes emerged. The first theme examined how contextual factors such as the economic conditions in Ghana and media sensationalism about queers affect the health support programs of NGOs. The second theme explored how human rights discourse has become an overgeneralized and overused concept and one that is not always applied in a contextually relevant manner. These two themes show how NGOs adopt goals and aims of international development organizations while attempting to navigate contextual structures such as religious and media institutional discourses, and economic constraints.

The third section of this chapter explored themes from the analysis of interview texts with queer Ghanaian men. The first theme examined how queer men are positioned as willfully diseased by doctors and nurses in government hospitals. These subject positions affect treatment by staff and queer men's access to important medications and information about their health. The second theme showed how queer men utilize different identification strategies to enact levels of restricted agency in hospitals. The two themes in this section showed how queer men utilize multiple identity locations and identity performances to navigate their subject positions in hospitals. It is also evident that intersectional locations of queer men affect how they enact agency in both public and private health centers in Ghana. Together, the themes in this chapter showed the interconnectedness of subject positions, structural and institutional discourses, and queer men's subjectivities. These themes also illuminated how queer Ghanaian men exercise levels of sexual agency.

Overall, the examination of subject positions and subjectivities of queer men in Ghana revealed how discrimination against queer men in hospitals is sustained and reproduced and how such discrimination reinforces a broader social order. This study shows that queer men face various forms of discrimination in hospitals that create health disparities. For example, some queer men are denied access to medications, systematically ostracized, shamed by nurses, and are made to wait for prolonged periods to be seen. Some queer men are also blamed for making poor life choices about their health. As a result, many queer men do not visit hospitals when they are sick.

Since moving to the United States, four of my friends have died of AIDS-related illnesses. This should not be the case given the availability of health resources provided to women who are HIV-positive in Ghana. For example, when I visited Ghana in 2015, I learned of my friend's death two months earlier. Michael was a graduate of the University of Ghana, and before his death owned his own business. When I asked how he died, Isaac told me Michael knew he was HIV positive but would not go to the hospital to be seen by a doctor regularly. Isaac claimed that the reason Michael was reluctant to visit hospitals was that he was humiliated by a nurse when he (Isaac) took him to the hospital to be seen by a doctor for malaria and got tested for HIV. He concluded that even though Michael could afford ARV drugs, he did not want to go to the hospital to be checked regularly. Michael died in his apartment in Accra.

Although funding for HIV and STD prevention has been made available to the NGO, to enable queer Ghanaian men to get tested regularly, some men do not take advantage of those services. Thus, it is essential to emphasize the relations between macro structural and institutional forces, meso subject positioning of groups such as queer men, and micro contextual factors such as comments and withheld information from nurses and doctors, that produce and

sustain discrimination against queer men. Additionally, the ways that queer men exercise agency is important to acknowledge. Queer men might be resisting the resources from the NGOs because of the restrictions and limitations their programs place on their erotic autonomy.

Reproductive health and sexual rights have become the site of the battle between the pervasive moralist and religious agents and those who battle for a human rights approach to public health. Religious leaders such as Pentecostalist church leaders have co-opted and contested human rights discourses by arguing that same-sex desire is a risky individual choice with consequences for the queer men and those around them. They also argue that individuals making such wrong choices should not receive state resources. These discourses reveal wider beliefs about heteronormativity through the centering of procreation in human rights discussions. Religious ideologies about sexuality privilege procreation as a biological process related to religion and marriage that needs protection. Given that Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic leaders discourses have strong political influence in Ghana, their arguments against same-sex desires and intimacies attract media attention, which then, get reported as widely held beliefs in the Ghanaian community. In this context, policy makers can then restrict research as well as resources to programs that are framed as encouraging healthy choices but acting to reproduce heteronormativity. In this context, nurses and doctors shame queer men in hospitals based on the widely shared belief that queer sex is unnatural, a choice or preference that can be changed.

Using procreation as the ideological premise to deny queer men's access to health resources is consistent with U.S Christian right ideologies of the family. Kaoma (2012) wrote that due to their declining popularity in the U.S, Christian conservatives have found a growing acceptance of their ideologies in African countries. With emphasis on abstinence-only education, faithfulness within heterosexual marriage, and anti-abortion, groups such as Family Watch

International have lobbied African governments and traditional African churches to adopt U.S conservative right ideologies. These efforts and discourse are nonetheless discounted, and framed by African journalists as advocating for progressive “U.S family lifestyles” (Kaoma, 2012). Their efforts have produced widely held views about same-sex desires, such as homosexuality is being pushed on Africans by progressives in the West. Coupled with discourses that center the individual as responsible for making wrong health choices, these discourses work together to reinforce that the state should not be held accountable for protecting the rights of queer men.

Although human rights discourse could be an influential counter discourse to the individualism discourse about individuals choosing their sexuality and choosing to be unhealthy, human rights discourse has become superficial in how it is applied. Human rights discourse is talked about by officials of NGOs without an explanation of what human rights means. The only definitions provided are overly general quotations from broader international declarations. Interviews with representatives of non-profit organizations also reproduced neoliberal discourses of individualism and liberalism. In this context, queer Ghanaian men need to be saved from Africa’s innate homophobia and also get in line with homonormative ideals within LGBTI visibility politics. Based on European Enlightenment thinking, discourses of individualism are implicated in neoliberal ideologies of self-empowerment and behavioral change. This also means that the individual is positioned as a rational, agentic subject capable of making right and wrong choices about sexual health without attention to contextual factors that clearly enable and constrain individual choices.

Nonetheless, the biopolitics of HIV/AIDS epidemic from the 1980’s has pushed those with liberal ideologies to re-assess the limitations of sexual freedom. In this context, queer

Ghanaian men's sexualities are being micro-managed through the rhetoric of safe-sex. Queer men are being told to suppress their sexual desire and pleasure for the sake of public (heterosexual) health and safety. Within these institutional limitations however, that narratives of queer Ghanaian men showed that they are still finding ways to engage in sexual pleasure.

Ideological fields such as those described above become widely circulating and impact levels of agency. Here, agency is the ability for individuals and collectives to gain access to health resources within the context of hospitals. Agency is situated in social relations and relative positions that are implicated in ideologies (Collier & Lawless, 2014) such as heteronormativity, Christianity, neoliberalism, and Individualism. Several interviewees outlined how their contextually contingent subject positions constrained their sexual agency and ability to seek adequate healthcare. Their agency became evident in the interstices between contextual structural productions, subject positions and their enacted subjectivities.

Within the context of this study, institutional and structural positioning of queer Ghanaian men as pathological and diseased affect relations between queer men and doctors and nurses, which then constrain their ability to enact their sexual identities and speak freely about their illnesses in public hospitals and to obtain needed treatment. Public discourse positioning same-sex desires as diseased, and queer sex as the cause of illnesses, contribute to wider beliefs about individualism and presumptions about everyone's ability to make right choices about sexuality and sexual health. The discourses revealed a presumption that individuals are fully agentic and capable of changing their sexual orientation through religious counseling and therapies.

The approach to human rights espoused by the representatives of NGOs is based on liberal ideology of a rational agentic individual consistent with organizational ideologies of

international development agencies. Some international agencies sponsor representatives of local NGOs in Ghana to travel to the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada to learn about Western approaches to human rights and social justice from trainers who have little information about the context of many African countries. The form of liberalism learned is akin to what Bonilla-Silva (2010) terms as abstract liberalism. There is a presumption that equal opportunities are available to queer men as for anyone seeking healthcare. This mythical neutral claim of liberalism reproduces the voices of Western white heterosexual males whose notions of reason work to silence others (Eng, 2010). Eng (2010) critiqued this unnamed voice of reason that encapsulates transnational queer politics. He noted how colorblindness functions to silence the voices of queers of color. This refusal to see difference, to acknowledge multiple "queer subjectivities" shows how the politics of colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2010; Eng, 2010) is evidenced in this transnational setting. The absence of problematizing difference acts to marginalize the experiences of queer men who do not have the socio-economic status and gender performance to navigate discrimination.

In summary, these themes constituting how queer men are positioned in public texts show that dominant discourses about same-sex desires and intimacies in online news media subjugate queer identity and constrain queer men's access to health resources. Themes from representatives of NGOs show that they are embodying the ideological and political interests of international organizations with assumptions about queer Ghanaian agency. Notions of human rights as self-awareness and individual self-empowerment assume an agentic individual who is capable of making appropriate individual choices by engaging in safe-sex. What is downplayed is how structures influence queer sexual attitudes and behaviors towards sex. Texts of interviews with queer men highlight the consistent negotiation of sexual identity in particular contexts to enact

restricted sexual agency. The varied strategies used by queer men to negotiate their subject positions demonstrate a “survival strategy that is essential for queer and postcolonial subjects who are subject to the violence that institutional structures reproduce” (Munoz, 1999, p.84).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Queer Ghanaian men face various forms of discrimination in schools, by families, workplaces, and health centers. Violence such as beatings, blackmail, workplace and health discrimination are a few of the different forms of violence that some queer Ghanaian men experience. Queer men also experience a lack of access to health resources. Ghana government funding for health projects and vulnerable populations do not include queer men since same-sex desires and relations remain criminalized in Ghana. Furthermore, the treatment of queer men by hospital officials represents a health barrier to queer men's access to adequate health resources. Feminine queer men especially are humiliated and embarrassed by nurses and doctors when they visit hospitals. They are chastised for making wrong choices about their sexual health and blamed for contracting HIV. As a result, some men do not visit hospitals when they are sick. These experiences have led to the increase in health disparities experienced by queer men.

The first objective of this study was to examine the subject positions of Ghanaian queer men in selected online news media reports during the period of 2014 to 2016. I analyzed online news media reports about same-sex relations and issues related to the LGBT community in both state-owned and privately owned news organizations. Second, I examined how representatives of three NGOs construct the Ghanaian "queer" subject in their discourse about LGBT rights. Third, I analyzed how interview texts with queer Ghanaian men demonstrate their subjectivities and relations with others. I also attended to what the discourses accomplish related to contested subject positions, relations between subjects and institutions, and ideological tensions that frame the queer Ghanaian subject. Below, I synthesize findings based on the research questions. I then

outline theoretical and methodological contributions. Lastly, I present limitations and applications.

There are various kinds of discrimination that queer men experience. However, violence and lack of access to health resources emerged as dominant in the texts. These two main barriers constitute obstacles to queer men's agency in Ghana. It became evident that power relations, history, and social construction mediate the production of knowledge about queer Ghanaian men. The imbalanced mediation of knowledge about queer men contributes to the production of specific subject positions and material conditions.

