stabanalisation

A discussion paper about disrupting backlash by reclaiming LGBTI voices in the African church landscape
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The title of the convening that gave rise to this collaborative reflection Breaking though the Backlash: Transformative encounters between LGBTI people and Churches in Africa, implies a level of visible and tangible progress in pursuing justice for LGBTI people within the African faith landscape and a coordinated push-back against progressive gains and constructive progress. Consequently this contribution starts by critically engaging the African contextual faith landscape and reflecting on examples of both progress and emerging backlash when it comes to the full inclusion of LGBTI people within African faith communities. Following from this, we explore the contours of a possible theology of liberation for LGBTI people in the African context. We agree with Makau Mutua who argues that to engage with backlash we require “…thoughtful analysis, courageous advocacy and fundamental reform.”

A Theology by LGBTI people for LGBTI people

We take our cue for this work from the prophetic call voiced in the publication following the 2016 Homophobia and churches in Africa: A dialogue consultation hosted in Pietermaritzburg entitled When faith does violence: Reimagining engagement between churches and LGBTI groups on homophobia in Africa. The call emerging from the publication was for the development of a people’s or, more poignantly termed, a prophetic theology from the margins. The challenge voiced within the publication called for theology done by LGBTI people in Africa for LGBTI people in Africa – in the process, disrupting the traditional status of authoritative voices when it comes to theological discourse as well as the dominant direction of theological reflection and engagement.
We proposed Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology within this contribution that calls for theological reflection(s) done by those, and starting from the lived experiences of those, who are often negatively identified in the African context with the term Izitabane.

We do this work self-consciously as four African Izitabane people who identify diversely within the LGBTI abbreviation and who have navigated our way through the African faith landscape in uniquely complex embodied ways. In the process of doing theology we broadly propose that Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology calls for an embodied reclaiming of all that is life-affirming within faith landscapes, re-imagining community and the engagement with the sources of faith and remembering our communal sacramental identity. We also weave into this contribution something of our own embodied experiences within faith communities when we recount narratives recalling personal experiences of the Eucharist in relation to navigating our sexuality and gender identity and expressions. The aim of these narratives are two-fold; they firstly illustrate our collective commitment to the process of doing theology from the body, and secondly they highlight something of the incomplete and ongoing nature of the work that we are engaged in. We consequently situate ourselves, through this contribution, in the uncomfortable in-between space, between that which we so painfully know and the collective embodied flourishing that we long for.

One of the deacons moves hastily after the cleric asked: “beloveds in the Lord are you served with bread?” In the back, one of the congregants put her hand up. The deacon needs to get to her. In his rapped movement the bread of the Eucharist falls accidentally from the silver plate and lands on the church floor. The deacon is dumbstruck for a moment and slightly embarrassed. He hastily turns around and fetched another plate and moves gently past the bread on the floor. He is not bothered, she needs to be served with bread. I, however, cannot stop gazing, there the bread lies, between me and the Eucharist table. I am sitting directly in front of the table. The bread just lies there, worthless, discarded and impure.

“The body of Christ is broken for you”, the consecrated words of the Eucharist are uttered. The Eucharistic words sounds so performative I think. I wondered, is this bread on the floor consecrated? Is this bread still the body of Christ? Not surely not, the bread, it cannot be, its filthy. When last did someone vacuum that spot? The bread is unclean, you cannot clean that which is unclean, especially when it is bread that is on a church floor. The uncleanliness of the bread connects with something inside of me. I am the unclean bread that is on the church floor. That no one wants to touch. Because I am gay. I am unclean Leviticus proclaims. My uncleanliness is against nature Apostle Paul asserts. I am not supposed to be in the sexual position of women, it is against nature. The filth of the floor altered the nature of the bread. Consecrated words cannot save the bread from impurity. Consecrated words cannot save me from impurity. I am doomed. Am I?
But why reclaim such a negative term?

Maybe appropriating the derogatory term Izitabane and (impossibly) coupling it with theology requires some attention before we move into a critical contextual reflection. “Nasi lesizitabane or lezizitabane,” which literally translate into “here comes these homosexuals, lesbians or gays” are words we often hear being uttered to LGBTI people walking the streets in local townships. Izitabane (singular) or Izitabane (plural) is the Zulu word most frequently used in communal spaces to discriminate, undermine and shame LGBTI people. This word is applied to both gender non-conformance and same sex desire and at times is used interchangeably with words such as Ungqingili (singular) or oNgqingili (plural), Inkonkoni (singular) or Izinkonkoni (plural).

The term Izitabane originates from conceptual engagements with intersexuality and articulates something of the understanding of intersex people as people who possess both sexual organs traditionally associated with being a female or male. The term is consequently often applied to gays, lesbians and transgender people and insinuates the notion of an individual possessing both sexual organs and someone that subsequently does not conform to the heteronormative orientation and gender identity.

Despite the populist argument, especially from African leaders that so-called ‘homosexuality’ is a Western import, historical research has highlighted that in the Southern African context ubutabane relationships were well established and documented.

In the South African context, the constitution is well known for its progressive stance on gender, sex and sexual orientation that finds pertinent expression in the bill of rights. However, with this being said, Izitabane in South Africa experience prejudice and sexual discrimination based on their sexuality and gender. We have heard and have been troubled by so many stories in Southern Africa about LGBTI persons being murdered under the pretence of ‘correcting’ in order to conform to heteronormative ideals. So called ‘corrective rape’ has become an ongoing violation that targets Izitabane in Southern Africa.

Beyond the example of ‘corrective rape’ as a mechanism employed by heteropatriarchy in the process of controlling the sexuality of gender non-conforming individuals, as a further example in 2018 the former South African deputy minister of education resigned from office because he was charged with assault. Upon his appearance in court he claimed that he assaulted the three women because they called him Izitabane. Manana’s incident highlights how the word Izitabane is negatively perceived in our society and connotes the derogatory elements that fuel discrimination as it undermines the dignity of a human being and constitutes a dehumanizing stance. The question probably emerges why use this word at all in the process of working toward the flourishing of communal bodies of LGBTI people in the African faith landscape.