Enabling or ignoring violence against queer men emerged as an overarching theme throughout the various texts. Violence in the context of this research included blackmail, mob action, workplace discrimination and discursive subjugation. In most cases, journalistic discourse constructed the violence against queer men as justified through the absence of a critique of gay bashing in relation to a story about gay bashing. Violence against queer Ghanaian men is largely left unquestioned. For instance, in a gay bashing incident which gained public attention because of the popularity of the victim, violence against queers was not included in the discourse. This case was reported as armed robbery against a heterosexual individual. The misrecognition of violence against queer Ghanaian men downplays the gravity of violence which queer men experience. This particular case also reinforced the notion that citizenship rights are tied to heteronormativity, and state protection is guaranteed if one's heterosexuality is unquestioned. Thus, even when violence against queer men enters public discourse about same-sex sexual relations, it is not interrogated, or the story is framed as a robbery against a higher class presumably heterosexual individual.

In addition to violence, inaccess to health resources was also apparent across the texts. Queer Ghanaian men are shamed and humiliated by doctors and nurses when they visit hospitals for treatment. This represents a health barrier to queer men's access to essential health resources which should be available to every Ghanaian citizen. Discourses from online news media showed that queer men were positioned as a threat to public health because queer sex is constructed as risky sex. So restricting government funding for queer health was justified as within the national interest. In this context, queer discrimination is framed as a not a violation of human rights but protecting the public from unhealthy people.

Central to this research is the examination of the relations between subject positions and subjectivities, and how these relations impact social interactions and constrain levels of agency within institutions, organizations, and social circumstances. In what follows, I analyze queer subject positions in relation to subjectivities and examine the particular ideological frames used to locate queer men in Ghana in relation to others. These relations are evidenced in online news media reports, interview discourse of NGOs and interview discourse of queer Ghanaian men. Together, these themes show how heteronormativity and the neoliberal transnational movement of queer politics and national interests converge to create particular subjects and subjectivities.

The first research question examined the discourses related to subject positioning of queer men and queer subjugation in public online news media. I analyzed how queer men and same-sex sexual relations are constituted in online newspaper reports. In order to answer this research question, I analyzed texts from six news organizations: This include three print newspapers with online reports: The *Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, and *Daily Guide*. The first two are state-owned, and the *Daily Guide* is a privately-owned newspaper. I included three radio

stations with online news portals: *Myjoyonline.com*, *Citifmonline.com*, and *Peacefmonline.com*. All radio stations analyzed in this study are privately-owned.

The second research question examined how queer men are constituted in interviews with NGO officials and queer men. I interviewed six representatives of three organizations; Ghana AIDS Foundation (GAF), Center for Citizen Rights (CFCR) and Ghana Human Rights Organization (GHRO) and 21 queer identified men in focus groups. Below, I synthesize my results by discussing each form of text I analyzed, public online media texts, interviews with NGO officials and interviews with queer men. I put texts about violence and health care barriers in conversation with each other to show how their interdiscursive influence limit the agency of queer men in Ghana and reinforce a social order or heteronormativity.

Discursive Themes

Online Media

Institutional Voices Demonizing Queers. Structural agents such as religious and political leaders drive the regulation and the construction of discursive boundaries around discussion of same-sex sexual relations, homosexuality, LGBT rights and human rights in Ghana. Criminalization of same-sex desires and rejection of human rights policies about reproductive choices for women in many parts of Ghana and Africa have been spearheaded by religious organizations in Africa and the United States (Ahlberg & Kulane, 2011). In the Ghanaian context, Pentecostalist- Charismatic church discourses about queer men are dominant in public texts about queer men. Analysis of online news media reports revealed that Pentecostalist church leaders position queer men as an abomination, devils, demons and unchristian. For instance, Rev. George Abaidoo was reported as saying that Ghanaian churches will resist any attempt to legalize “homosexuality.” In another story, an Imam was quoted saying

that queer Ghanaian men are an abomination and dirty. These statements construct queer men as unreligious and immoral in relation to Christians and Muslims. What is problematic about these comments is that they are mostly reported without journalistic interrogation. For instance, some of the priests were reported saying that “gay marriage” could destroy the economy of Ghana. Such comments were reported without alternative views and any critical interrogation. Although accepted in Ghana, this message is not acceptable in all African countries. When a Ghanaian pastor was invited to preach in a church in South Africa in January 2017, Dag Heward-Mills of Lighthouse Chapel International was reprimanded by the South African media for promoting hatred when he preached against queer men in a church in Soweto. Some of the church members recorded his sermon and posted it on social media. There were calls by human rights groups to ban the Ghanaian Pastor from ever returning to South Africa.

Ghanaian presidents, legislators, police officers and government officials’ statements and comments about same-sex desires and relations also factor into the structural and institutional voices demonizing queers. In response to Hilary Clinton’s comments that queer rights are human rights, religious leaders pressured the former president of Ghana to make a public announcement that he will not decriminalize “homosexuality” because it is against “Ghanaian culture.” These comments demonize queers and construct them as unchristian, immoral and unAfrican in relation to norms of heteronormativity, morality, and Africanness. In this vein, Pentecostalist church discourse merges with national belonging to articulate a queer subject who is outside the circuits of state protection. By positioning same-sex desires as an abomination already condemned by God, any violence which queer men experience can be legitimized as saving the country from people who want to destroy morality and the nation.

Complicating Gay Bashing through Intersectionality. Intersectional subject positioning influences how violence is reported to the Ghanaian public. Gay bashing incidents hardly enter public discourse about queer men. However, on February 19th, 2015, the bloody images of Albert Appiah, a famous music producer and event organizer in Ghana surfaced on YouTube and was shared on WhatsApp. An analysis of the online news media reports from both state-owned and private media organizations revealed the intersectional subject positioning of Albert Appiah as a heterosexual, middle-class entrepreneur who is “accused” of being “homosexual” and robbed. First, the constituting of this specific gay bashing incident as a robbery disregards the increasing violence that queer Ghanaian men experience by vigilante groups. By not addressing this case as a hate crime, conditions and social norms which sustain violence against queer men are not questioned. Intersectional structural barriers such as criminality of same-sex relations and ideological effects of heteronormativity are ignored. The need to survive and fulfill a sexual desire can force some queer men to meet in secluded spaces such as in their cars or in “unsafe” places. However, what drives queer Ghanaian men to have to engage in risky practices to fulfill their sexual desires is not mentioned in the report. Second, the emphasis on his implied heterosexuality constructs the ideal citizen who can receive state protection when s/he experiences violence. Online news media reports of the gay bashing of Albert Appiah offered an important source of influence in which news organizations, Pentecostalist-Charismatic church leaders and political leaders could have critiqued the violence that queer men experience. Instead the reports enabled it to continue.

In doing so, the social norms that created the conditions for assailants to seize Albert Appiah on suspicion of his “homosexuality” are left largely unquestioned and un-interrogated. Discourses that sustain blackmail and mob action against queer Ghanaian men are rather

reinforced because of how Albert Appiah is constructed as heterosexual, middle class and an entrepreneur in relation to the robbers who are represented as criminal and intolerant.

Queer sex as Risky and Contributing to STDs. Online news media from both state-owned and privately owned organizations positioned same-sex sexual desires and pleasure as an addiction, pathological, and inherently diseased. Pleasure from queer sex was positioned as an addiction which leads to social crimes such as pedophilia. For example, a report from *Myjoyonline.com* narrated the story of a gay man whose story begins from when he was sexually abused as a child to his subsequent abuse of a young man and being sent to jail. This narrative feeds into conservative/traditional views of same-sex desires as a learned behavior and also same-sex sexual pleasure as addiction. Editorials in state-owned online news media positioned queer sex as risky and contributing to the rise of STDs. For instance, Sydney Abugri argued that queer sex is unnatural and those who engage in it need psychological re-orientation. He employed natural and nature discourses in his support for his assertion that queer sex is an abhorrent in human nature. The introduction of biological discourses of natural and nature reduces queer men to a singular, over-generalized sexual subject. Furthermore, nature and natural discourses are persuasive in Ghana because they reproduce creationist ideologies in Christian theology. In this discourse, queer men are perceived as acting against God's natural order. Some editorials in the *Daily Graphic* positioned queer Ghanaian men as innately promiscuous which leads to higher rates of infectious diseases. This discourse situates queer sex as unhealthy as an unhealthy practice which brings diseases to the nation.

Human Rights Discourses as Co-opted and Contested. Queer rights as linked to human rights is positioned in online new media as a neo-colonial infiltration. The statement from former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair to cut funding to African countries that persecute

LGBT individuals has not only been condemned but also used by African religious and political leaders as evidence that LGBT rights is another imperialistic instrument of oppression from the West to Africa. For instance, an editorial in *Myjoyonline.com* contended that a \$918 million-dollar loan that Ghana is receiving from the International Monetary Fund had stipulations that Ghana should institute gay marriage. Although the assertion that Ghana should institute gay marriage after receiving the loan is false, it was still reported by *Myjoyonline.com*. Such sensationalist stories reproduce the discourse propagated by U.S religious right, African Pentecostalist-Charismatic church leaders and political leaders that Ghana must resist being forced to accept LGBT rights as human rights. Thus, discussions of combating queer discrimination as linked to human rights is contested because same-sex desires and relations are rationalized as an individual choice about sexuality.

Queer men facing inaccess to health services were positioned as making poor individual choices about their sexual health. For instance, some editorials positioned queer sex as risky sex and without pleasure. By removing pleasure and desire from queer sex, readers of these public texts who are typically Christian and educated interpret queer sex as self-injury. The lack of understanding that queer sex can be pleasurable feeds into the conservative Christian understanding of desire and pleasure as permissible only in marriage between people of the opposite sex. The reduction of the humanity of queer Ghanaian men to abnormal queer sex also essentializes same-sex desires and centers the discussion of the criminality of same-sex sexual relations as protecting society from diseases.

In summary, these themes constituting how queer men are positioned in public texts show that dominant discourses about same-sex desires and sexual relations in online news media subjugate queer identity and constrain queer men's access to resources. It also becomes evident

that religious institutional discourses about “homosexuality” are the dominant discourses framing queer discrimination. In his vein, anti-queer statements from religious leaders reported by online news media circulate widely because of the predominance of Pentecostalist- Charismatic Christianity in Ghana. Notions of religious morality and Africanness pervade the discussions about same-sex sexual relations leaving little room for opposing views from human rights activists. In fact, between 2014 to 2016 there were no editorials or news reports arguing for LGBT rights. This is problematic as Pentecostalist-Charismatic leaders are hardly interrogated about their anti-queer views. Even when some editorials attempted to point out argumentative fallacies in the religious discourse on same-sex sexual relations, these texts begin with statements that the writers are not atheists and do not oppose queer criminalization.

The subject positions and representations of same-sex desires and pleasures described above constrain queer men’s abilities to avoid violence and discrimination at hospitals. Given the structures of religion, norms of heteronormativity and criminality, police officers who are assigned to cases of blackmail or mob action might not file charges against the perpetrators. Furthermore, nurses and doctors who humiliate and shame queer men for making wrong choices about their health are not held accountable for the impact of their actions. The positioning of queer men by structures and institutions such as religion, politics and strong social norms that create conditions that enable violence and queer discrimination at hospitals. Subsequently, discourses from religious leaders become institutionalized ways of speaking about queer rights in Ghana that then reflect in the language of other genres of journalism about same-sex sexual relations and LGBT visibility politics. Therefore, analyzing production and consumption of online news media showed how these discourses constituting queer Ghanaian men become part of the social order around same-sex desires outside of acceptability.

NGO Officials' Texts

NGOs are Positioned as Saviors. Representatives of NGO discourse constructed queer men as inagentic and dependent on the NGOs. The representatives described their NGO goals as critiquing the marginalization and silencing of queers, and enabling voices to be reclaimed, but there is no description of how their programs will accomplish these goals. By not addressing the current context, and structural and institutional limitations in detail, the representatives of NGOs in this study positioned themselves as saviors in relation to queer Ghanaian men. Such discourses contribute to a paternalistic relationship between the NGOs and queer men. For instance, after speaking about how their programs are community-based, one of the representatives stated that they “teach” queer men how to avoid violence and blackmail. This discourse positioned queer men as having no localized knowledge constructed through the persistent navigation of violence from police and mob action from citizens and everyday discrimination. This discourse constructs the knowledge from the NGOs as superior while downplaying knowledge from queer men.

Empowerment Discourse Constrains and Enables Agency. This theme examined the discourses of empowerment utilized by the representatives of NGOs as a remedy to violence and queer discrimination. All the officials of NGOs interviewed in this study described the importance of empowerment of queer men through human rights education. The use of this empowerment discourse also includes advocating that queer men are responsible for educating others who hold anti-queer views. How queer men were positioned in these kinds of discourses of empowerment is problematic as the discourse reduces institutional problems to the level of the individual. This discourse of empowerment is also evident in one of the NGO training programs where queer men are taught how to avoid violence. Such programs emphasize behavioral changes such as talking differently, dressing like a “man” and better assessing security risks

when meeting someone for the first time through the internet. While addressing security in the context of violence is justified, the focus on the body alone shifts attention from institutional discrimination and social norms condoning violence to queer men's specific behaviors. The shift positions queer men as solely accountable for experiencing physical violence and discrimination at the workplace because of what they are wearing or how they walk.

Acknowledging the Contextual Challenges. NGO officials recognized that the economic conditions of the country and lack of government support, both financially and socially, also affect health access for queer men. Discourse from the interview texts described how economic conditions in the country disproportionately affect queer men. For instance, some queer men who have been given free access to health centers and medication still need money for transportation and also sustainable income. This economic context impacts the work of NGOs because apart from providing basic health services to queer men, they also have to provide funds for them to take advantage of the services.

Besides the economic conditions, some of the representatives also spoke about the effects of sensationalization of queer stories in public media. Some of the representatives noted that media reports about queer men create barriers to their programs. Newspaper stories about queer lynching and announcements by "gay killers" on radio stations create fear among the queer community in Ghana which discourages queer men from visiting health clinics or hospitals. In this discursive and material context, some queer men do not reach out to the NGOs for help when they need medications because of the potential for violence. The sensationalization of queer stories by some media institutions also halts on-going discussions of policies and programs until the story dies out. Another problem

which officials mentioned is the lack of national government funding. The lack of government funding for programs specific to queer men is legitimated by the political context and government position on the criminalization of same-sex desires. These contexts represent recognized barriers to NGO work in Ghana.

Human Rights Discourse as Steeped in Superficial Morality and Individual

Awareness. This theme explored how the approach to human rights has become an overgeneralized and overused concept and one that is not always applied in contextually relevant ways. Human rights are constituted as “self-awareness” of one’s immutable right to live and be free. This form of “human rights” is channeled as knowledge about Ghana’s Constitution which guarantees the right to life and freedom of association. However, these rights do not apply when one is queer. This discourse of human rights enables the NGOs to situate their missions and aims in the broader discourse of the UN Declaration of Human Rights without directly showing what rights are being addressed in their programs (safety, access to health care, being paid a wage, etc.) or how they will ensure these rights are honored. This was evident when representatives described that queer men need to know about their rights and responsibilities. However, the focus on the individual is problematic as it shifts attention from structural health problems to queer people knowing about their human rights.

Together, these themes show that representatives of NGOs are embodying the ideological and political interests of international organizations with assumptions about queer African agency. Notions of human rights as self-awareness and individual self-empowerment assume an agentic individual who is capable of changing their choices to avoid violence and also ensure access to health resources. These discourses also obscure the diversity and contextual specificity of queer African identity construction and negotiation which are shaped by multiple factors of

nationalism, globalization, indigenous popular culture, diasporic connections and class position. The human rights discourse described by the representatives point to the globalized and transnational discourses of LGBT visibility politics which encourage particular practices to resist queer discrimination and Africa's homophobia without particular attention to historical context geopolitical arrangement, and embodiment in local spaces.

Interviews with Queer Men

Enacting Agency in Contexts of Violence. This theme examined how queer participants experienced violence and what they did to avoid the violence. During the focus group interviews, participants recounted multiple instances where they experienced mob action, blackmail, and workplace and health discrimination. Some of the queer participants described moments where they were attacked or threatened by people walking on the street because they were positioned as gay. This shows the vulnerability of some queer men in public places such as the market. Other queer participants spoke of the potential for violence in online dating websites. Gay online applications such as Grindr and Adam4Adam have been co-opted by gay imposters. These spaces are no longer safe spaces where queer men can find partners with anonymity. Whereas the anonymity of the individual supposedly works to support the disclosure of sexual subjectivity, gay imposters add risk and constrain agency. Other participants also spoke of how they lost jobs or were terminated from their place of employment because of perceived queerness. Although there are laws against discrimination in the workplace in Ghana, some queer men might not have the financial and social resources to pursue such cases in court. Mostly this is because of the fear of how one's public image would be affected and also because of the fear of jeopardizing chances for future jobs. Nonetheless, some participants also mentioned of how they resisted workplace bullying by speaking up against discrimination.

Negotiating Positionality Through Identity Performance. The participants with higher socio-economic status, class location, educational background and communal ties spoke of varying levels of state and community protection. For instance, one of the participants who owns his own business spoke about how he navigates violence by dressing differently at his shop and when he leaves his shop. These strategies evidence the contextually contingent nature of cultural identity negotiation and also agency. Some of the participants also spoke about “staying strong” and being empowered to overcome adversaries. However, calling for strength was offered by queer men who engage in particular masculine gender performances, who have good paying jobs, and have supportive families. These intersectional locations constitute spaces of privilege. Other participants who do not have a consistent salaried job and do not have family support, emphasized the need to create networks of queer friends for support. The result of the constant negotiation of queer identity has also created social hierarchies within the queer community in Ghana. Some queer men spoke about specific performances such as appearing as “classy” which helps them avoid violence. However, others argued that performing “classy” among the queer community in Ghana functions to subjugate those who are perceived to be feminine and belong to different a socio-economic status.

Health Practitioner Discourse Positioning Queer Subjects as Willfully Diseased.

This theme examined how the subject positioning of queer men by staff in public hospitals contributes to health disparities. Some of the participants mentioned how they were humiliated at hospitals by nurses and doctors. Some queer men were positioned as making unhealthy and irresponsible sexual life choices and therefore could be treated differently from a heterosexual patient. Feminine queer men and HIV-positive queer men, in particular, became easy targets for nurses and doctors to humiliate. The positioning of queer men as irresponsible by nurses and

doctors serves as a health barrier to especially feminine queer men who become easy targets for nurses and doctors to shame. This process of subjectification for feminine queer men in public hospitals reduces their agency to make appropriate health choices and access health resources. Furthermore, power relations and the social hierarchy between queer citizens and heterosexual citizens are normalized through the subjugation of queer men.

Some of the queer participants also spoke of how health practitioners treated HIV-positive queer men in hospitals. Stories from queer participants indicated that nurses hardly provide any information about how and where to get ARV medications or information about social support groups for HIV-positive queer men. Subsequently, public hospitals are unwelcoming spaces for especially feminine queer men and HIV-positive queer men. In these contexts, queer men's abilities to make choices about their health are constrained by hospital staffs by withholding information and paths to medication that HIV-positive women, for instance, can obtain.

Utilizing Strategic Subjectivities to Enact Restricted Agency. Some of the queer participants spoke of how they navigate and negotiate their subject positions to enact restricted agency in hospitals. Queer participants spoke about various strategies used to navigate their subject positions. Some participants mentioned that they identify as bisexual sometimes at hospitals. Identifying as bisexual in hospital spaces is an exercise of limited agency in a space where dominant discourses about queer sex circulate. However, being bisexual is still not acceptable in the context of broader social norms and given socio-political and socio-cultural understanding of gender and sexuality in Ghana.

Other participants explained that they identify as gay and bisexual in some settings but not at hospitals because they do not want to face humiliation and discrimination. Besides

identifying as bisexual or straight, other participants spoke of personal performance strategies. For instance, a participant mentioned that he avoids discrimination at hospitals because he acts like a “normal” gentleman. Thus, this strategy positions performance of heterosexuality as the standard that queer males need to strive for if they want to avoid discrimination. Conversely, the queers who do not present as heterosexual can be blamed for not making normative choices, and this becomes their sole responsibility when they experience discrimination at hospitals. Intersectional locations of class also influenced the performances and negotiations of identity. Some queer participants with economic resources spoke about visiting private hospitals instead of public hospitals in order to reduce discrimination. This means that queer men who visit private hospitals might also have the agency to be positioned as queer and obtain quality care due to their higher-class status. These discourses show the various identity negotiation strategies which queer men use to navigate discrimination at hospitals.