Taking it back and turning it on its head

Drawing on the insights posited within ‘queer theory’ we argue that the term Izitabane might be used as a better conceptual tool to conduct radical cultural and political critique in contemporary South Africa when it comes to LGBTI people. Izitabane is indeed a term that is complicated as it is dominantly used in a discriminatory manner. We argue that it is precisely this dimension that makes it particularly useful. Firstly, we argue that the pure shocking and offensive nature of the term in African contexts cracks open space for authentic conversation to begin and for the enhancement of the process of destabilizing neat gender and sexuality categories. Secondly and more recently the term has been reclaimed and re-appropriated as a signifier of proud self-identification. We argue that it is precisely the unsettling semantic nature of the word that we need to unpack and interrogate in the process of the re-appropriation of the term Izitabane.

We do not deny the fact that the re-appropriation of the term Izitabane may evoke or bring to memory some painful experiences and encounters for those involved in this context. We do, however, believe that it constitutes a promising tool in pursuit of a radical sexual politics in South Africa. Milani Tommaso proposes Stabanisation as a radical practice of deconstruction that regards identity categories and ideological formations from the North through the lens of Southern African experiences. Stabanisation, therefore, resists settling on conclusive answers and stable constructions but instead unveils the uncomfortable ambiguities, complexities and ruptures that arise from the intersections of race, and non-normative gender and sexual subjectivities in the African context.
Izitabane as a verb

We propose Stabanisation as a tool in pursuit of a radical decolonial practice through the lens of Southern African experiences that is brought into critical conversation with the notion of ubuntu theology. We argue for this in order to counter theologies that have denied, neglected or demonized the reality of the body and bodily desire as Marcella Althaus-Reid so poignantly denotes:

"Denying lust, or the ‘lustful desires of the flesh’, determines when, how and with whom we go to bed, and as such it has been the issue of main interest in all heterosexually-based theology. All the concepts of sin and grace seem to be unendingly tangled around the theologian’s gaze at other people’s beds, bathrooms or sofas. Heterosexual theology has found in its development the same problems and difficulties that people usually find in their sexual lives, for instance, issues of hierarchical relations, positional bodies and monogamic patterns of thought which tend to constrain and de-nurture people’s lives. While people struggle to find life and meaning in the relationships of the sofa beds of friends and lovers.”

Through this contribution we aim to affirm the humanity of Izitabane within the contours of ubuntu theology that calls for the reclaiming of African identities and for communal belonging, flourishing and well-being. We hope that the humanity, dignity and value of izitabane will be honoured as human beings made in the Image of God. By appropriating ubuntu theology for izitabane through the process of Stabanisation we hope to enhance and deepen the meaning of the Zulu saying noting that “umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu” which literally translate into “a person is a person through others” or as John Mbiti poignantly summarises “I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.”

Before, however, exploring the contours of izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology and extending the invitation for further reflection and collective development, we now turn our attention to the contextual realities within the African faith landscape that demands the imperative call for liberation. Although by no means exhaustive, we engage different African contextual examples that might offer some illustrations of progress being made for LGBTI people of faith and systemic mechanisms of backlash that this progress has encountered. Although our engagement with these contextual realities might have a theoretical tone, we want to acknowledge the painfully high embodied price that those at the forefront of these ideologically contested developments pay and that the wounds of progress are most dominantly written on the bodies of LGBTI people.

"I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am.”

- John Mbiti
two steps forward and one backward: considering contextual backlash and progress

It was clearly communicated that I and those like me were not welcome to the special General Synod meeting of the Dutch Reformed Church that took place in Pretoria in 2016.

The special synod was called precisely to deal with the disruption of LGBTI people and the unruly bodies that were welcomed during the 2015 synod, but that subsequently created a great deal of conflict and strife and therefore necessitated a special synod meeting. The Sunday newspaper announced that no disruption would be tolerated and that those with #Liefdeisliefde T-shirts would not be allowed to enter the meeting. Upon arrival at the meeting venue the reception was chilling and the aggression tangible. I slipped passed those who were stationed with strict orders not to allow us into the meeting venue and found a seat at the edge of the pew on the balcony. A man, not much older than me, probably an elder in the church structures approached me and demanded that I leave the meeting venue. He insisted that it was clearly communicated that I was not welcome and that I should leave. In response to my refusal he took me by the arm and indicated that if I refused I would be forcefully removed. In the midst of this threatening encounter the moderator of the church meeting started proceedings on the meeting floor and welcomed all present. He indicated that the meeting would start by all those present sharing the signs of the Eucharist and that also the guests to the synod meeting on the balcony would be invited to partake in the communal meal. In what felt like a heartbeat the hand that was instructed to forcefully remove me became the hand that had to share the broken body of Christ with me in the signs of bread and wine. To this day words escape me to express the violence, the disjointedness and the strange grace of these moments.

In Southern Africa, sexuality and gender are constructed, nurtured and regulated by faith communities and sustained by culture.
In Southern Africa sexuality and gender are constructed, nurtured and regulated by faith communities and sustained by culture.11 How does these constructions, nurturing and regulation of gender and sexuality look? What does faith communities gain from influencing sexuality and gender? At the heart of the next section we try to engage with the above mentioned questions and discuss and analyse the backlash and progress of faith communities in relation to the advancement of the human dignity of LGBTI people. In the first part of this section we look at some of the countries geographically located in the Southern African region and collectively take stock of some of the progress and also backlash to progress within these different contexts. After our contextual discussion we highlight some of the structural mechanisms and strategies that to our minds inform the backlash.

Botswana

The advancement of equality and human dignity of LGBTI people in Botswana has been a collective effort of activist organizations, law fraternity and faith communities. In 2017 the High Court ordered the government of Botswana to legally recognize the gender identity of a transgender woman. Following this landmark ruling, earlier in June 2019 the Botswana High Court decriminalized same-sex sexual conduct. Resistance from faith communities to maintain, nurture and regulate the criminalization of sexual conduct was evident in the national conversation around decriminalization. The Evangelical Fellowship of Botswana (EFB) played a key role in driving the narrative that decriminalization of same-sex conduct would erode the moral fibre of Botswana.