In summary, texts of interviews with queer men highlight the consistent negotiation of queer identity in particular contexts to enact restricted agency. The varied strategies used by queer men to negotiate their subject position demonstrate a “survival strategy that is essential for queer and postcolonial subjects who are subject to the violence that institutional structures reproduce” (Munoz, 1999, p.84). Discourses also showed that intersectional locations such as socio-economic status, educational background, and gender performance influenced queer men’s abilities to negotiate their subjectivities in specific contexts. Institutional subject positioning of same-sex sexual relations and the various strategies used by queer men to negotiate their subject positions have impacted relations between queer men as well. Interview texts showed that some queer men are embodying NGO discourses of empowerment and personal self-transformation. They described their use of strategies of making advantageous choices in attire and performing

masculinity. In this context, queer feminine men are blamed as personally responsible for experiencing discrimination. While discrimination against queer men is sustained and reproduced by multiple structural agents, queer men who do not conform to heterosexual and homonormative ideals are held responsible for not changing their lifestyle to reduce discrimination. These discourses are reconstituting queer discrimination as an individual responsibility, producing a narrow view of queer subjectivities, as well as presuming individuals have the agency to obtain the resources they need to empower themselves.

Discursive Accomplishments

Implicated ideologies and Orders of Discourse

The discourses in the online news media together with texts of interviews with representatives of NGOs and queer men brought out varied discourses implicating ideologies of heteronormativity, same-sex desires and pleasures as unAfrican, neoliberalism, liberalism, normalizing queer violence and human rights. Central to understanding the ideological implications of the various discourses is the need to bring out how ideologies interpellate (Althusser, 1972) various groups and social actors into particular positions. Jorgenson and Phillips (2002) wrote that interpellation can be defined as the process through which language constructs a social position for the individual and thereby makes him or her an ideological subject (p.15). In the construction of particular subject positions for queer men in Ghana, there is an articulation of the different elements of language into a distinctive set of chain of meanings. For instance, ideologies of neoliberalism are linked and articulated with individualism, self-transformation and free market. However, this discourse is also challenged by religious discourse of morality and freedom as a collective condition (Boyd, 2013). Thus, the following ideological

implications are presented as a struggle between differently positioned groups articulating multiple ideological discourses to construct public imagery about same-sex sexual relations.

Heteronormativity is the implied standard and norm by which queer men are scrutinized and subjugated. Violence such as blackmail, beatings, and workplace and health discrimination are the material conditions enabled through the subject positioning of queer Ghanaian men as against heteronormative norms. Butler (1990) noted that the traits that society views as “masculine” and “feminine” are falsified constructs of the repetition of what society expects of the behavior of male or female. This performance is also governed by the societal constraints of heteronormativity. In the context of this study, heteronormativity merges with African patriarchy to produce a stringent view of gender and sexuality. Tamale (2011) argued that patriarchy is one of the main social institutions driving the anti-queer discourse in most African countries. Men in most sub-Saharan African cultures are born elevated in societal hierarchy (Tamale, 2011). Not only are men valued but women’s bodies are reduced to vehicles of reproduction whose sexual desires are also repressed. This is exemplified in practices of female genital mutilation (Manuh, 2007). Thus, queers are not only subjected to norms of heteronormativity, but they are also critiqued for not performing their "script" of heterosexuality in a patriarchal culture. Standards of heteronormativity and patriarchy were evident through how representatives of NGOs and some queer men described feminine queer men as personally responsible for experiencing violence because they do not act “normal.” By pointing to how they dress, talk and walk, feminine queer men are being scrutinized to fit into societal heteronormative ideals in order to avoid violence or seek health care. Performing heteronormativity helps queer men to avoid discrimination, however, it also feeds into conservative ideologies that same-sex sexual relations are unAfrican and other claims of queers as not existent in Africa.

Directly linked to ideologies of heteronormativity is the circulating discourse and ideology that same-sex sexual relations are unAfrican. Examination of online news media exposed the rationalization of same-sex sexual relations as a product of the West. For instance, most of the editorials and news reports of anti-gay comments and statements from priests tend to centralize the legalization of gay married in the West, loans from Western organizations to particular organizations and comments from Western leaders as representations of same-sex sexual relations. Similarly, all the editorials examined in this study used images of white men getting marriage as the base image of same-sex desires and identity politics. This process reproduces the circulating ideologies and feeds into discourses positioning same-sex sexual relations as a Western product. Subsequently, same-sex desires and pleasures are positioned as being imposed on Africans by the West and queer Ghanaian men are positioned as making individualized risky choices about their sexuality.

Neoliberal ideologies of individualism, self-help, and self-transformation are also implicated in the description of the relations between NGO officials and queer men. Throughout the texts, there were dominant explanatory frameworks that have been characterized as neoliberal. Peck, Theodore, and Brenner (2009) wrote that neoliberalism was largely an amalgam of free-market utopianism on the one hand, and a pointed, strategic critique of the prevailing Keynesian order on the other (p.105). Neoliberalism valorizes meritocracy and individual choices. Furthermore, neoliberalism is also a political state project which seeks to subvert democratic governance by attempting to monetize all aspects of the public domain (Chun, 2016). In this context, individuals are encouraged to be entrepreneurs in order to change their poor conditions. The focus on the individual as the sole change agent is extremely problematic. For instance, interview texts with representatives of NGOs encouraged queer men

to make personal changes on their body, and walk and speak differently in order to avoid violence and discrimination at health centers. Petras (2004) argued that the local nature of NGO activity means that "empowerment" never goes beyond influencing small areas of social life, with limited resources, and within the conditions permitted by the neoliberal state and macro-economy. Thus, in the NGO interview discourses, the focus on individualism and self-help discourses implicate global and transnational ideologies of neoliberalism.

Competing ideologies of human rights were evident in texts from online news media and interviews with representatives of NGOs. Mutua (1999) argued that human rights are the construction of a political ideology that paints such liberal movements as impartial and the quintessence of human goodness. Similarly, the transnational and globalized discourses of GLBTQI politics which centralize human rights is typically portrayed as divorced from material conditions, and organizational interests. NGO representatives' interview discourse described human rights as linked to self-awareness and knowledge about fundamental human rights. This discourse of human rights implicate ideologies of Western liberalism. A distinctive feature of Western liberalism is the freedom of the individual. Bonilla-Silva (2010) argued that when the bourgeoisie lauded freedom, they meant free trade, freedom to sell and buy; when they lauded the individual, they also meant the bourgeoisie, the middle-class property owner. In this context, the NGO discourse of human rights reproduces universal agentic individuals who can avoid violence and discrimination in health centers by being aware of their human rights and learning about Ghana's Constitution.

Counter discourses from religious and political leaders show claims that queer men are choosing to be gay and thus, should not be protected by the state. The ideology of same-sex desires and relations as a choice also aligns with U.S conservative theology which assumes that

individuals have the agency to change their sexual orientation. Kaoma (2012) wrote that U.S religious conservatives in Africa are promoting ideologies based on African family values, heteronormativity, and patriarchy. These ideologies are implicated in statements from Ghanaian anti-gay priests who argue that although being “God’s children,” queer Ghanaian men should change their sexual orientation and stop sinning. Embedded in these discourses is the claim that queer men have a choice to change their sexual orientation so should seek therapy and sexual re-orientation.

What emerged as the social order in the different discursive texts is the emphasis on individualism and a responsibility to protect African values. Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) define order of discourse as the “complex configuration of discourses and genres within the same social field or institution. It can denote different discourses that partly cover the same terrain, a terrain which each discourse competes to fill with meaning in its own way” (p. 141). In the context of this research, queer men are constituted as individuals who can make “right” choices about their sexuality. Individualism is the guiding principle which the different configurations of discourses and genres emanate to position queer men. Human rights is presented as a contested space. While NGO officials promote human rights as a justification for their programs, religious leaders promote human rights for only Christians. Queer men’s silence about their rights and advocacy for adapting to heteropatriarchal norms by some, evidences lack of attention to human rights. Furthermore, there are arguments for and against queer rights, centralizing the need to protect African values. While religious and political leaders argue that same-sex sexual relations are unAfrican and also sinful so should be rejected, human rights advocates argue for the application of universal human rights to protect African values. These orders of discourse

constitute “the social struggle and conflict” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1995, p. 31) regulating the discussions on queer discrimination.

Implications Related to Agency

This study demonstrates that representations of same-sex sexual relations impact available choices for queer Ghanaian men to enact their queer identities and obtain resources. Additionally, subject positions form relations that are informed by ideologies that impact levels of agency. Across the discourses is the premise that individuals have the ability to change their sexuality. Also, there is the premise that individuals have choices and they must make the right choice in order to be respected as an African citizen, avoid violence, and access health care. These assumptions impact levels of agency of queer men. For instance, queer men are assumed to be fully agentic to change their sexual orientation. Some of the participants talked about beatings and being shamed by parents and family members in order to make them change their sexual orientation. On the other hand, discourse from representatives of NGOs also reveals an assumption that queer men have the agentic potential to make bodily changes in order to avoid violence and discrimination. Interviews with queer men show narratives illustrating that agency can be enabled and constrained in different degrees in specific contexts.

This study shows that queer men negotiate their agency within structures, institutions, and representations. This was important to point out because power relations are constrained and enabled by structures. For instance, an HIV-positive queer man was denied access to social support systems and ARV medications because he was positioned as gay and unchristian. This was reported as happening frequently. In this context, queer men are routinely subjugated. This subjugation illustrates power relations between queer men in relation to heterosexual citizens. The analysis proves the contextually contingent nature of agency (Collier, 2009). Queer men did

use different strategies to avert discrimination at hospitals. The success of such strategies was dependent on multiple factors such as how they were positioned by class, education and masculinity. Their strategies of identity performance varied across contexts. Thus, placing subject positions in relation to subjectivities proved helpful to reveal how queer men navigate their subject positions and the strategies used to enact different levels of agency both to manage violence and navigate health care barriers.

Matrix of Domination and Power Relations

This study showed how intersecting institutional power structures reproduce and sustain queer discrimination and violence. In the context of this study, institutional power structures governing gender and sexuality such as the criminal justice system, religion, national government positions and socio-economic class intersect to subjugate queer men. Howard (2014) wrote that oppressive systems such as race, class, gender and sexual orientation work as interlocking systems of oppression as one navigates societal and structural barriers. As shown in this research, gender and sexuality in ideological fields favoring patriarchy and individualism form intersecting structural and institutional barriers which disadvantage queer men in Ghana. As well queer men are always already positioned in relation to the standards of heteronormativity and conservative Christianity.

Theoretical Contributions

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study contributes to ongoing discussions about the complexities of sexuality, sexual and reproductive rights, and queer liberation in the African context. This study shows that ideologies are implicated in public media and interview discourses, forming queer men's relations with institutions, NGOs and with each other. This

research contributes to ongoing discussions started by scholars in queer postcolonial studies, queer intercultural communication, and critical discourse analysis.

(Queer) Postcolonial Theory.

The use of a postcolonial approach in this study highlighted the contradictions that still engulf queer criminalization debates in post-independence Ghana. Independence from the British was supposed to usher in a more democratic political, judicial and criminal system that was denied Ghanaians during colonialism. The first president of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, emphasized notions of self-rule and self-determination as necessary elements of true independence. In applying postcolonial theory to queer discrimination in Ghana, discourses from the online news media and interview texts indicated that while the colonial government changed at independence, the institutional underpinnings of the colonial government and the colonial relationships between institutions inherited at independence remain the same.

It became evident in this study that Ghanaian Pentecostalist-Charismatic ideologies about same-sex sexual relations is the most pervasive colonial regime framing the discussions on queer discrimination in Ghana. This comes as no surprise since religious institutions have had a close relationship with Western colonialism and imperialism (Epprecht, 2008). The marriage between Christian religion and colonialism have made it an influential colonial institution currently masquerading as an innately African institution protecting the interest of Africans (Kaoma, 2012). Lewis (2013) noted that by the 19th century, Africans were deemed inherently biologically different and degenerate. Central to this essentialist notion is Africans' distinctively pathological sexuality. As evident in the analysis, queer Ghanaians are positioned as pathological, degenerate, and inherently diseased by religious and political leaders. Therefore, a queer postcolonial

approach was useful to illuminate how colonial discourses are ingrained as hegemonic truths and discursive practices.

Discourses from religious leaders portrayed queer Africans as devils, demons, evil, pedophiles and rapists. These archetypes are similar to the colonial racialized representations of the barbaric African who cannot control his/her sexuality and therefore, must be tamed (Lewis, 2013; McLintock, 1994; Otu, 2016). Africans ostensibly concerned with independent self-definition such as African nationalists make similar claims of a sexually powerful and virile African man in relation to queer Africans whose sexual behavior mirrors feeble white masculinity (Lewis, 2013). The discourses from African nationalists reinforce colonial projections developed during the 19th century by positioning queer men as not manly and a product of Western colonialism. This can be considered contradictory in the sense that African nationalists who fought against such depictions of Africans are subjecting queer Ghanaians to the same representations used to devalue the humanity of Africans. This shows that while political players during colonialism changed, views of African sexuality remain hegemonic through the subjugation of queer Ghanaians.

Discourses from the US Christian right, disseminated through the statements of local anti-gay pastors, replicate past colonial relationships which sought to regulate African sexualities. Discourses from local anti-gay pastors utilize similar words, phrases, and arguments which are similar to US Christian right theology. Discourses focusing on the African family, the exclusive heterosexuality of Africans, and queer rights as a Western imperialism agenda were evident in the statements of anti-gay priests. Epprecht (2008, 2013) argued that this discourse emanates from colonial representations of some African tribes as “natural beings,” whose instincts, it was felt, were wholly different from the sophisticated desires of the Westerners.

Dlamini (2006) wrote that because the African man was perceived to be close to nature, ruled by instincts, and culturally unsophisticated, s/he had to be heterosexual. This colonial misrepresentation of African sexuality is still being used to rationalize mistreatment of queer African asylum seekers in Europe. Chavez (2014) argued that queer migrants from Africa were asked to prove they are queer by kissing another man or showing physical evidence of their queerness. The power dynamics patrolling queer African bodies are imbricated in ideological fields within the context of colonialism and Western imperialism. Thus, the discourses here show that U.S Christian right theology (historically aligned with white supremacist ideology) merged with African nationalist colonial imaginations of African sexuality to position same-sex sexual relations as sometimes non-acceptable and sometimes non-existent in Africa. The “capacities inherent within colonial past are routinely reaffirmed and reactivated in the colonial present” (Gregory, 2004, p. 7).

Using queer postcolonial theory also enabled a critique of power relations and subjugation within the cultural conditions of postcolonial countries. Analysis of discourses and ideologies revealed that Ghanaian citizenship rights are tied to exclusive heterosexuality. For instance, some of the online news media reports about the gay bashing of Albert Appiah focused on whether he was indeed queer. A statement from the police superintendent was made to confirm that he is not queer and thus, merits state protection. Queer participants’ discourse also revealed that when cases of blackmail and physical violence are reported to the police, they are not taken seriously. Furthermore, queer men are shamed at hospitals by nurses and doctors for making wrong choices about their sexuality. These social practices create subjugated positions for queer men as they are positioned against heteronormative ideals and denied citizenship rights.

Although notions of Africans' cultural differences from the British were deployed to seek independence, queer African identity is being muted to deny queer men's access to state protection and health resources. This shows the fragility of the notion of "nation" and the concurrent renegotiation of its boundaries given the fact that the Ghanaian nation was a product of colonialism (Shome, 2012). This also confirms Ann Stoler's argument that sexual arrangements and affective attachments are a fundamental aspect of national belonging. In the context of this research, it is by emphasizing sexuality that it became possible to elaborate the absence of a clear break with the colonial past.

A queer postcolonial approach also proved relevant in analyzing the human rights discourses from representatives of NGOs. These discourses emphasized human rights while downplaying the effects of colonization in the creation of Ghana's past. The discourses on human rights, in most instances, echoed Western notions of individual freedom and personal liberty. This demonstrates the relevance of a postcolonial approach in exploring the continued relationships between colonized countries and their colonizers. All the NGOs in this study received funding from international organizations and governments in Western countries. This can be considered a continuation of relationships that were established during colonialism.

The discourses on human rights, as much as they were relevant to queer liberation, were adopted in a way that mirrored the conditions under which they were developed in the West. Exploring the relevance of situating human rights within postcolonial critique, Cobbah (1987) wrote that human rights institutions have historically engaged in cultural imperialism. He highlighted the fact that when the UN Declaration on Human Rights was adopted in 1948, the UN was dominated by Western countries and most of sub-Saharan Africa was still under colonial control. Representatives of NGOs described human rights as if they can be universally applied

without explaining how and which human rights can be honored in the context of Ghana. Context and history are important facets of postcolonial theory; in this study, these proved relevant as the discourses were intertwined with colonial history and Westernized notions of liberalism and freedom.

From the above explanation, it is evident that independence did not mark the end of social relations and practices informed by colonialism. The continual references to social, political, medical, and legal institutions inherited at independence to violently deny queer Africans access to state resources show the importance of illuminating sexuality as a relevant aspect of postcolonial theory. Ideologies such as heteronormativity are implicated in discourses positioning queer men as against the norm. In this context, relations between queer men and social institutions such as religion and the criminal justice system reproduce power relations subjugating same-sex sexual relations as abnormal and heterosexuality as the norm. It also became evident that relationships established between the colonizer and colonized, to “civilize” and “modernize” the other, have been sustained through broader discourses of globalization and human rights.

Queer Intercultural Communication.

This study applies and contributes to queer intercultural communication by situating sexuality as a key element of how queers in Ghana negotiate their Ghanaian/African identity. This research shows how queers’ gendered and sexual identities challenge, resist and enact their identities within the boundaries of the nation in a time when all nations are situated in transnational spaces. Examining discourses in public texts in relation to discourses of lived accounts of queer men in Ghana enabled me to put subjectivity and subject position in

conversation to explore how ideological discourse frames spaces of engagement between and among groups.

The findings in this dissertation contribute to research on relations between subjectivity and subject positions which are crucial terms in critical intercultural communication research. Institutional positioning of queer men enabled violence of multiple forms and discrimination in public hospitals. While queer men were being interpellated into more than one subject position, that of willful sinner and willfully pathological were predominant and have material effects on queer men's lives. For instance, when queer men test positive for HIV in public hospitals, they are not provided resources typically available to HIV-positive women. They are rather chastised for making wrong individual choices about their sexuality. Thus, this study has shown how exploring the relations between subject positions and subjectivities can shed light on agency.

The voices of Christian institutions and anti-gay priests positioned themselves as anti-colonialists and protectors of African values in relation to queer men who threaten these values. It also became apparent that inequitable power relations are being enacted; queer male subject positions are subjugated to the heteronormative male. However, queer resistance and enactment of restricted agency were also evident. For instance, even though some queer men were positioned as devils and demons, those who were also positioned as having higher class status such as the well-known music producer, were able to navigate some subjugated relations and positions. Queer men who were positioned as having a higher socio-economic status were sometimes treated differently by institutions such as hospitals as their class position became salient in some contexts, especially when performing masculine gender and identifying as bisexual.

In addition to exploring subject positions, this study also explored the subjectivities of queer men. Queer men's description of subjectivity evidenced how subjectivities are connected to subject positions, intersectional locations, and contextual factors. Central to subjectivity is the enactment of agency within the structures, institutions, and representations, which shape queer experiences. Agency can be constrained or enabled through discourse as contextually contingent discourses "limit the scope for action and possibilities" (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.17). For instance, queer men with higher socio-economic status and particular masculine gender performances spoke about using different strategies to enact multiple levels of restricted agency when they experience violence or visit public hospitals.

This study extends theories of intersectionality within queer intercultural communication to explore how intersectional locations affect how queer men experience discrimination. Central to this research was the examination of how social divisions and hierarchies of sexuality, class, and gender in Ghana intersect with global representations of LGBT visibility politics and African patriarchy to produce particular queers in relation to other queers. Intersectional analysis showed some queers advance particular identities in order to be positioned within some expected norms to minimize discrimination. Queer men with higher socio-economic status and particular masculine gender performance described using strategies to avoid violence in some contexts. This shows how structural hierarchies of class intersect with structural hierarchies of sexuality to produce a queer subject and strategies to receive state protection. It is important to point out that subject positions are always relational, and queer men who were able to avoid violence were able to do so by posing as closer to the expected norms of conduct required by conservative religious institutions, government spokespersons and Western NGOs.