The protection of normative gender and sexual values and norms, according to these arguments creates conditions that enhances the well-being of families and communities that further supports the flourishing of the nation state.12 For years the EFB strategically ran campaigns portraying LGBTI people as “delinquent beings and deserving of nothing but to be thrown in prison cells and mental hospitals.”13 The religious rhetoric of the EFB became the bedrock for physical and virtual bullying and violence. The EFB’s violent rhetoric is not different from the associations that this organization belongs too. The EFB is a member of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA). In part the AEA is a member of the World Evangelical Alliance that promotes the right to “attempt to influence public policy on gay rights.” As a global religious body the WEA is therefore meddling in sovereign affairs of nation states. 

The position of religious leaders in Malawi is both viewed as stumbling block and an opportunity for the advancement of equality and dignity. In 2016 Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) and the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) marched in the capital of Malawi and handed over a petition to stop the decriminalization of homosexuality and abortion. The issue that mainly informed this collective protest action by above mentioned churches was the protection of the so-called ‘family’. Initially the debates concerning homosexuality in Malawi was sparked by national interest in the arrest of Tione Chimalamba, a transgender woman, and Steven Monjeza, a cisgender man when they got married in 2010. Chimbalanga and Monjeza destabilized religious and cultural beliefs of the construction of marriage that is dominantly understood as being between one man and one woman. Chimbalanga and Monjeza destabilized religious and cultural beliefs of the construction of marriage that is dominantly understood as being between one man and one woman.

Contrary, to the EFB, AEA and WEA backlash the Botswana Christian Council (BCC), supported decriminalization. The BCC progressive stance on the equality and human dignity of LGBTI people can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of activists and faith communities that worked together to demystify stereotypes and stigma that fuelled religious prejudices. Engaging with faith communities is a messy and complex endeavour that requires some sort of understanding how faith, sexuality and gender interrelate. The EFB dominant narrative of morality, is a colonial heritage of laws that regulated the bodies desire. Canadian political philosopher Judith Butler in The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection points out that “subjection consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency.”

Globalizing the culture wars: the WEAsmandala - A discussion paper about disrupting backlash by reclaiming LGBTI voices in the African church landscape
Botswana activists, advocacy workers, religious leaders and faith communities’ collective efforts can be attributed to seeking a just society where the human dignity of all people are intertwined.

This Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) and the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR) advocates for the advancement of equality and dignity of LGBTI people in the sectors of justice, health and social services. CEDEP and CHRR disrupt the sexual citizen marker by affirming the equality and dignity of LGBTI people.

South Africa

Same-sex sexual conduct in South Africa is decriminalized under law and same-sex people’s unions are recognized by South African law. Constitutional democracy in the state does not necessarily imply that faith communities affirms the human dignity of LGBTI people. Furthermore, the disconnect between the protection sanctioned by the South African constitution and the precarious realities faced by LGBTI people in the South African context has often been commented on and have given rise to rich reflection concerning the maturity of the South African constitutional dispensation. In this section, we will look at the following churches and ecumenical body: Dutch Reformed Church, Methodist and the Anglican Church in Southern Africa.

In the South African landscape, the backlash and progress became apparent within the Dutch Reformed Church. In October 2015 the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) made the decision to fully affirm the human dignity LGBTI people. Joy was short lived as numerous documents of objection flooded the leadership of the DRC. In 2016, buckling under the pressure of these objections the DRC retracted its 2015 position statement of inclusion and regressed to a legalistic and conservative position pertaining to sexual diversity within the faith community.

A group of 11 DRC believers took the church to court to seek legal judgement. On 21 August 2018, the case of the 11 members against the DRC was heard in the Pretoria High Court. Essentially the two main issues for consideration was, on the one hand, a technical issue of alleged procedural misconduct as it was argued that the 2015 progressive decision was compromised and ultimately overturned when the meeting procedures were inappropriately led by those responsible for procedural oversight. The second issue engaged, on the other hand, was the complex process of the balancing of rights within the South African constitutional dispensation, when rights protecting the freedom of religion is brought into conversation with rights protecting personal liberty pertaining to issues such as race, class, gender and, particular to this contribution, sexual orientation.

Judgment was handed down on Friday 8 March 2019 and ruled in favour of the plaintiffs on both grounds. The misuse of church law and meeting procedures inappropriately led by those responsible for procedural oversight. The second issue engaged, on the other hand, was the complex process of the balancing of rights within the South African constitutional dispensation, when rights protecting the freedom of religion is brought into conversation with rights protecting personal liberty pertaining to issues such as race, class, gender and, particular to this contribution, sexual orientation.

The Centre for the Development of People (CEDEP) and the Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation (CHRR) advocates for the advancement of equality and dignity of LGBTI people in the sectors of justice, health and social services. CEDEP and CHRR disrupt the sexual citizen marker by affirming the equality and dignity of LGBTI people.
Openly queer ministers in the Methodist church face stigma, shame, and are treated as outcasts.