Critical Discourse Analysis as Methodology and Method

This study utilized Fairclough's (2003) critical discourse analysis to understand how queer discrimination is sustained and reproduced in Ghana. One major premise of critical discourse analysis is to uncover relationships between discourses, ideologies and power relations in society. Another premise is to examine how discourses constitute social reality and its material consequences. This study focused on the three dimensions of analysis proposed by Fairclough, text, discursive practice and social practice.

I started the analysis by reading through the interview transcripts and online newspaper texts to get a holistic picture. In so doing, I analyzed the content of the text to see what is generally being talked about and identified micro level speech acts. This analysis unveiled various conceptualizations of queer men and same-sex sexual relations. I then followed this by bringing out the various representations of queer identity that emerged in both online news media and interview texts. The analysis revealed various discourses used to constitute queer men, queer sex and same-sex sexual relations in general.

The second dimension in the Fairclough model of discourses analysis focuses on discursive practices. According to Jorgenson and Phillips (2002), "Discursive practice involves the production and consumption of texts" (p.68). In the context of this research, this means I focused on the context and structural factors, histories and broadly circulating discourses and how these influenced the production of the text. Through critical discourse analysis, it was possible to show that discourses are always situated within contextual factors such as the country's history of the colonial productions of criminalization and the current proliferation of religious ideologies shaping national identity. Colonization emerged as an important historical context influencing the production of various discourses. Furthermore, political conditions,

religious endorsement, and English and Twi language usage affected production and distribution of the online news sources I examined. Consumption was addressed at a broader level by analyzing what discourses were reproduced in both texts. For instance, I showcased how representatives of NGOs and queer men critiqued representations of queer men in news reports. The situated these discussed in each chapter also evidence examples of discursive practice.

The last dimension in Fairclough's (2003) model refers to social practice. This is demonstrated in my study in my examination of what is being accomplished by the discourse with regard to implicated ideologies, power relations between subjects, levels of agency and material effects. Although I looked for differences in the nature of the discourse from public and private news organizations, there was little variation. In Ghana in 2014-2016, the relations between discourse ideology and power were revealed by socio-cultural practices of violence and discrimination in health care settings and also through queer men describing situated enactments of their subjectivities in workplaces, social encounters, and hospitals. Ideological implications described earlier served to reify subjugated positions and complex relation as detailed earlier.

Methodological Reflections

In the study, I faced a number of challenges that are highlighted below. My background and identifications both helped me gain access to texts and individuals to interview and posed challenges. I am originally from Ghana and am studying in the United States. I came to the United States in December 2007 and went back to Ghana in August 2016 to collect data, after spending eight years in the United States.

In order to carry out this research, I had to access the online archives of two state-owned newspapers, one privately owned newspaper, and three private news portals. I relied on online news reports because they are widely read. I searched for news articles using words such as

gayism, gay, and homosexual. Reports on same-sex sexual relations from online news portals of radio stations are in English even though some of the radio stations use the local language in their broadcasting. Moreover, accessing online news reports about same-sex sexual relations was a safe way to negotiate my access to these documents given the political climate around same-sex sexual relations in Ghana.

I also had to access representatives of NGOs that specifically work with queer men to carry out personal and focus group interviews. Six representatives from three NGOs agreed to be interviewed for this study. It was not difficult getting access to them. All the representatives are familiar with me and my research in the United States since we studied together at the University of Ghana. Due to this familiarity, they were willing to share information about the work they do with queer men. Also, for some of the representatives, mentioning that I was studying in the United States generated a positive disposition toward me. They positioned me as a friend, a researcher who could understand the issues and perhaps was more politically aligned with the work that they are doing. Moreover, some of them were very open about their relationship with international organizations which they may not have shared with other researchers.

On the other hand, obtaining access to queer men proved challenging. Given the political climate around same-sex sexual relations in Ghana, queer men are cautious about any form of research that could expose them. I chose to use an oral informed consent to protect confidentiality. I also chose to offer the interviewees a small stipend for their participation. Although I grew up in Ghana and had access to queer friends, most of them were out of the country during the time of this research. I relied on the NGOs to help me recruit queer men. In the end, this proved most helpful as the queer participants spoke about their relationship with the

NGOs as part of their overall queer experiences in Ghana. Furthermore, the NGOs recruited queer men with varied socio-economic, religious, educational and ethnic backgrounds.

Another major obstacle that I faced was finding an appropriate location to conduct the interviews. My initial plan was to hold the focus group interviews in a hotel. However, lack of funding made me reconsider where to conduct the interviews. Eventually, I conducted all the focus group interviews in the office of one of the NGO sponsored health centers. This kind of endorsement of my research by an NGO was important in that I had a space to conduct the focus group. However, the health site was both helpful and challenging in different ways. First, the health center is located on the outskirts of the capital city, Accra. So, participants did not draw public attention when they were coming to the health center. Furthermore, since it's a health center, it is presumed that anyone going there needs medical help. However, some of the participants were not comfortable with the hospital space due to their experiences with nurses and doctors in some public hospitals in Accra. Also, since the workers at the health center had to vacate their shared office in order for me to conduct the focus group interviews, they sometimes walk in during the focus group interviews to look for documents or use the staff bathroom. When that happened, we took a break or stopped the interviews until the staff left. Nonetheless, health center staff members were extremely respectful of the use of their office space and provided all resources needed to complete the interviews.

Reflexive Examination of the Context and Positionalities

Given the above challenges and experiences of carrying out research around a sensitive topic such as same-sex sexual relations in Ghana, scholarship cannot be separated from the context in which the study is carried out. My relationship as the interviewer with the interviewees was contingent as it had to be negotiated and cultivated at the time of the research.

Other NGO premises had been attacked by mobs, so officials were very cautious about inviting “researchers” to their premises. Given my acquaintance with the representatives of the NGOs in this study, they felt comfortable with me coming to their premises to conduct the personal interviews.

It was challenging when interviewed expressed views counter to my own. For example, one of the representatives at one of the NGOs who identifies as heterosexual said that being queer is a choice and people have a right to choose what they want. When I asked for further explanation, he narrated how he chose his heterosexuality and that gay people should be allowed to choose who they want. Although my own definition of same-sex desires and pleasures is that it is not a choice, I listened to him and encouraged him to express his views. He was reproducing the social order of broader discourses about sexuality and implicating an assumption of individuals’ abilities to choose or change their sexuality at will.

During the focus group interviews, I was sometimes positioned as not Ghanaian. This became apparent when a participant tried to translate a statement from another participant into English. Eventually, I had to make it clear to the participants that I am not a U.S American, and I speak two local languages so they could mix English with Twi or Ga. This was also necessary as some of the participants were struggling to use English to describe their queer experiences. The use of English, Twi, and Ga became a challenge methodologically when I had to translate their statements into English as I was transcribing. Although I did my best, some of the nuances in their queer experiences were lost in translation, and the situated meaning of specific local words cannot be accounted for in English.

As I reflect on the entire project, I have realized that conducting research with multiple social actors is an ongoing negotiation of cultural identifications and intercultural relationships.

As a U.S trained queer Ghanaian, I thought building relationships with the NGO representatives and queer participants would be easy, but it was not as I anticipated. Some of the queer participants told me I was the third person interviewing them in 2016; one said he did not know what all the data was used for since nothing has changed for him. Moreover, I was the only Ghanaian ever to interview him. Some of the participants were surprised that my research was not about HIV-prevention or condom use. A representative from one of the NGOs also noted that he is frustrated with international researchers who just come when they need queer men to interview and leave without providing any help. This made me reflect on how I positioned my dissertation research to the participants. In future research I will emphasize what I intend to do with my research data beyond publishing such as creating training programs for journalists and NGO representatives. Being critically reflexive under these conditions enabled me to position my research as not taking advantage of queer experiences of violence to publish and sustain my access to education and job security in the U.S. Nonetheless, I still benefit from this relationship with my participants as I have access to resources which enable me to stay in Ghana temporarily and leave when I am done.

My ability to leave the research scene, however, enabled me to escape the challenging institutional positioning and challenging material conditions. Participants' questions pertaining to "when are you leaving Ghana" reminded me that I have the privilege of mobility to escape the materiality of my queer identity in Ghana. Also, I was positioned as an outsider. I had to be dependent on the interviewee's first-hand experiences which I lacked because of my positioning as an outsider. I realized that having lived in the U.S for more than nine years placed me as an outsider even though we share the same nationality. This was particularly true given that I had limited knowledge of more recent events that had unfolded. Also, although I was working with

intersectionality, and I thought carefully about same-sex sexual relations and identifications such as class and professional status, I did not look for positions which were absent such as immigration status and tribal affiliation. Future research could benefit from exploring such identity positions.

The above experiences show that doing research on politically charged topics such as same-sex sexual relations requires sensitivity to the political and social context. In addition to knowing and understanding the political and cultural context in the country, there is also a need to be able to negotiate relationships with interviewees in each given situation. Critical reflexivity helped me to negotiate contextually contingent cultural identifications, relationships, and positionalities. Importantly, I sought to make sure that my research did not reproduce U.S academic imperialism (Yep, 2013). Yet, it certainly benefitted my academic standing and reinforced my own political positions. Thus, I see value in employing critical reflexivity with the participants in this study and my future work before, during, and after the research to make sure researcher engagement with the Ghanaian queer community does not produce colonial relationships and knowledge (Collier & Muneri, 2016).

Contributions, Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited to focusing on analysis of online news media and interview texts as a starting point for understating the ideological tensions framing discussions of same-sex sexual relations in Ghana. It is important to highlight that there is very limited research that explores the intersectional locations of queer subjectivities in the Ghanaian context. Previous research has focused on African countries with either anti-gay laws such as Nigeria and Uganda or countries with pro-gay laws such as South Africa. However, Ghana is an important context to study queer discrimination as even though there are laws criminalizing same-sex sexual

relations, few are arrested for being identified as queer except in cases of rape or pedophilia. However, queer discrimination is prevalent and queer men are restricted from accessing specific resources in the country. Integrating personal accounts and public media discourses enabled analysis of institutional policies, practices and social conditions.

This study included six interviews with officials from NGOs. Future research could expand the results by conducting interviews with other civil society organizations that do not focus exclusively on queer health. These organizations include those involved in the struggle against human rights abuses of queer men through political advocacy. Interviews with these groups could broaden the diversity of the groups and perspectives on queer advocacy in Ghana

The research was focused mainly on organizations and queer men based in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. In Ghana institutions and NGOs are concentrated in urban areas, especially the capital. Future research focusing on queer discrimination in rural areas can complement findings in this dissertation.