For a long time the Methodist Church of Southern Africa were dominantly in the spotlight when considering the position of LGBTI people within faith communities due to its structures, churches discontinuation of Rev. Ecclesia de Lange, Much has been learnt concerning the full inclusion of LGBTI within faith communities by this ongoing process of mediation, discussion and discourse. 2 South African Methodist minister and scholar, Simangqa Kumalo, for instance argued that the Methodist Church in Southern Africa (MCSA) claims to accept gay and lesbian people to its membership, and ministry, however, it has not taken further steps to recognize same-sex unions. The complexity of the issue and the disconnect between progressive and conservative perspectives on the realities faced by LGBTI people in the Methodist Church in Southern Africa has recently been further illuminated by a study conducted by Ntobeko Dlamini that drew on the methodological insights of oral history and engaged the embodied lived experiences of Izitabane or queer ministers in the Methodist church in KwaZulu Natal. The findings highlighted that openly queer ministers in the Methodist church face stigma, shame, and are treated as outcasts. 3 Dlamini’s findings and the recent ruling of the Methodist church’s ban on LGBTI suggest that the Methodist church has betrayed its own mandate and stance of claiming to be the loving and accepting church when considering the position of LGBTI people within faith communities due to the interpretation of the bible by heteropatriarchal backlash. In the United Methodist church maintained its position to accept LGBTI people but with the exception that they remain celibate. Same-sex relationships have generally been conceptualized as equal to lust, prostitution, and promiscuity, fornication, and these do not remain celibate. Same-sex relationships have generally been conceptualized as equal to lust, prostitution, and promiscuity, fornication, and these do not remain celibate. Same-sex relationships have generally been conceptualized as equal to lust, prostitution, and promiscuity, fornication, and these do not remain celibate. Same-sex relationships have generally been conceptualized as equal to lust, prostitution, and promiscuity, fornication, and these do not remain celibate. Although the tradition was adopted by the ANGELIC Church of Southern Africa is remarkable if one considers some of the conservative trends noticeable in the global denominational landscape. In 2006, for instance, the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) met in Jerusalem as a separate body outside of the Lambeth Conference, GAFCON emerged as a response to a suggested liberal trend in the church, coherence of Biblical truths for example the consecration of a bishop who is in a same-sex union, and secondly the redefinition of marriage, the LGBTI Community in the context in which ACISA operates. The mandate of the commission is: “...to present to Provincial Synod 2019 a proposal enabling the Church ‘to minister to those in same-sex unions and the LGBTI Community in the context in which ACISA operates. This mandate does not rescind the decision of Provincial Synod 2016: it neither assumes that ministry to members of the LGBTI community will include the blessing of same-sex unions, nor does it exclude that possibility, should that be the mind of Provincial Synod 2019. It also directs the Commission to consider the situation of Dioceses outside South Africa, in which there is no provision in law for same-sex unions. The mandate is in line with the inclusion of the 1998 Lambeth Conference and Provincial Synod 2002 to listen to the views of the LGBTI community, and in particular with that part of Lambeth Resolution 1.10 which “calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals.” The approach adopted by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is remarkable if one considers some of the conservative trends noticeable in the global denominational landscape. In 2006, for instance, the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) met in Jerusalem as a separate body outside of the Lambeth Conference, GAFCON emerged as a response to a suggested liberal trend in the church, coherence of Biblical truths for example the consecration of a bishop who is in a same-sex union, and secondly the redefinition of marriage, the LGBTI Community in the context in which ACISA operates...
GAFCON reclaims the authority of the Bible as central source in the movement. The Bible from this perspective becomes the source book of fundamentalism and informs stable and binary gender constructions. This point is evident in the Jerusalem Declaration when it again states that marriage is between a man and a woman. It argues that marriage is the exclusive space of “sexual intimacy”, reproduction, and the basis for family. In recent years, GAFCON made several statements that further illustrate their stance. On the consecration of women as Bishops the movement is clear that they “retain the historic practice of the consecration only of men as bishops.” Furthermore, GAFCON countered a Church of England decision to write a baptism liturgy to affirm the gender appropriation of transgendered people. This declaration and subsequent statements is a call back to orthodox Anglicanism that “guard[s] and [proclaims] the unchanging truth in a changing world.”

The movement back to ‘orthodox Anglicanism’ is an inward retreat for self-preservation of enclosed identity. Throughout history we have seen the detrimental effects of enclosed identities that others, stigmatize and dehumanizes the other and the development of set boundaries of “us” vs. “them.”

In contrast the approach of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa that seek to develop pastoral guidelines to provide a framework to minister to LGBTI people speak of some awareness of the importance of inclusion and embrace as Christian values. We commend ACSA for taking a bold step towards active listening to both sides of the conversation. However, we are of the opinion that the time has arrived where LGBTI people must respond to their own theological needs. Therefore, after considering something of the systemic and ideological issues underlying these examples of backlash and progress, in the next last section we propose Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology as a way of LGBTI people doing theology from their own embodied lived experiences in order to promote the full inclusion for all those who do not fit the heteropatriarchal ideal.

“the misuse of church law and procedural process was a strategy to overturn the progress made in the faith community to full inclusion of LGBTI people.”
Pushback and backlash to much of what has been highlighted and discussed in the contextual examples of progress as posed above can be systemically understood when considering the pervasive normalcy of ‘the water we swim in.’

We understand the backlash that we witness and experience to various forms of progressive inclusion as systemic expressions of heteropatriarchy or the term has recently been re-framed econo-heteropatriarchy. This new expression affirms the analysis that patriarchy and heteronormativity is the structural results when culture and religion align to inform dominant constructions of gender. This system is not a mere conceptual confusion, or an idea, but it has very real consequences for bodies and finds expression in the intersection of socio-economic realities, class, race, gender and sexuality construction.

Patriarchal heteronormativity

The pervasive construction of patriarchal heteronormativity is the result of a systematic normalization of heterosexuality and is dominantly present in African contexts. According to Andrew Martin et al, “this is the idea, dominant in most societies, that heterosexuality is the only ‘normal’ sexual orientation, only sexual or marital relations between women and men are acceptable and each sex has certain natural roles in life, so-called gender roles.” Patriarchy and subsequent heteronormativity thus equates being human to being a man and a man understands over against a woman and in ideal union with a woman. This system then further informs dominant ideas about masculinity, family, marriage and citizenship.

Men and boys who deviate from traditional norms of masculinity which are dominant and aggressive over other genders, suffer violence, discrimination and abuse.
Heteronormativity informs dominant ideas of what it means to be a man. Connell et al argues that hegemonic masculinity as a dominant perception and ideal is maintained by dominance and violence to safeguard and sustain masculinity against encroachment. It is also the same narrative that informs homosexuality as un-African and a product of colonial rule.32 A real man is one who provides, protects, produces, leads and penetrates. Connell further argues that men and boys deviate from these traditional norms of masculinity which are modes of masculinity that are dominant and aggressive over other genders, suffer violence, discrimination and abuse.

In spaces where it is not possible to remodel healthier forms of masculinity by creative reinventions, hegemonic ideals of masculinity teach men that showing ‘soft’ emotion is subjecting oneself to weakness and furthermore that it is acceptable to express violence and anger towards women and alternative genders. Marginalized men and women often assist in sustaining these ideals by supporting, suppressing and applauding men who are violent.33 The protection from encroachment not only supports the bashing of women, Izitabane and other men from tarnishing the idea of masculinity, but upholds systems where those who would otherwise fall in the margins, such as women and MSM are celebrated for upholding the ideals of patriarchy.34 This further fuels social structures which degrade the value of an all-inclusive community by priding certain identities as important or powerful over others.

### Marriage = one man + one woman

A second structure that is claimed to exclusively belong within the domains of aco-n-heteropatriarchy is that of marriage. In numerous faith discussions and church decisions, as also became apparent in our contextual discussion above, concessions are made towards the inclusion of LGBTI within faith communities but marriage as the foundational union construction in society is reserved for those who identify as heterosexual.34 Religion and culture align to keep this idea in place as it is often argued that the focus of a marriage union is reproduction and the subsequent ‘biological compatibility’ of males and females is used as a proof for this argument. When for instance listening to the reflections on the nature and value of marriage as an institutional container for union between one man and one woman as often proposed as the only possible option when contemplating the question of union within conservative faith communities, one would think that the Bible speaks in clear singular (positive) voice on the subject of marriage and that one unquestionable model is held up consistently within the body of Scripture. This is of course not the case as we see different models proposed and deemed acceptable in various parts of the biblical narrative. These different models speak of different contextual conventions and aim to address the needs of differently situated communities within the development and unfolding of the biblical story. Just as we encounter a diversity of voices in the process of interpreting the Bible, the inner voice of scripture is also rich and complex. We pick up on this notion when we further discuss the contours of Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology.

### A father, a mother and 2.5 children

Closely related to the instance of marriage being a heteronormative construction that could only be constituted when one man and one woman is involved in the union is the notion employed within backlash rhetoric when arguing for ‘traditional family values.’34 The narrow, heterosexual definition of family informed by religion and culture is that of a father, a mother and their biological children produced from within the holy confines of heterosexual marriage. The embodied lived realities of real African families, however, undermine and deconstruct this single and restrictive notion of what family means. A diversity of family constructions has always existed and we would like to acknowledge and affirm the rich construction of constructions that constitute family in the African context. Beyond traditional nuclear families, single parent, multi-generational, female- and child-headed households and childless families are but some of the examples what constitute family. Not only is the backlash notion of ‘traditional family values’ problematic because it implies one single construction of family, it also gives the impression that there are somehow universal ‘family values’ that exist and that can and should be appropriated by all. These so called traditional family values are, however, nothing more than ideological rhetoric based on culturally informed fundamentalist religions notions of aco-n-heteropatriarchy.

A noteworthy attempt to resist these limiting notions of family in the Southern African region has been the affirming and reclaiming statement that the Global Interfaith Network launched in February 2018. The Johannesburg Declaration signifies an attempt to protect the diversity of alternative and LGBTI families, to celebrate sexual diversity within African cultural and faith context.35 The statement was the product of organizing across a range of sectors and a diversity of stakeholders in the process of reclaiming a diversity of family constructions as both Christian and African. Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology argues for the same style of organizing and engagement as illustrated in this example.
A true citizen under the law

A category that we would like to discuss is one often co-opted by econo-heteropatriarchal discourse is that of what constitutes a true African national citizen, especially if a nation appropriates Christianity as a value for the entire population.26 Within these contexts LGBTI people are often demonized on the basis of homophobic religious and political discourse. These ideas find expression and are often protected within legislation. We recently witnessed this form of backlash in a very tangible way when on Friday, 24 May 2019 the Kenyan high court ruled against the petition to repeal provisions 162 and 165 of the Kenyan Penal Code which criminalizes same sex conduct. The Court had been asked to review the constitutional validity and compatibility of Section 162 and 165 of the Penal Code, which provides for criminal sanctions to be imposed on individuals convicted of engaging in or permitting someone else to engage with them in ‘carnal acts against the order of nature’ as well as section 165 of the Penal Code which makes provision for sanctions against male consensual same sex conduct. This negative ruling declared a lack of evidence of extensive discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the existence and application of the law in the Kenyan context. In order to fully understand the significance of this contextual example we firstly need to take into account something of the contextual and historical realities informing the existence of Section 162 and 165 within the Kenyan Penal code.

Laws against the body, particularly sexual laws, were paramount in the social ordering of genders and sexualities in the micro and macro scale.27 Sodomy laws, as particular examples of colonial law that has found space in traditional African dialogue on sexualities and has also been profoundly driven by religious fundamental beliefs, have had devastating and fatal outcomes on LGBTI rights and identity.28 Beyond this macro level impact, for individuals it has had rather distorted implications on the identities and experiences of LGBTI people in the African context as these laws does not only criminalize sexual expression between same sex people but also demonizes it and degrades it un-African and un-Christian. Aiming to illustrate something of the complexities highlighted above the Kenyan National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC) launched an appeal against the constitutionality of section 162 and 165 of the Kenyan Penal Code, which criminalizes same sex relations. The appeal was rejected based on the lack of evidence against it infringing on LGBTI rights, while the presiding judge made reference to the idea that there is nonetheless no scientific proof that LGBTI people are born that way. The “ draconian colonial-era criminalization of homosexuality,” according to the NGLHRC, disenfranchises Kenyans by preventing them from forming part of the national privilege of belonging and benefiting from the safeguards of the constitution, and does not guarantee them protection against “suffering violence, blackmail and torture” but rather subjects them to further risk of torture and discrimination.29