This research focused largely on news reports written in English. Although English is the main language spoken in Ghana, there is a growing resistance to news reports in English. To broaden their consumer base, some public and private news organizations currently report news in both English and Twi or Ga at different times of the day. Future research might uncover how news stories written in Twi or Ga play a central role either complementing, countering or amplifying discourses about same-sex sexual relations.

Lastly, further research on queer discrimination should go beyond the study of discourse to analyze how performance and affect plays into how queer men negotiate their identities in Ghana. Such analysis could reveal how queer men both reinforce and resist subject positioning. Complementing CDA with how but how queers perform “every day,” “ordinary” social relations

through embodiment and across varied spaces constitute would illuminate how identity performances constitute and respond to broader social structures.

Applications

Training programs that highlight how queers are positioned could benefit journalists working in various media organizations, not only to honor the rights of queers in Ghana but also understand the material effects of their reporting on queer men. For instance, when I attended training session for journalists at the Netherlands Embassy in 2015, a journalist mentioned that he was surprised to see queer men with higher educational background than him at the training session. He assumed queer men were social outcasts or prostitutes who contribute nothing to society. His ideas about queer men may be shared by other journalists who write about queer issues. Training might be helpful in encouraging more balanced writing about queer men. The quest to improve the role that journalists and other media practitioners can play in queers' lives is largely informed by the understanding that the media, as well as the government, churches, educational institutions and health care, are central to achieving a more democratic state where diverse individual and group civil liberties are respected.

Some of the discourses from representatives from NGOs provided a de-contextualized view of human rights without taking into consideration the historical context of colonization and the cultural nuances shaping queer subjectivities in Ghana. Training programs with NGOs would be useful to provide more context for Western influenced approaches and note that intersectional locations affect queer subjectivities. Some NGOs might benefit from decolonizing their approaches and utilizing a community-based participant research as well.

Conclusion

Queers in Ghana have witnessed ongoing improvement in access to health resources over the past ten years. Furthermore, research focusing on queer men has been allowed to take place without government restrictions. However, discourses positioning queer men as devils, demons and pathological continue to create subjugated positions for queer men which also mainly constrain their agency. This dissertation responds to Ekine and Abbas (2013) who call for situating queer liberation struggles within the broader contexts of African liberation and self-determination. As evidenced in this study, colonialism is still ongoing in different forms, and queer men are subjected to colonial logics regulating sexuality and difference. My hope is that this dissertation can create spaces for dialogue between social activists involved in the non-profit sector, media professionals and queer identified individuals in the African context to explore how histories and global and local discourses shape discussions about human rights, responses to violence and the availability of health care. These dialogues can show that queer Africans are positioned with complex identities. I conclude this dissertation with comments from participants. One who summed up how news media contributes to queer discrimination and another who exerted agency when confronted with violence.

The media sees us to be gays, and that's it. They see us to be one type of people. Like the devil. So, they send that message across to the public and we are treated like that.

One day, we went to an event and when we were going back home, we saw some guys by the roadside. Immediately they saw us, they started saying that they will burn us. So, I turned to them and said, "what! why would you just burn people walking to their homes." So, I started screaming at them but my friends were telling me to stop. I insisted that I have a right to walk home without harm. They said, "we will beat you," but I said "no! you cannot beat us!" I have my right; you have your right so why are you coming to beat me? So, we left them and they went.

It has been a wonderful experience working with both NGO representatives and queers on this project. I hope to continue working with them as we explore ways to reduce queer discrimination in Ghana.

Appendix A
Officials of INGOs
Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Godfried Asante, Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Communication & Journalism at the University of New Mexico, U.S.A. The overarching goal of this study is to understand how people who identify as GLBTQ are represented in newspaper reports and also how that reporting affects GLBTQ people's engagement with institutions and interactions with others. In order to examine this, the researcher seeks to understand how such representations impact the availability of choices for GLBTQ people and their construction of cultural identities in Ghana. In addition to examining media reports, this The researcher will interview staff members of non-profit organizations who work with queer men, and also queer men in Ghana.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to conduct interviews with individuals who are working with community organizations in Ghana in order to get information about their views on queer discrimination. The research also entails discourse analysis of newspaper reports and texts. The specific research questions that this research seeks to address are 1. How are queer men subjects constituted in discourses produced by Ghanaian print and online news organizations, and discourses from interviews with NGO representatives and Ghanaian queer men? 2. What do the discourses constituting subject positions and subjectivities accomplish related to social hierarchies, agency, power relations and ideologies? This research is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the doctoral program that the researcher is undertaking at the University of New Mexico in the U.S.A. The results will be presented as a dissertation to the Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico and results will be published in communication journals and/or as book chapters on communication and GLTBT identities. The results may also inform training programs and community based projects about queer criminalization and discrimination.

Why are you being contacted?

You are being asked to participate in this study based on the following reasons: (a) because you are working with an organization involved in issues related to human rights, LBTGQ health and politics, community development, social and political advocacy (b) your organization is based in Accra or another location in (c) you are willing to talk about queer discrimination and criminalization in Ghana.

What are the procedures?

If you decide to participate in the study, the interview will be held in a place that is most convenient to you and where we can have a private, uninterrupted interview. Participation in the

interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes on the day appointed for the interview. During the interview you will be asked to provide information about your organization and your involvement in the organization by sharing information on your professional work, the actions that you have taken and how you think these actions are helpful to the struggle against criminalization of same-sex relations in Ghana. Your responses will be kept confidential. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you may choose not to answer any questions during the interview without any penalties whatsoever. Your responses will be tape-recorded only with your permission. There are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research

What are the benefits of my participation?

Your participation in this research will give you the opportunity to share information and views about your experiences in the struggle for queer decriminalization and cultural identity in Ghana. This research provides you with an opportunity to reflect about the work that you are doing and the results may inform training programs and advocacy projects to be applied in your organization. The results of the interviews with queer men in Ghana may offer useful information about queer men's experiences and needs which are relevant and applicable to the work you are doing in your organization in Ghana and in Africa.

How will my interview responses be used?

All the information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your interview responses will be used strictly for academic purposes. Your personal responses will not be shared with anyone else in your organization. Your name and the name of your organization will not appear in any research report or transcript. All participants and organizations will be assigned pseudonyms in the final research report. Quotations from the interview responses will be listed with the pseudonyms only. Only the researcher, Godfried Asante, and Principal Investigator, Dr. Mary Jane Collier, will have access to the audiotapes and the transcripts of your interview. The audio taped data will be erased when the written transcriptions of your interviews are finished or wherever you request that from Godfried Asante by email or phone call. For contact information about Godfried Asante, please see below.

What do I need to do to participate in the interview?

Should you decide to take part in this interview, please send an e-mail message to Godfried Asante at asantg@unm.edu or call at (phone number will be inserted when I get a local number) to indicate your willingness to participate. You can also send any other questions that you might have and I will be happy to address them. Then we will schedule a time and place for the interview. Thank you for your time and willingness to take part in this important research study.

Appendix B
Queer Ghanaian men
Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Godfried Asante, Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Communication & Journalism at the University of New Mexico, U.S.A. The overarching goal of this study is to understand how people who identify as GLBTQ are represented in newspaper reports and also how that reporting affects GLBTQ people's engagement with institutions and interactions with others. In order to examine this, the researcher seeks to understand how such representations impact the availability of choices for GLBTQ people and their construction of cultural identities in Ghana. In addition to examining media reports, this The researcher will interview staff members of non-profit organizations who work with queer men, and also queer men in Ghana.

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Why are you being contacted?

You are being asked to participate in this study based on the following reasons: (a) you are a Ghanaian citizen, who identifies as LGBTQ, men who sleep with other men (MSM), or non-gender conforming (b) you are willing to talk about queer discrimination and criminalization in Ghana and how it affects how queen men's engagement with institutions and interactions with others.

What are the procedures?

If you decide to participate in the study, the interviews will be held in groups of 5-6 in a location which will be communicated to you. If you wish to be part of the research but do not want to be part of the focus group, a personal interview can also be arranged. Participation in the interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes of your time on the day appointed for the interview. During the interview, you will be asked to provide information about how criminalization of same-sex relations in Ghana has affected your cultural identity. Your responses will be kept confidential. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you may choose not to answer any questions during the interview without any penalties whatsoever. Your responses will be tape-recorded only with your permission. There are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research

What are the benefits for my participation?

Your participation in this research will give you the opportunity to share information and views about your experiences as someone who identifies as queer or same gender loving person in Ghana. The interview will allow you to share your views on the impact of newspaper representation of queer men on your relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and your engagement with institutions. The results from the interview will be compared and contrasted with newspaper representation of queer men in Ghana and this will lead to a better understanding of cultural identities of queer men people in Ghana.

How will my interview responses be used?

All the information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your interview responses will be used strictly for academic purposes. Your personal responses will not be shared with anyone else in your organization. Your name will not appear in any research report or transcript. All participants will be assigned pseudonyms in the final research report. Quotations from the interview responses will be listed with the pseudonyms only. It is only the researcher, Godfried Asante and Principle investigator, Dr. Mary Jane Collier who will have access to the audiotapes and the transcripts of your interview. The audio taped data will be erased when the written transcriptions of your interviews are finished or wherever you request that from Godfried Asante by email or phone call. For contact information about Godfried Asante, please see below.

What do I need to do to participate in the interview?

Should you decide to take part in this interview, please email, send an e-mail message to Godfried Asante at asantg@unm.edu to indicate your willingness to participate. Available times and location will be emailed to you. You can also send any other questions that you might have and I will be happy to address them. Then we will schedule a time and place for the interview. Thank you for your time and willingness to take part in this research study.