In sum, the main thrust of our argument in this section was for the unmasking of econo-heteropatriarchy as a mere construction that is neither absolute nor stable or complete and yet remains pervasive. Zitsabanzi bodies, lives and relationships shows that the prescribed container of econo-heteropatriarchy is not big or stable enough to contain the diversity of human experience. From the place of our bodies. In the following section we offer a discussion of the contours that inform our collective understanding of Zitsabanzi zingabantu ubuntu theology. We do this work collectively and from the place of our bodies. We spoke from our own place and in the process we hope to make a different voice heard than the dominant discourse that so often want to tell us who we are, where we belong and what our bodies should be doing. We structure our discussion around the foundational notion of embodiment and the communal and collective actions of reclaiming, reimagining and remembering.
Observing sis Patience crouching late into church often gets my spirits high. Her boisterous energy and appeal follows her determined stumbles into the church, half shy and aware, yet continually affirming the poignancy and knowing strut in her step. A character indeed. Her flaré, once present, always has a magical effect on the mood of the choir; her angelic voice creates the mood that makes possible the potential of music to move the heart and heal the soul. I’ve often been lost and taken in by effects of the pristine harmony of melody and heart in the communal singing, that rarely have I observed that she remains behind, often, while the rest of the choir and the church move forward in time for the Eucharist. Awa, we know Sis Patience and her drama! Of such a sacred ritual of the church, the build up to the heart of connection, I find myself asking why she chooses to miss the blessings here entailed, that she knows are within her grasp, in part towards making the connection that she woke up for. I admit that I am at a miss when she insists that she cannot receive communion having been so late for church, as she then missed her one opportunity to confess her sins. I say, for a minute I marvel at how she, maybe like many others, holds to high esteem the concept of sin, to centralizing it within doctrine and classifying oneself unworthy even in the space of transformation. In that moment, I also take a step back, remembering that in that very same space of transformation what it is that sets me apart from the rest, that which many have seen as something that justifies my exclusion and gives other grounds to judge and conspire against people like me. That I forget that it is as much a space of hurt as it is for healing.

Sin, as reflected on in the story above is often understood as being something that concerns an individual and that call for the denial of the body. Foundational to Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology is the centrality of the body as the site of experience, connection and meaning making and consequently the body is centred as the primary space for theological reflection.

Theological reflection that starts from the body

The theological reflection that we propose starts from the reality of the body and takes seriously the fact that our bodies give expression to sex, gender, longing, desire and comfort. Our bodies creates the landscape from which we interpret our lived realities and enables the possibility of human connectedness and therefore towards true humanity and community. Privileging the body stems from an African knowledge system that views the body as interconnected with nature, ancestors, deity and with the community.

Religion, politics and culture often, however, intersects with one another to compound and prescribe gender roles and behaviour. Religion has often been positioned to police the nature of sexuality and bodies into a heteropatriarchal system. Reclaiming embodiment essentially demands people of difference, especially the other and the oppressed, to own their spaces and destabilize oppressive narratives and systems, by speaking from the body.

“privileging the body stems fom an African knowledge system that views the body as interconnected with nature, ancestors, deity and with community.”
Bodies denied

We encounter injustice, stigma and discrimination fundamentally in our bodies and by way of example this concretely manifests in the following ways:
- being denied gender affirming surgery (GRS) because health professionals view GRS as cosmetic surgery that often leads to the deteriation of mental and sexual health;
- illegal medical surgeries that alters sex characteristics of intersex children without their consent;
- the seemingly unquestionable insistence of gender specific bathrooms that denies gender non-conforming and trans-people alternative and affirming options;
- the denial that bisexuality is an orientation and conflating bisexuality with promiscuity;
- claiming that orientations of being gay and lesbian is un-African;
- the denial that bisexuality is an orientation and conflating bisexuality with promiscuity;
- the seemingly unquestionable insistence of gender specific bathrooms that denies gender non-conforming and trans-people alternative and affirming options;
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- the denial that bisexuality is an orientation and conflating bisexuality with promiscuity;
- the denial that bi...
More than one voice in the Bible

Sometimes when listening to church discussions about sexual diversity one gets the impression that the Bible speaks with one voice on the issue of sex and sexuality. Just as we, however, encounter a diversity of voices in the process of interpreting the Bible, the inner voice of scripture is also rich, diverse and at times contradictory.

A notion that could be very helpful when engaging the above mentioned is understanding the Bible as a so called ‘site of struggle’ as proposed by the South African biblical scholar Gerald West. This insight has been very helpful in the process of trying to understand how it is possible that when reading the Bible people can come to such different understandings. How, if we are reading the same text, do we end up with such very different interpretations? Not only is there a diversity of voices gathered around the Bible in the process of Interpretation, but the Bible internally also contain a rich diversity of perspectives and positions. A problem often arises when those wishing to protect themselves and their identity connect with voices or perspectives within the Bible that aimed to do a very similar thing for vulnerable communities in transition in the ancient world.

When we believe that the Bible is not for us…

When contemplating the relation between Izitabane and the Bible, we call for a radical new way of reading the Bible because of our own embodied experience of exclusion and dehumanization due to certain life denying interpretations of scripture. We ask these questions because we are privileged enough live in community with those who have been excluded and who continue to be excluded on the basis of race, class, gender and sexual orientation and who yet still strive to read the Bible and to live by its principles. We have been shocked and at times saddened when we discover in conversations with those on the margins how these exclusivist interpretations of scripture have found internal traction and often become the inner positions of those most vulnerable and excluded. We saw something of this in 2017 when engaging with Izitabane of faith from rural KwaZulu-Natal in a contextual Bible reading exercise, as part of the Eudy Simelane lecture series, when listening to the sentiment expressed that the Bible is indeed against Izitabane love and that there is no conversation to be had on the matter with religious leaders or people of faith.

When asked, all of us can probably remember a time when we thought that the Bible were not for us or did not belong to us but were the property of the church or to the university. By drawing on the notion of the Bible as a site of struggle Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology calls for honesty and imagination in the process interpretation and reappropriation of the Bible by Izitabane.

Reading the bible from our context and with others

The honesty called for above means that we are serious with ourselves and each other about the fact that all Bible reading is done in a contextual way. We read the Bible in our context and from our own position. Rather than seeing this fact as a problem, we understand this to be a gift as it allows us to bring the embodied stories of our own lives in conversation with the stories of the Bible. The comfort, support, wisdom and guidance that we find by doing this does not, however, belong to any group or individual but comes to its most profound expression when we read the Bible with others. The point is thus not to read the Bible with only those who look like us or who think like us but rather to meet others and the Bible, that is so different from us, together and in the process to create space for more bodies to matter in our collective communities.
As we partake in this sacred body and blood of Christ you need to make sure that your spirit, heart, mind and body are clean and sacred for if that is not the case then you are committing sin in the eyes of the Lord. If there is anyone amongst you who is not talking in this sacred sacrament of the Lord. These are the words I heard over and over again. My Father (who was the pastor of the church) each time he was serving the Sacrament. Sacrament was for those who have gone through the public confirmation as members of the church. Unfortunately for me I did not reach the confirmation stage as I was grappling with my gender incongruence. I delayed taking confirmation because that for me meant I would be agreeing to attend church in female's uniform which did not sit well with me. Instead I began to withdraw and to isolate myself as I constantly felt that I was different, but I always longed to be served that body and blood of Jesus like everyone else. I thought to myself a minute......My father always puts that wine in the fridge at home and the white waffle is always in the cabinet at the dining room. It became a habit of me from that day that whenever I saw my father taking the sacrament to church in the afternoon I will also help myself when no one was noticing. Happily indulging in the sacrament alone, my conscience was clean because I knew that I had not wronged anyone, so I am not sinning. Self-exclusion became an answer to avoid being publicly excluded because I was not confirmed and I could not share my gender difference in the church. Indulging privately in the sacrament I was reclaiming the space to partake in the body and the blood of Christ as I believe myself to be of Christ made in God's image.

The final movement that we would like to highlight as we collectively reflect on the contours of Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology is the process of remembering our communal sacramental identity that would hopefully inform the radical reclaiming of the signs of grace as foregrounded in the narrative above.

Sex and sacraments?

What is the commonality between sex and sacraments? Most Christians would probably not dare ask such an indelicate question. Even the idea of linking these two concepts crosses boundaries between that which is considered holy and that which is understood to be of this world. And yet at the heart of both sex and the sacraments we find the body.

Rather than think of our bodies or our desires as dirty or something that we should hide, we call for the celebration of our embodied love and desire that disrupts and destabilizes dominant heteronormative ideas about love, desire and relationship. Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology is the final movement that we would like to highlight as we collectively reflect on the contours of Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology is the process of remembering our communal sacramental identity that would hopefully inform the radical reclaiming of the signs of grace as foregrounded in the narrative above.

Sex and encounter expression of hospitality

Within Izitabane zingabantu ubuntu theology, the body, the site of sexual desire, becomes a space of joy, pleasure, belonging, justice and peace. Sexual desire that is in and for joy, pleasure, belonging, justice and peace makes us present in the world and stands in contrast to heteronormative hierarchical power constructs of toxic masculinities that sublimate bodies into discrete objects. Sexual desire can be defined broadly as a healthy self and mutual erotic stimulation that holistically enhances well-being and goodness. Although Izitabane sex is often demonized or made into something shameful with Western culture and society, we believe that the sexual desire expressed by Izitabane is a unique expression of hospitality and mutual encounter. Where heteronormative structural expressions of desire threatens the wellbeing of bodies, desire expressed by Izitabane relates the binary understanding of sex, relationship and marriage.

Invitation to continue discovering together

In conclusion when asking ourselves at the outset of this collective writing and reflecting process what faith and belonging to a faith community mean, words and ideas like belonging, tradition, identity, community, possibility for life direction, social support, a community of care, ritual or sacrament that signifies a relationship to the transcendent came to the fore. All these words, concepts and ideas were familiar and part of our experiential reality at some stage of our lives and yet we were also so painfully aware of our exclusion, by choice or design, from faith communities. Despite being aware of the ‘not-yet-realized’ nature of our Ubuntubana embodied embeddedness within faith communities, we allowed ourselves and each other to dream, to think and to imagine an alternative and holistically flourishing community where the unique and embodied humanity of all is recognized and celebrated and where life in sacramental unity could be possible together. We argue that this could be possible in African faith communities if we reclaim our embodied humanness, if we reimagin our relationship to sacred sources and if we remember our collective sacramental identity. None of what we argued for can or should, however, come into being in isolation and therefore as a final word we would like to extend the invitation for more reflection, more conversation, more encounter and more embodied honesty as we truly believe that the sum is more than the individual parts.


1 The current contribution is the result of a collective writing project between representatives from the Gender and Religion Program at UKZN, the Ujamaa Centre for Biblical and Theological community engagement and Research and Inclusive and Affirming Ministries (IAM) commissioned by The Other Foundation for the Africa regional religion convening entitled Breaking though the Backlash: Transformative encounters between LGBTI people and Churches in Africa. The consultation hosted in Durban from 21-24 July 2019 is the second of its kind and follows the first consultation hosted in Pietermaritzburg in April 2016 entitled Homophobia and churches in Africa: A dialogue.

2 Although the full abbreviation LGBTIQA+ holds even greater expression of diversity and fluidity we employ LGBTI in this essay because of its dominant use in the Southern African region and across a variety of sectors.

3 Heteronormativity, a notion further engaged with in the development of the argument of this contribution, is the ideological worldview and belief system that regulates societal formations according to heterosexuality as the accepted norm and value for biological males and females to constitution sexual desire.


5 For more in this regard please see: Epprecht, Marc. Heterosexual Africa?: The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS. New African Histories Series. (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008).

6 Section 9, Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution.

7 The names of Eudy Simelane (JHB-KwaThema: 2008), Thokozani Qwabe (Ladysmith: 2013), Thapelo Makutle (Northern Cape: 2012), Noxolo Nogwaza (JHB-KwaThema: 2011) are but some painful reminders of the lived realities faced by Izitabane in South Africa.

8 South Africa is also considered to be the birth place of so called ‘corrective rape’: an act of violence against women committed by men ostensibly to ‘cure’ lesbians of their nonconforming sexual orientation – or correct it – the belief being that homosexuality is an imported white disease from the colonial empire. “It is especially African women and girls thought to be lesbian that become victims of corrective rape, with the claimed purpose of turning them into ‘real African women’” Kelly, within the article by Di Silvio, further elaborates: “Attackers, often family members, friends, or neighbours of the victims, say they are teaching lesbian women ‘how to be a real woman’. Although Black Lesbian are the main targets of Corrective Rapes, any person with a nonconforming sexual identity is at risk, seeing that the aim or goal is to ‘cure’ or simply to punish any nonconforming sexual orientations. Thus, any person...
thought to be ‘too different or insufficiently feminine’ and who fail to stay invisible is at risk. Accordingly 86% of black lesbians from the Western Cape said they lived in fear of sexual assault. Lorenzo Di Silvio. "Connecting Corrective Rape: Cornichon and Developing South Africa’s Affirmative Obligations To Prevent Violence Against Women.” Georgetown Law Journal 99 (2011): 1469-717.