Appendix C

Interview Guide for INGO Staff

Organizational Background and Work

1. What are the goals of your organization?
2. When/How was your organization formed?
3. Please describe the funding sources, grants obtained, etc.
4. Does your organization receive international funding? If so how has this worked for your organization in relation to reaching your goals?
5. Please describe the staff for your organization.
6. Please describe the activities and programs in your organization.
7. In what projects, programs, activities are you involved?
8. What does GLBTQ mean in the context of your work and your organization?
9. To what extent is your organization involved in political advocacy against same-sex criminalization and discrimination?
10. What do you think is the role of organizations such as yours in the struggle against queer discrimination and criminalization?
11. Describe a moment of success that you have enjoyed in your organization.
12. What are the major challenges or obstacles faced by your organization?
13. How have the following factors affected your work in the organization?
 - a). political events
 - b). economic conditions
 - c). government policies and practices (in general and pertaining to the organization)
 - d). major institutions (religion, military, education, etc)
 - e). Comments from presidents from other African countries
 - f) Comments from politicians in the West?
 - g). Religious organizations in Ghana and the United States?
 - h) media coverage of events related to queers or of your organization

Appendix D
Demographic Survey

1. Name (Initials only):

2. Age:

3. Where do you live in Ghana?

4. Ethnic affiliation

5. Employment Status

6. Educational Background (circle one): High School/College Degree/Master's Degree)

7. Are you with disability? Y/N

8. Are you single? Y/N

Appendix E

Interview Guide for Queer men

Questions for Queer men in Ghana

1. Please describe how you identify yourself in relation to your sexual identity
2. Describe major challenges you have faced as a member of the LGBTQ community in Ghana in relation to:
 - a) family relationships,
 - b) work/co-workers,
 - c) friends,
 - d) institutions such as church, legal systems etc)
3. Describe your experiences, if any, with the community based organizations that are in Ghana
4. Describe your experiences with discrimination as a queer man in Ghana. If you have not faced any discrimination, how do you think you have avoided it? If you have, did you seek support? If yes, where and with whom?
5. What is your assessment of media coverage of queer men in Ghana? Please talk about frequency of coverage, nature of representations, etc. To what extent are the representations consistent with your experiences? Provide examples
6. How do you think the media representations of queer men in Ghana have affected viewers and readers generally? For example, how have the news reports affected, for a) your family? b) your friends? c) your co-workers?
7. Please describe your experiences and outcomes related to your sexuality, in encounters with:
 - a) the police,
 - b) medical providers in hospitals,
 - c) government office personnel,
 - d) other institutions

Appendix F

Informed Consent Form for Queer Men

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Godfried Asante, Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Communication & Journalism at the University of New Mexico, U.S.A. The overarching goal of this study is to understand how people who identify as GLBTQ are represented in newspaper reports and also how that reporting affects GLBTQ people's engagement with institutions and interactions with others. In order to examine this, the researcher seeks to understand how such representations impact the availability of choices for GLBTQ people and their construction of cultural identities in Ghana. In addition to examining media reports, this The researcher will interview staff members of non-profit organizations who work with queer men, and also queer men in Ghana.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

If you agree to be in this research study, you will answer discussion questions about your experiences as a queer man in Ghana and how representations of queer men in Ghanaian media have affected your relationship with your family, friends and coworkers. Participation in this interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes of your time on the day for the interview. Your responses will be kept confidential. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you may choose not to answer any questions during the interview without any penalties, whatsoever. Your responses will be tape-recorded only with your permission. There are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research.

How long will I be in this study?

The focus group will take about one and half hours to two hours to complete and you also agree to be audio recorded.

What are the risks of being in this study?

There are no foreseen risks associated with participating in this study. There may be some minimal risks in talking about some uncomfortable experiences that you might have gone through. In this respect, memories of these experiences may make you feel uncomfortable. The interview will also explore questions regarding your own cultural groups and your relationships with people whose group identities are different from yours. You may choose not to respond to any question, inform and talk about your discomfort with the interviewer, or stop the interview at any time. There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks, ask one of the study investigators

What are the benefits of this study?

Your participation in this research will give you the opportunity to share information and views about your experiences as a queer man in Ghana. The interview will allow you to share your views on queer criminalization and discrimination in Ghana. In short, this research will give you an opportunity to reflect on how criminalization and media representation of queer men has affected your relationship with family, friends and coworkers. The results of this study will lead

to a better understanding on the effects of media portrayal of queer men and also the communicative practices queer men use to navigate the institutions and structures which constrain or enable their access to specific resources.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

Your participation in this focus group is voluntary and anonymous. You will write your name on the authorization page only. You may refuse to participate, skip any question or withdraw at any time without penalty. If you do decide to participate, you will sign and detach both consent forms, keep one form for your records, and hand the other form to the person administering the focus group before starting the focus group.

How will my information be kept confidential?

Your original name will be withheld from the transcription of the focus group interviews and in the final report. The information gathered from the focus group will be used only for the purpose of this study. Information from the focus group will be transcribed and saved in the Communication and Journalism department under the supervision of the principal investigator and researcher. Only the principal and secondary investigators will have access to the transcriptions.

After each focus group interview, the researcher will transfer the videotaped session into a Compact Disk and erase the original video from the audio tape recorder. The researcher will hire a transcription service to transcribe the videotapes. The transcript will be saved on the secondary researcher's computer until final analysis is completed in May 2017.

The secondary investigator will erase transcriptions from his computer once his dissertation is completed. The CDs and hard copies of transcriptions will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the main office of the Communication and Journalism department for three years after the completion of the study. After the three-year period, the data related to the study will be destroyed. Transcriptions would be shredded and information on the CDs will be deleted. Through the written consent document and the oral introduction, the researcher has explained this study to you and answered your questions

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

There are no direct costs to you for participating in this study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

Participating in this study is voluntary and there are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research.

Can I stop being in this study once I begin?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting any services to which you are entitled

If you feel your personal safety is compromised during the focus group interview, you can leave the interview and request to have a personal interview instead. Likewise, if the personal safety of

the investigator becomes questionable at the location of the personal interview, that particular interview will not be conducted.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Godfried Asante, PhD Candidate , or his associate Dr. Mary Jane Collier will be glad to answer them at 505 554 4831 any time throughout the week. If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team in regards to any complaints you have about the study, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129 or email at IRB@salud.unm.edu.

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research subject?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/HRRC/maincampusirbhome.shtml>.

Consent

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research subject.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Name of Adult Subject (print) Signature of Adult Subject Date

INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE

I have explained the research to the subject or his/her legal representative and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Godfried Asante

Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member) Date

Appendix G

Informed Consent Form for Officials of INGO

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Godfried Asante, Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Communication & Journalism at the University of New Mexico, U.S.A. The overarching goal of this study is to understand how people who identify as GLBTQ are represented in newspaper reports and also how that reporting affects GLBTQ people's engagement with institutions and interactions with others. In order to examine this, the researcher seeks to understand how such representations impact the availability of choices for GLBTQ people and their construction of cultural identities in Ghana. In addition to examining media reports, this The researcher will interview staff members of non-profit organizations who work with queer men, and also queer men in Ghana.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are working with an organization involved in issues related to human rights and political advocacy (a) you are a staff member (b) you are involved in an organization located in Accra, Ghana or other locations in Ghana (c) you are a Ghanaian citizen, (d) you are willing to talk about queer discrimination in Ghana.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

You will participate in an interview that will be held at a place most convenient to you and where we can have an uninterrupted interview. The researcher, who is from Ghana will conduct the interview. Participation in the interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes of your time on the day appointed for the interview. During the interview, you will be asked to provide information about your organization and your involvement in the organizations by sharing information on your professional work, the actions that you have taken and how you think the actions are helpful to the reduce discrimination against queer men in Ghana. Your responses will be kept confidential. Your responses will not be shared with other members of your organization. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you may choose not to answer any question during the interview without penalties whatsoever. Your responses will be tape-recorded only with your permission. There are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research.

How long will I be in this study?

The interview will take about one and half hours to two hours to complete and you also agree to be audio recorded.

What are the risks of being in this study?

There are no foreseen risks associated with participating in this study. There may be some minimal risks in talking about some uncomfortable experiences that you might have gone through or experienced working with queer men. In this respect, memories of these experiences

may make you feel uncomfortable. The interview will also explore questions regarding your own cultural groups and your relationships with people whose group identities are different from yours. You may choose not to respond to any question, inform and talk about your discomfort with the interviewer, or stop the interview at any time. There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in this research study.

For more information about risks, ask one of the study investigators

What are the benefits of this study?

Your participation in this research will give you the opportunity to share information and views about your experiences working against queer criminalization and discrimination. In short, this research gives you an opportunity to reflect about the work that you are doing and the potential to develop into a model that can be applied in your organization for best outcomes. The results of this study will lead to a better understanding on the effects of media portrayal of queer men and also the communicative practices queer men use to navigate the institutions and structures which constrain or enable their access to specific resources. The results of the study will be directly relevant and applicable to the work you are doing in your organization in Ghana and in Africa.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

Your participation in this interview is voluntary and anonymous. You will write your name on the authorization page only. You may refuse to participate, skip any question or withdraw at any time without penalty. If you do decide to participate, you will sign and detach both consent forms, keep one form for your records, and hand the other form to the person administering the focus group before starting the focus group.

How will my information be kept confidential?

Your original name will be withheld from the transcription of the interviews and in the final report. The information gathered from the interview will be used only for the purpose of this study. Information from the focus group will be transcribed and saved in the Communication and Journalism department under the supervision of the principal investigator and researcher. Only the principal and secondary investigators will have access to the transcriptions.

After each focus group interview, the researcher will transfer the videotaped session into a Compact Disk and erase the original video from the audio tape recorder. The researcher will hire a transcription service to transcribe the videotapes. The transcript will be saved on the secondary researcher's computer until final analysis is completed in May 2017.

The secondary investigator will erase transcriptions from his computer once his dissertation is completed. The CDs and hard copies of transcriptions will be stored in the locked file cabinet in the main office of the Communication and Journalism department for three years after the completion of the study. After the three-year period, the data related to the study will be destroyed. Transcriptions would be shredded and information on the CDs will be deleted. Through the written consent document and the oral introduction, the researcher has explained this study to you and answered your questions

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

There are no direct costs to you for participating in this study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

Participating in this study is voluntary and there are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research.

Can I stop being in this study once I begin?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting any services to which you are entitled.

If you feel your personal safety is compromised during the focus group interview, you can leave the interview and request to have a personal interview instead. Likewise, if the personal safety of the investigator becomes questionable at the location of the personal interview, that particular interview will not be conducted.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Godfried Asante, PhD Candidate, or his associate Dr. Mary Jane Collier will be glad to answer them at 505 554 4831 any time throughout the week. If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team in regards to any complaints you have about the study, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129 or email at IRB@salud.unm.edu.

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research subject?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/HRRC/maincampusirbhome.shtml>.

Consent

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research subject.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Name of Adult Subject (print)	Signature of Adult Subject	Date

INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE

I have explained the research to the subject or his/her legal representative and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Godfried Asante

Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member)

Date

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