4 According to Schneider. Quer Theory “is a critical theory concerned principally with cultural deployments of power through social constructions of sexuality and gender.” Derived from the idea of denaturalizing and de-essentializing stable identities, queer theory is derived from a tradition that is interested in giving new language to criticise heterosexual and social supremacy. The word Queer is to be deployed in order to encompass the emerging diversity of sexual minorities due to lack of attachment to specific historical identities and defiance of the stable identity allure by then gay rights movement to conform. Please see: Laurel Schneider. “Quer Theory.” In Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation, edited by A.K.M. Adam, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 206-212.

5 In striving towards political correctness media and lititabane allies have opted to use the Zulu words such as “Abahandana nobubili obubaya” that literally translate as those in same-sex relationships. This may sound good and polite to lititabane, however, terms such as these do not erase the diversity and the uniqueness of our otherwise orqueens (ubudibana bethu abunto). These terms for instance do not speak to the uniqueness of transgender individuals who regard themselves as loyal to the traditional gender binary, post- or in the process of transitioning, and whose relationships could consequently be classified as fitting within the contours of heterosexuality. Whereas on the other hand the term lititabane does not refer to non-normative sexualities, in a very literal sense of these individuals, it semantically embodies the blurring of the male/female dichotomy, bringing them together into a unique unity and in the process undermining the seeming stability of gender constructions.

6 Marcolia Athaus-Reid.


8 The T-Shirt slogan can be translated with LoxloveLov and #kuthandothando.

9 In this paper when we are referring to Southern Africa the following countries constituted this geographical region: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. However, we decided to focus on Botswana, Malawi and South Africa, since this is a ongoing research paper.

10 Van Klinken argues that Pentecostal nationalism, which clearly pertains to EFB, though the article referrers to Zambia, advocates for “the defiance of the stable identity allude by then gay rights movement to conform. Please see: Laurel Schneider. “Quer Theory.” In Handbook of Postmodern Biblical Interpretation, edited by A.K.M. Adam, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 206-212.

11 Derived from the idea of denaturalising and de-essentializing stable identities, queer theory is derived from a tradition that is interested in giving new language to criticise heterosexual and social supremacy. The word Queer began to constructions of sexuality and gender.” Derived from the idea of denaturalising and de-essentializing stable identities, queer theory is


14 Such treatment of homosexuals queer ministers in the church and such treatment extends to and further fuels exclusion and stigmatization within communities. Dlamini suggests that for queer ministers to avoid being ridiculed and discriminated by church members and leaders they have to remain in the closet thus completely cloaking the notion of the Methodist Church acceptance of queer individuals in mainstream as well as the community of the church. Damlmi Mobeko. “Queering Ministry: the lived experiences of queer clergy in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.”


16 The Jerusalem Statement states: “2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation: The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respecting of the church’s historic and consensual reading … 8. We acknowledge God’s creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repudiate our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifting fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.”

17 “GAFCON.”

18 Reclaiming orthodox Anglicanism in this narrow sense has similar traits to nationalism, where self-interests of nation-states are posed over and against migrant people. Poignantly, GAFCON met in Jerusalem while, Israel occupies Palestine illegally. There are no statements that calls the state of Israel to return Palestinian land. Justice as central biblical imperative ceases to exist because it is unreliable for the ideological worldview of the GAFCON movement.
Thabo Msibi here speaks to the ‘anti-gay’ rhetoric while drawing parallels to how the negation of same sex relations through Sodomy laws. For more in relation to public nudity and the policing of sexuality through the law please see: Bibi Bakare-Yusuf “Nudity and morality: The use of female bodies in public breastfeeding is still contested and policed.”


Gust Yep describes this process as follows: “The process of normalization of heterosexuality in our social system actively and methodically subordinates, disempowers, denies and rejects individuals who do not conform to the heterosexual mandate by criminalizing them, denying them protection against discrimination, refusing them basic rights and recognition, or all of the above.” Yep, Gust A. “The violence of heteronormativity in communication studies: Notes on injury, healing, and queer world-making.” Journal of homosexuality 46, no. 2-4 (2003): 11-59.


According to Shutte “Our deepest moral obligation is to become more fully human [which] means entering more and more deeply into community with others. So although the goal is personal fulfilment, selflessness is excluded.” Augustine Shutt. Ubuntu An Ethics for a New South Africa. (Watersmeet: Cluster Publications, 2001), 30.


As argued elsewhere, this process will epistemologically privilege the knowing of Izitabane bodies.
The Eudy Simelane Annual Memorial Lecture hosted by the Ujamaa Centre for Biblical and Theological Community engagement and research is an ongoing initiative that aims to mainstream conversations pertaining to gender, sexuality and religion. The project aims to honour the legacy of the South African woman’s football star Eudy Simelane that was raped and murdered in KwaThema in Gauteng due to the fact that she was living openly as Isitabane. The lecture series and associated community engagement process was launched in 2016 and has addressed issues such as LGBTIQA+ lives and the law, LGBTIQA+ lives and the church and LGBTIQA+ and family and friends. The 2020 version of the lecture will aim to stimulate discussion on LGBTIQA+ people, sport and faith.

Similarly, one often find woman as gatekeepers of patriarchy based on certain interpretations of scripture.


Lisa Isherwood Elisabeth Stuart. Introducing Body Theology, 148.

Williams, Body’s Grace, 311.

For more in this regard please see forthcoming publications by Gerald West and Beverly Haddad.


Gust Yep describes this process as follows: “The process of normalization of heterosexuality in our social system actively and methodically subordinates, disempowers, denies and rejects individuals who do not conform to the heterosexual mandate by criminalizing them, denying them protection against discrimination, refusing them basic rights and recognition, or all of the above.” Yep, Gust A. “The violence of heteronormativity in communication studies: Notes on injury, healing, and queer world-making.” Journal of homosexuality 45, no. 2-4 (2003): 11-59.
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